

The Roman Missal: New Translation

During this next week the priests of the diocese will be attending the Priest's Convocation. Convocation is generally held every other year, its purpose being the professional/ministerial development of the priests of the diocese. This year's Convocation will center on the new Roman Missal promulgated in 2002 by Pope John Paul II. The Missal is the book the priest uses at his chair and the Altar for the prayers of the Mass. It is always first given to the Church in Latin because that is the universal language of the Church. Translating the Latin into English is a very deliberate and consequently long process. Thus we will not welcome the new Missal until the First Sunday of Advent 2011.

New Missals are not new to our history; they are not recent phenomena. The missal is revised from time to time to add new mass texts (the Opening Prayer, the Prayer at Offertory and the Prayer after Communion) or to remove old ones no longer relevant. In addition, texts that accompany the celebration of saint's feast days are added and some are removed.

As the *Northwest Indiana Catholic* pointed out in a recent edition this is the third edition of the Roman Missal since the second Vatican Council in 1965. Each new Missal, once promulgated by the Holy Father, enters a process of translation into English. All the English speaking countries of the world work on one translation for all those nations. Translation from one language into another are both about accurately in capturing the language of the original balanced with providing a text that is understandable.

The new translation of this third edition of the Roman Missal will sound different from our present translation. For the priests in particular they will have to begin to get used to slightly different cadence when offering the prayers of the Mass. Arguably some of the translations are much richer and some are more challenging. No translation is perfect.

Though change is part of our life no one likes it. There is understandably some sadness in letting go of familiar words. But a change in words of how something is expressed does not mean a change in the belief that is expressed. New words indeed can open for us new meanings, new insights into the deep mystery of our Faith expressed in our common prayer.

Thus, the new Missal offers us an opportunity to look more deeply at the center of our Faith, the celebration of the Eucharist, Holy Mass. Certainly, any closer look at this primary source and summit of who we are as disciples of Jesus cannot hurt us but only deepen our commitment to follow Christ.

You will hear more about this as time goes by. In the New Year those of you who are catechists, religion teachers, Pastoral Council members, Commission members, liturgical ministers or on parish staffs will begin to learn more from me and other priests of the Diocese. So pray for us during this week that we may be open to the work of the Holy Spirit as we learn and refresh our love for the most important prayer we offer and participate in, the Holy Mass.