

This is the first article

Latin? English? What's the fuss?
An article about Language in the Liturgy

John Henry Cardinal Newman once famously wrote: “To be deep in history is to cease to be Protestant.” I wonder if one could also say that to be deep in liturgical history is to cease to be ideological. I believe one of the reasons for this is that there is great reassurance in our liturgical history, littered as it is with saints and sinners, fidelity and abuses, that the Holy Spirit is in charge and guides the Church.

There has been a great deal of discussion, some calm and reasoned, some less so, regarding the Roman Missal translation project. In this article, I propose to give some history of sacred (liturgical) languages in the Church's worship. In subsequent articles, I intend to discuss the reasons—the advantages and the disadvantages—for the current translation project. My purpose is twofold: first, to provide some catechetical preparation for what is to come; second, to provide some history behind and foundation for this project and, hopefully, to encourage people to step away from ideology in order to hear the real concerns from all sides. It is only when we have truly listened, that we have the right to speak our opinions, let alone to proclaim the Gospel.

THE LANGUAGES OF THE CHURCH'S WORSHIP

1 Cor. 14:16-19: “If you pronounce a blessing with the spirit [in tongues], how shall one who holds the place of the uninstructed say the ‘Amen’ to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying? For you may be giving thanks very well, but the other is not built up. I give thanks to God that I speak in tongues more than any of you, but in the church I would rather speak five words with my mind, so as to instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.”

ARAMAIC

Jesus preached and taught in Aramaic. Consider, for example, his use of the words “Abba” or “Amen, Amen,” or even in Acts 26:14, where the voice of Jesus is said to speak in Hebrew (Aramaic was the Hebrew of the common man). The apostles also spoke and taught in Aramaic (the Gospel of Matthew—or at least parts of it—is often thought to have been originally written in Aramaic).

GREEK

As the apostles, including Sts. Paul and Barnabas, moved beyond the land of Israel (Palestine), they took up their preaching, teaching and worshipping in the international language of the day, which was Greek. Even the Jewish communities in Rome spoke Greek; and the Christian community in Rome used Greek also for its liturgy and Bible (the New Testament, of course, was written in Greek). Perhaps one reason for the Roman liturgy being in Greek was that many of the earliest Christians in Rome were slaves, poor people and foreigners—all of whom spoke Greek rather than Latin—even if some other

language was their mother tongue. One of the earliest “papal” letters, written by St. Clement (+99), was written in Greek. St. Justin, martyr (+130), a Christian philosopher who lived in Rome, wrote in Greek. St. Irenaeus (+202), bishop of Lyons (in modern day France) spoke and wrote in Greek.

THE SHIFT TO LATIN

As more of Rome and the Western Roman Empire became Christian, however, there were more and more Christians who spoke Latin only, and not Greek. By the third and fourth centuries Christians were beginning to experiment with Latin. Tertullian, a lawyer who lived in North Africa between about AD160 to AD220, was among the first Christian theologians to write in Latin. For approximately two centuries the Church had taught and worshipped in Greek. The transition to Latin was a long and difficult struggle. After all, the inspired Word of God was written in Greek, wouldn't it be safer doctrinally to worship in Greek, too? The transition needed to find the right Latin words to grasp the authentic and orthodox meaning of the Church's Greek. Tertullian was a tremendous help in developing a theological and liturgical lexicon in Latin that was both theologically correct and understandable to the average Christian. This was a tremendous early example of inculturation, the process of applying the Gospel to the various cultures throughout the world. The goal is to allow the Gospel to purify the culture of superstition, idolatries or anything contrary to Christ, but also to use the language and custom of the culture, where possible, in proclaiming the Gospel. The ultimate “inculturation,” of course, was the incarnation, when the Word of God, by clothing itself in the language and culture of humanity—particularly Jewish humanity—purified all of humanity.

Over the next three centuries, the Roman Church continued to refine and develop its Latin liturgical lexicon. Popes Innocent (401-417), Leo the Great (440-461), Gelasius (492-496), Vigilius (537-555) and Gregory the Great (590-604) were major contributors to the development of liturgical prayer in Latin.¹ When one reads the sermons and prayers of Pope St. Leo the Great, for example, you can almost hear the Greek language in the background. Latin had become the dominant liturgical language, but Greek was still the intellectual and theological touchstone behind it.

It is interesting to note that the Roman Church always held the principle in mind that language was a beautiful means to be used for the end of bringing people closer to Jesus. At times, in the history of the city of Rome, there would be a sudden influx of Greek speaking refugees from the East (from parts of the Byzantine Empire, often due to persecution or war). Then, there would be a sudden resurgence of Greek in the Roman liturgy. The Roman Christians always seemed concerned to minister in the language of the people, originally Greek, then Latin, and then both Greek and Latin depending on the immigration situation of the city.

THE VARIETY OF LANGUAGES IN THE EAST

¹ Keith Pecklers, *Dynamic Equivalence: The Living Language of Christian Worship*, Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2003, p. 3.

The Christian Church in the Eastern Empire (modern day Turkey, Greece, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and parts of Egypt) primarily spoke Greek (never Latin), but likewise was solicitous to minister in the vernacular for different peoples. Thus local languages like Syriac, Coptic, and Armenian were immediately used for both the Bible and the liturgy. The Bible was translated into Syriac by the second century, into Coptic in the third, and into Armenian in the fourth. Liturgical translations followed the biblical translations.²

THE TENSIONS BETWEEN LATIN AND THE VERNACULAR

In the eighth century, a group of German clerics believed that the only languages that one should use for worship were those used on the inscription placed on the cross of Christ: Hebrew, Greek and Latin (namely, the phrase “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews,” cf. Jn. 19:19-20). The Council of Frankfurt in 794 condemned these “trilinguists:” “to those who believe that God can only be adored in three languages, *anathema sit*.” Still, there were many Catholics who equated being Catholic with celebrating the liturgy in Latin.³ It is helpful to remember that there was no such thing as separation of church and state in the Roman Empire. The languages of literature, schools, political life, and liturgical life would have been matters of civic and national interest, perhaps not unlike the strong emotions encountered in the United States today regarding immigrants learning to speak English. The Latin-speaking members of the Roman Empire felt strongly about Latin as their language, including their language of worship.

A classic example of the volatility of the question of the vernacular in the liturgy was the missionary effort by sibling Saints Cyril (+869) and Methodius (+885) to the Slavic communities of Eastern Europe (Moravia and Pannonia). Cyril created the Glagolitic alphabet (later known as the Cyrillic alphabet) and the brothers translated the Gospels and some liturgical texts into this newly writable vernacular.⁴ As they began to have success with their evangelization efforts, they decided to take local candidates to Rome for ordination, and to seek papal approbation of their vernacular innovations. Pope Hadrian II (867-872) granted the two brothers full permission for the use of Old Slavonic in the liturgy. Together, they celebrated that vernacular liturgy in Hadrian’s presence, and Hadrian ordained their candidates as priests and deacons, and Methodius as bishop. In 870 Hadrian formally ratified this Slavonic liturgy.⁵

Three years later, however, Pope John VIII (872-882) came under the influence of the “trilinguists” and forbade the liturgical use of Old Slavonic.⁶ In 879, the Pope summoned Methodius to Rome for questioning. Upon hearing Methodius, Pope John suddenly reversed himself, declaring Methodius free of all heresy and publicly defending him and his vernacular liturgy against the “trilinguists.” Pope John wrote, “It is not opposed to

² Pecklers, *Dynamic Equivalence*, p. 3.

³ Pecklers, *Dynamic Equivalence*, p. 4.

⁴ Pecklers, *Dynamic Equivalence*, p. 4.

⁵ Pecklers, *Dynamic Equivalence*, p. 5.

⁶ Pecklers, *Dynamic Equivalence*, pp. 5-6.

the integrity of faith or doctrine that Mass be celebrated in the Slavonic tongue or that the Holy Gospels and the other lessons of the New and Old Testaments well translated in that language be used for the Mass and the Office, for He who made the principal languages, created all the others for His own praise and glory.” (L. Eisenhofer, Handbuch der Katholischen Liturgik I, Freiburg i. B.: Herder, 1932, p. 154) Pope John even placed Cyril and Methodius’ translation of the Gospel on the altar in St. Peter’s and in 880 formally reactivated permission for the use of Old Slavonic in the liturgy.⁷

Fortune turned again, however, following the death of Methodius in 885. Pope Stephen V (885-891), acting under the influence of a forged letter purported to have been written by John VIII, condemned the liturgical use of Old Slavonic and forbade its use.⁸ As a result, much of Christianized Eastern Europe shifted allegiance from Latin Catholic Rome to Greek Byzantine Constantinople, which allowed Old Slavonic. This is one reason why the Russian Church today counts its Mother Church as Constantinople and not Rome. It wasn’t until the seventeenth century, in 1631, that the use of Slavonic in western liturgical rites was officially approved by Pope Urban VIII (1623-1644).⁹ The Greeks in Constantinople, on the other hand by the year 1190 had adopted the principle that those who did not understand Greek were to celebrate the Greek liturgy in their own language, faithfully rendering the texts directly from the Greek official edition.¹⁰

CONCESSIONS AWAY FROM LATIN

Scholars believe that Latin, as a spoken, living language, began to give way to the modern European languages by the tenth and eleventh centuries at the latest. There is evidence of bishops and priests preaching in French (though celebrating the rest of the liturgy in Latin) as early as 1195. Missionary Orders often received permission to preach in the vernacular in order to instruct and deepen the faith among the uneducated.¹¹ Consider the following vernacular permissions granted by the Church long before the Second Vatican Council:

- In the early 1300s, Pope Clement V granted special permission for the use of Mandarin Chinese in the liturgy as a means of evangelizing the Chinese.¹²
- In 1624, Carmelite missionaries in Persia (modern day Iran) were granted permission to celebrate one Mass each day in classic Arabic “for the consolation of peoples recently converted.”¹³
- In 1631, full privileges were granted to missionaries in Georgia for the celebration of the Eucharist in either Georgian or Armenian as an instrument of evangelization.¹⁴

⁷ Pecklers, Dynamic Equivalence, p. 6.

⁸ Pecklers, Dynamic Equivalence, pp. 6-7.

⁹ Pecklers, Dynamic Equivalence, p. 7.

¹⁰ Pecklers, Dynamic Equivalence, pp. 7-8.

¹¹ Pecklers, Dynamic Equivalence, p. 8.

¹² Pecklers, Dynamic Equivalence, p. 9.

¹³ Pecklers, Dynamic Equivalence, p. 11.

¹⁴ Pecklers, Dynamic Equivalence, p. 12.

- Prior to 1773, Jesuit missionaries received permission from the Holy See for use of the Iroquois language in the liturgy celebrated with that Native American community around the area of modern day Montreal.¹⁵

THE COUNCIL OF TRENT

The Council of Trent (1545-1563) spent a good part of one of its sessions discussing a switch to the vernacular at Mass for Europe. There were many proponents and many opponents. For the opponents of a switch, Latin held associations of mystery, universality, and orthodoxy of linguistic formulation¹⁶ (e.g. in the prayers and creeds). There was concern that translations into many vernaculars would run the risk of inaccuracies of doctrine (just like the concerns over going from Greek to Latin in the third and fourth centuries). The proponents of vernacular argued that the patristic church used a vernacular liturgy, and that there was a great catechetical loss with the use of Latin since the vast majority of the faithful could not understand the scriptures or the liturgy. They believed that pastoral necessity (as well as historical precedent) called for a return to a vernacular liturgy. Some of them actually believed that the use of Latin was perpetuating an impoverishment of the faith.¹⁷ All the bishops who had experience of a vernacular liturgy spoke out in favor of it. In the end, however, with the Protestant reformers demanding the vernacular and deriding the Latin, the Council Fathers decided that it was not an opportune time to change to the vernacular, lest it be seen as a concession to the Protestants.

FROM TRENT TO VATICAN II

In the decades and centuries following the Council of Trent, in France, England and later in North America, translations of the Missal and Office were published for use of the laity, though not for use by the priest in the liturgy. Sometimes, these publications were condemned by Church authorities, sometimes they were ignored, and still other times they were promoted. In 1877, Pope Pius IX (1846-1878) who had earlier forbade vernacular translations, reversed his decision and authorized any bishop to provide the translation and use of vernacular missals for use by the laity.¹⁸ The following details the vernacular developments within the Church in the first half of the 20th century:

- In 1906, Pope Pius X (1903-1914) granted permission for certain areas of Yugoslavia to make permanent liturgical use of the classical Paleoslav language.¹⁹
- In 1920, Pope Benedict XV (1914-1922) granted permission for the use of Croatian and Slovenian in Church rites and for sung epistles and gospels in the vernacular at solemn Masses.²⁰

¹⁵ Pecklers, *Dynamic Equivalence*, p. 24.

¹⁶ Pecklers, *Dynamic Equivalence*, pp. 9-10.

¹⁷ Pecklers, *Dynamic Equivalence*, p. 9.

¹⁸ Pecklers, *Dynamic Equivalence*, p. 30.

¹⁹ Pecklers, *Dynamic Equivalence*, p. 31.

²⁰ Pecklers, *Dynamic Equivalence*, p. 31.

- Pope Pius XI (1922-1939) allowed the celebration of Mass in Estonian in response to a plea from the bishops of Estonia that their people were going to the Protestants and Orthodox for intelligible liturgies.²¹
- In 1929, Pope Pius XI granted permission for a vernacular Ritual (the book containing the other sacraments besides the Eucharist) in Bavaria, Germany.²²
- Permission for a vernacular Ritual was granted to Vienna, Austria, in 1935.²³
- In 1941 and 1942, missionaries in various countries in Africa, China, India, Indo-China, Indonesia, Japan, and New Guinea were given permission to translate the Roman Ritual into the local language, retaining Latin only for the essential sacramental formulas.²⁴
- In 1948, a limited use of French was allowed in the celebrations of baptism, marriage and anointing of the sick.²⁵
- In 1949, permission was granted to China for the complete celebration of Mass in Mandarin Chinese, with the exception of the Eucharistic Prayer remaining in Latin.²⁶
- In 1949, the bishops of Cameroon in Africa petitioned to use French in their liturgy, but the Church refused, saying instead that Cameroon should prepare a translation in the mother tongues of the people of Cameroon and to leave a French version to French citizens.²⁷
- In 1950, India received permission to use Hindi for the celebration of the sacraments in regions where Hindi was spoken.²⁸
- In 1954 an English Ritual for Baptism, Marriage, Extreme Unction and Funerals was approved by the Congregation of Rites for use in the dioceses of the United States.²⁹
- In 1960, Pope John XXIII authorized permission for Melchite-rite Catholics in the U.S. to celebrate their whole liturgy in English, with the exception of the Eucharistic Prayer.³⁰

As can be seen, the vernacular has had long and widespread use long before Pope John XXIII called for the Second Vatican Council.

THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

The “Constitution on the Liturgy” (approved by the Council Fathers of the Second Vatican Council on 4 Dec. 1963) in paragraph 36 addresses the use of Latin and the vernacular in the liturgy:

²¹ Pecklers, *Dynamic Equivalence*, pp. 31-32.

²² Pecklers, *Dynamic Equivalence*, p. 32.

²³ Pecklers, *Dynamic Equivalence*, p. 32.

²⁴ Pecklers, *Dynamic Equivalence*, p. 33.

²⁵ Pecklers, *Dynamic Equivalence*, p. 35.

²⁶ Pecklers, *Dynamic Equivalence*, p. 35.

²⁷ Pecklers, *Dynamic Equivalence*, p. 35.

²⁸ Pecklers, *Dynamic Equivalence*, p. 35.

²⁹ Pecklers, *Dynamic Equivalence*, p. 35.

³⁰ Pecklers, *Dynamic Equivalence*, p. 176.

36. 1. Particular law remaining in force, the use of the Latin language is to be preserved in the Latin rites.
2. But since the use of the mother tongue, whether in the Mass, the administration of the sacraments, or other parts of the liturgy, frequently may be of great advantage to the people, the limits of its employment may be extended. This will apply in the first place to the readings and directives, and to some of the prayers and chants, according to the regulations on this matter to be laid down separately in subsequent chapters.
3. These norms being observed, it is for the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned in Art. 22, 2, to decide whether, and to what extent, the vernacular language is to be used; their decrees are to be approved, that is, confirmed, by the Apostolic See. And, whenever it seems to be called for, this authority is to consult with bishops of neighboring regions which have the same language.
4. Translations from the Latin text into the mother tongue intended for use in the liturgy must be approved by the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned above.

Both the Council Fathers and the Commission established by Pope Paul VI to help in implementing the liturgical reforms of the Council were concerned that the passage from Latin to the vernacular should be gradual.³¹ The next step was for episcopal conferences around the world to make a formal request to Rome for permission to pursue vernacular translations for liturgical use. The U.S. bishops made their request and received permission to proceed on 15 October, 1965. The date of 27 March, 1966 (Passion Sunday) was set for the whole country to begin increased use of English in the Mass. This initial permission included the prefaces of the Eucharistic Prayer and the prayers said by the priest and responded to by the people (opening prayer, prayer over the gifts, and prayer after communion). On 31 Jan. 1967, Pope Paul VI gave permission for the episcopal conferences to decide whether it would be best in their countries to translate into the vernacular the whole Eucharistic Prayer as well as the rites of ordination. Every episcopal conference throughout the world moved in this direction, and their efforts have been sanctioned by every Pope. While it may be true that the “Constitution on the Liturgy” envisioned Latin remaining an important part of liturgical worship, it is likewise true that the same bishops and Pope who foresaw Latin’s continuance in the liturgy, also endorsed wider and wider use of the vernacular, when they saw its pastoral benefits.

In 1981 the Congregation for Divine Worship in Rome conducted a survey of all the bishops regarding the use of Latin in the liturgy, the desire for more Latin, the use of the vernacular, and its level of acceptance. The response was overwhelming in favor of the pastoral benefit of the vernacular. The views of the bishops were that without the vernacular, “the liturgical reform would have been much less fruitful; that the demand for Latin is almost nonexistent; and that Latin is more and more disappearing from use as a liturgical language of the Church.”³²

I hope this brief history of the use of language in the liturgy has been instructive. The Latin language has played a major role in the Western Church for more than 1,700 years, and as a result it has a highly developed and sophisticated liturgical and theological

³¹ Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy 1948-1975*, Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1990, pp. 99-100.

³² Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy*, p. 112.

vocabulary. There is a certain “Latin culture” which has shaped Latin rite Catholics for millennia. The Latin language remains a very important means for study and research into the historical, pastoral, liturgical and theological treasures of the Church. It remains today the official language of the Roman Catholic Church, with all official Church documents being promulgated in Latin, before being translated into the various world languages. Often when the liturgy is celebrated with an international audience, at least some of the prayers are offered in Latin (though the Scriptures are almost always proclaimed in the vernacular). And there are still a number of Catholics today who prefer to worship in the Latin language.

Nevertheless, the good fruit that the use of the vernacular has borne is certain, and its continuance in the life of the Church is equally certain. In subsequent articles, I will examine first the history of our current English language translation used in the liturgy, and then explore some of the changes to come in the new English translation.

This is the second article...

Latin? English? What's the fuss? Why a New Translation

“If I translate word by word, it sounds absurd, if I am forced to change something in the word order or style, I seem to have stopped being a translator.” (St. Jerome (+420), *Interpret. Chron. Euseb. Pamph.*, Praef.: PL. 27, 35)

St. Jerome is the patron saint for scripture scholars and Bible translators. He is most famous for his translation of the Old and New Testaments from Hebrew and Greek into Latin, commonly called the Vulgate (from the Latin word “vulgare” meaning to make accessible or common). His quotation above succinctly captures the frustration everyone has felt who attempts to move from one language to another. It is never simple, and it always involves making choices that can feel more like betrayal than translation. Many people “assume there is a one-to-one correspondence between words in one language and their mates in another. But a simple glance at any dictionary shows the multiple definitions that exist for any one word within one language.” (Quote from an unpublished article by Fr. Paul Turner) It is important to recall that our liturgy is not an original creation of our own making, but has been handed down to us—and in translation at that.

Even before the Second Vatican Council closed, when it became apparent that at least some vernacular would be permitted in the liturgy, English-speaking bishops from various countries began discussing ways to cooperate on a way to produce a common English translation for the whole English-speaking, Catholic world. This was, in part, at the prompting of the Council itself. In the “Constitution on the Liturgy” #36.3, the Council Fathers had recommended that, “whenever it seems to be called for, this authority [an Episcopal Conference, e.g. of the United States] is to consult with bishops of neighboring regions which have the same language.” The result of these early discussions led to the formation of the “International Commission on English in the Liturgy” (ICEL) on 17 October 1963. Rome established and approved for its governance a constitution composed of 11 member conferences and 15 associate member conferences.

The first changes to the order of the Mass, following upon the recommendations of the Bishops at the Second Vatican Council, were promulgated by the Sacred Congregation of Rites on 25 January 1965. The parts of the Mass that pertained to the people were translated by ICEL. The private prayers of the priest and the Eucharistic Prayer were kept in Latin, and the whole text, with the aforementioned parts in English, was published the following year (1966). This order of the Mass was then thoroughly revised into the shape which is familiar to us today, and it was promulgated in 1969 (in Latin). ICEL began the work of translation immediately, and a full English translation was published in 1974—by which time permission had been granted for the celebration of the entire Mass in English. In 1975, Rome promulgated a revised edition of the *Missale Romanum* (“Roman Missal,” the book containing all the prayers and rubrics necessary for the Mass). This was necessary for a variety of reasons. The office of subdeacon had been

suppressed in 1973, and several prayer texts for specific celebrations had been added. The translation of this second edition of the *Missale* appeared in 1985, the version still in use today.

From the beginning, this work of translation was understood to be a new exercise in the history of the Church—at least on such a scale. It was taken for granted that there would be a learning curve, and that the translations would require revision. There had been considerable pressure to make them available as soon as possible. Already in 1983, ICEL began a less rushed process of translation, drawing on the experiences of previous years and consulting broadly with experts in various fields: linguistics, poetry, music, grammar and, of course, spirituality and liturgy. Gradually, a revised translation was approved by all the Episcopal Conferences of ICEL and sent to Rome for approval in 1998. Approval was never given.

For some time, concerns had been growing in Rome over the style of translation being used. For principles of translation, ICEL used the 1969 instruction, *Comme le prévoit*, which advocated a rule of translation known as “Dynamic Equivalence.” According to this theory, the concern is to translate concepts more than words. The concept or sense of a phrase must be translated, rather than the exact words. An example is given here from the Opening Prayer for the First Sunday of Lent. The current translation uses the principle of Dynamic Equivalence and the proposed new translation uses the principle of Formal Equivalence—a more literal rendering of the Latin original:

Current Translation

Father, through our observance of Lent, help us to understand the meaning of your Son’s death and resurrection, and teach us to reflect it in our lives.

Proposed New Translation

Grant us, almighty God, through our yearly exercises in the holy Season of Lent, to grow in understanding of the riches hidden in Christ and to pursue their effects by a worthy way of life.

The original prayers of the Church use a wide variety of titles for the divine: God, Lord, almighty God, eternal Lord, etc., etc. Using the principle of dynamic equivalence, ICEL chose to translate most of these titles with the English “Father.” The thought was that all of these titles refer to the same divinity and that “Father” conveys more warmth than “almighty God.” Next, “our observance of Lent” *basically* means the same thing as “our yearly exercise in the holy Season of Lent,” but it seems clear that, though the substance was maintained and a certain crispness garnered, some depth and richness were lost. Lastly, the “riches hidden in Christ” does refer to his “death and resurrection,” but again, poetry was sacrificed.

ICEL had also been experimenting with the creation of original English texts. Some language theories doubt whether it is ever possible to translate accurately from one language to another, and the alternative in such a case would be free composition in the genius of the native language. In May 2001, the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments promulgated a new document on translation theory entitled

Liturgiam authenticam (the authentic Liturgy). This instruction reserved the creation of new liturgical compositions to the Holy See alone. It also provided principles for translation that differed significantly from the previous instruction, *Comme le prévoit*. Note, for example, the following excerpt from *Liturgiam authenticam*:

The translation of the liturgical texts of the Roman Liturgy is not so much a work of creative innovation as it is of rendering the liturgical texts faithfully and accurately into the vernacular language. While it is permissible to arrange the wording, the syntax, and the style in such a way as to prepare a flowing vernacular text suitable to the rhythm of popular prayer, the original text, insofar as possible, must be translated integrally and in the most exact manner, without omissions or additions in terms of their content, and without paraphrases or glosses. Any adaptations to the characteristics or the nature of the various vernacular languages is to be sober and discreet.” (#20)

A number of factors led to the promulgation of *Liturgiam authenticam*. By 2001, the Roman Rite had over 35 years of experience in using a vernacular liturgy. In 2000, the Roman Rite had promulgated a revised “General Instruction of the Roman Missal” and a revision of the Roman Missal itself was coming (published in 2002).

The question often arises, why does it take so long to get a revised English translation? Every other major European language has already undergone revisions of its initial translations in light of decades of experience. In part, the reason for this discrepancy was that the English translation was not for only one country, but for every English speaking country in the Catholic world. In the Spanish speaking world, on the other hand, Spain, Argentina, Mexico, Chile, etc., all use their own Spanish translation that differ from one another. If it were only up to the United States, it would be much easier, but that is not the case. The English language translation affects the whole English speaking world. And actually, the English translation affects the non-English world as well. In some countries, there is no one who knows Latin, and so they actually translate from English. This raises the importance of an English translation above other vernacular translations. This can be seen from a letter written on 26 October, 1999 by the prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments, Jorge Cardinal Medina Estevez, to Bishop Maurice Taylor of Galloway, Scotland, head of ICEL at that time. In that letter the prefect said:

Problems with the English language translations of the liturgical texts assume a particular gravity in proportion to the prominence of the English language in the international community. Even while it remains essential that liturgical translations be made directly from the original texts into the various modern vernacular languages, the impact which the English language translation is likely to exert on certain other versions is an observed and unavoidable fact, which in turn must be said to place a significant responsibility on those charged with the translations into English.

The third edition of the *Missale Romanum*, which was published in 2002, included various modifications due, in part, to a revised Code of Canon Law and the publication of other liturgical books (e.g. the Ceremonial of Bishops). There were also new Mass formulas for recently canonized saints, as well as new prayers for the Commons of Martyrs and the Blessed Virgin Mary.

We can say, then, that there are three major reasons for the new translation currently underway:

first, because the current translation was always considered provisional;
second, because the Church has provided significantly revised principles of translation;
and third, because of the publication of the third edition of the *Missale Romanum*.

It has never been a matter of whether to do a new translation, but rather when...and how. The Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, has repeatedly encouraged the English speaking bishops to speed the new translation along as quickly as possible. The Holy Father understands the language of the liturgy to be an essential dimension of the renewal of the liturgy, and one of the most important means of inculturating the Roman Rite into the genius of various peoples. In the next article, I will discuss the principles and the process for making a new translation.

This is the third article...

Latin? English? What's the fuss? The Principles and Process for the New Translation

On 15 September 2003, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments formally established ICEL (the International Commission for English in the Liturgy) as a mixed commission in accordance with the Holy See's Instruction, *Liturgiam authenticam*, published in May 2001, which significantly revised the principles then in use for translation. One of the aims in this restructuring of ICEL was to establish greater episcopal oversight in the process of translation. The Congregation also created in the spring of 2002 a consultative body of bishops and experts called *Vox Clara* ("A Clear Voice"). Since the Congregation had now reserved the approval of translations to itself, it was deemed necessary to form a team of bishops and experts who could act as consultants to the Congregation and facilitate their cooperation with the various English speaking Episcopal Conferences.

The process of achieving an approved English translation for the liturgy is extraordinarily involved. Indeed, I would venture to say that never in the history of the world has a set of texts received so much consultation, review, and revision. ICEL has divided the *Missale Romanum* into twelve sections.

- 1) The work begins with the base translators. These are experts whom ICEL employs to make the initial translation from Latin to English.
- 2) Their translations are then studied by nine review teams.
- 3) Next, the texts are sent to the Roman Missal Editorial Committee (RMEC), which chiefly serves an editorial purpose. RMEC, which is a committee of ICEL, seeks to bring a unified style and consistency of vocabulary to prayers that have been composed and reviewed by various groups.
- 4) From RMEC, the texts go to the ICEL secretariat, which reviews and checks them for typographical or other mistakes.
- 5) The secretariat then brings them before the ICEL commission, which consists of eleven bishops—one from each of the eleven member conferences. Others usually present at these meetings include three members from the ICEL secretariat in Washington, DC, the chair of RMEC, and a few other experts and assistants. They review and emend each text, with only the eleven bishop members having voting rights.
- 6) Once a given section of the *Missale* is approved by the ICEL commission, then it is sent to each of the eleven Episcopal Conferences who have full membership. At this point, the particular section of the *Missale* is called a "green book" because of the color of its binder. The secretariat for each Episcopal Conference suggests revisions and solicits suggestions from every bishop in the Conference (the US Conference of Catholic Bishops has 273 active bishops in its membership).
- 7) Suggestions from each of the Episcopal Conferences are then sent back to the ICEL secretariat.

- 8) Along this process, the proposed translations are also sent to the Congregation in Rome for suggestions and feedback from *Vox Clara*. There is often a regular exchange back and forth between ICEL and *Vox Clara*.
- 9) ICEL reviews the suggestions from the Episcopal Conferences (and from *Vox Clara*), and makes further revisions. The ICEL membership then votes to approve the translation, now called the “gray book” based on the color of its new binder.
- 10) The “gray book” is then sent back to each Episcopal Conference who votes to accept or reject it. If they accept the gray book, it then goes to Rome for final approval by the Congregation and the Holy Father. Each Episcopal Conference can also request adaptations in the gray book version, which Rome would approve only for that particular Conference.
- 11) Finally, the Holy See provides (hopefully!) the “recognition” of the text, which then may be published and put to use.

As you can see, the process is long and involved! There can be many bumps and plenty of disagreements along the way, but it is hoped that with so many competent persons working together, the end result—even though it may be by “committee”—will be worthy of Divine Worship in the liturgy.

Here is the current status of the translation project: ICEL has completed all the green books, and most of the gray books. The US Bishop’s Conference is scheduled to vote on the last gray book in November 2009. If all the votes go well between now and then, the final section will be sent to Rome by the end of 2009. As soon as Rome gives final “recognition” the English language “Roman Missal” will be ready for publication and use in the dioceses of the United States, possibly by the end of 2010.

Finally I offer some of the stylistic differences that will be seen in the new translation when it is available for use in the liturgy.

Liturgiam authenticam provides its main principles for translation in paragraph 57:

That notable feature of the Roman Rite, namely its straightforward, concise and compact manner of expression, is to be maintained insofar as possible in the translation. Furthermore, the same manner of rendering a given expression is to be maintained throughout the translation, insofar as feasible. These principles are to be observed:

- a) The connection between various expressions, manifested by subordinate and relative clauses, the ordering of words, and various forms of parallelism, is to be maintained as completely as possible in a manner appropriate to the vernacular language.
- b) In the translation of terms contained in the original text, the same person, number, and gender are to be maintained insofar as possible.

c) The theological significance of words expressing causality, purpose or consequence (such as *ut, ideo, enim, and quia*) is to be maintained, though different languages may employ varying means for doing so.

d) The principles set forth... in n. 51, regarding variety of vocabulary, are to be observed also in the variety of syntax and style (for example, in the location within the Collect of the vocative addressed to God).

The US bishops' Committee for Divine Worship makes the following comment with regard to the challenges presented by these principles of translation:

The application of this paragraph of *Liturgiam authenticam* has made some extraordinary demands on translators, especially with reference to 57a. The use of extended subordination is a method to order all the elements of a sentence in such a way as to express a dependence on God as the source of all saving action. The very syntax of the sentence indicates what is secondary or subordinate. In addition, the meaning of the prayer is communicated through the use of a sequence of [verb] tenses that links all action solely to that of the main clause.

When such a sentence is broken up, in English, into many shorter sentences there comes about a cumulative loss of meaning between those ideas which are secondary and their subordination to a principal action. In general, the translators have remained faithful to the principle, but there have been some prayers that were so extensively long that they needed to be broken into two sentences.

An example of the difference this principle of translation demands can be seen in the following comparison of the current translation of the Prayer Over the Offerings for the Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time and the proposed new translation:

Current Translation

A Suggested Early Draft

Lord God, in this bread and wine
you give us food for body and spirit.
May the eucharist renew our
strength and bring us health of mind
and body.

O God, who in the gifts presented here
nourish with food and renew with Sacrament
the twofold nature of the human race,
grant, we pray, that their sustenance
may not fail us in body or in mind.

The present English translation breaks up a long Latin sentence into two (as here, or sometimes even three independent clauses). This has made the content easier to grasp, but has resulted in the loss of some meaning. It has also caused a style of prayer in which the Church makes statements to God about what God should already know, and the link between the address of the divinity and the request of the prayer is broken. We end up telling God what he does, and then separately asking him for something, whereas in the proposed translation, we are asking God for something because we recognize what he has already done for us. The longer sentence does make it more tricky both to proclaim and to hear, but the potential benefits seem well worth it. Other modern languages do this

already and have adapted to this style without any trouble. The new translation will, therefore, also better harmonize with the closer translations of other languages, thus creating a more unified voice throughout the Catholic world.

Another change will be the use of a broader vocabulary. The current translation employs a rather narrow range of words to translate a considerably larger lexicon in the Latin original. In the new translation, then, a greater English vocabulary will not only be more faithful to the Latin but also enrich the sounds, content and images of the English translation. There are many images in the Latin original that were never used in the current translation. One example is the image of dewfall used for the action of the Holy Spirit in the second Eucharistic Prayer. In the current translation, this imagery was simply omitted.

There is a need to broaden and deepen the liturgical/theological lexicon that we can draw upon in the English language. This will enable the liturgical books to be more consistent and uniform not only in the prayers, but also for the rubrics. Bishop Arthur Serratelli of Paterson, NJ, chairman of the US Bishops Committee for Divine Worship, has written that the proposed translations “are densely theological. They respect the rich vocabulary of the Roman Rite. They carefully avoid the overuse of certain phrases and words.” (from a column which appeared in the June 19, 2008 edition of *The Beacon*, Bishop Serratelli’s diocesan newspaper)

The style of the prayer texts will be more formal than what we currently hear. Another description for this is that the new translations use a “higher linguistic register.” The texts portray a more submissive stance of humanity in relation to the divine power. They stress God’s mercy and our unworthiness. This is not at all to say that they promote groveling, a grim countenance, or worthlessness. To the contrary! The great truth of our unworthiness, when combined with God’s mercy to us in Christ, creates not despondency but delight! There is joy in the fact that God “has looked with favor on my lowliness, and from now on, all people will call me blessed!” (from Mary’s declaration to Elizabeth in Lk. 1:48).

The word order of the new translations consciously follows the word order of the Latin as much as possible. This hinders the flow of English style a bit, but it adds a theological nuance that is important.

Latin orations, especially Post-Communions, tend to conclude strongly with a teleological or eschatological point. The new translations in English follow the sequence of these Latin prayers in order to end on a strong note...Why should we strip the English translation of the distinctive theological emphases of the Latin text? A slightly non-colloquial word order can lead the listener to a greater attention to the point of the prayer.” (from Bishop Serratelli’s diocesan column)

For the sake of clarity, “teleological” and “eschatological” both refer to the final goal of life, the end time or heaven. Many of the Latin prayers end in the key of heaven—which is where every good prayer should take us! A good illustration of how this desire for a

strong ending can make the English less fluid, however, is found in the proposed new translation for the Prayer after Communion for Wednesday of Holy Week. Bishop Galeone of St. Augustine, Florida, proposed an alternative translation which rendered the English more fluid, but sacrificed the eschatological ending (i.e. ending with a reference to the goal of heaven).

Proposed New Translation

Fill our minds, almighty God,
with sure confidence that,
through your Son's Death in time,
to which awesome mysteries bear witness,
you have given us perpetual life.

Bp. Galeone's Suggested Revision

Almighty God,
fill our minds with [the] sure confidence
that you have given us perpetual life
through your Son's Death in time,
to which [these] awesome mysteries bear
witness.

There is a definite advantage to ending the prayer with the reference to perpetual life, but to do so will require the Priest-Celebrant to proclaim the prayer with just the right cadence and inflection. It will require mindfulness on the part of the priest.

Lastly, there has been a growing desire in recent years for the Mass prayers to be sung. Good singing can add a note of both solemnity and joy to a celebration. In order to facilitate this, ICEL has tried to be mindful of the rhythm and singability of the texts. It has also created a special committee which is working to write chants for these new liturgical texts.

When the revised prayers finally arrive, there will be new words to hear, new syntaxes to comprehend and a new style to absorb. This will require some effort on the part of the priest who proclaims, as well as on the part of the assembly who hears. One of the recommendations that have been continually stressed by the US bishops is the need for the prayers to be written in sense lines to facilitate their proper proclamation by the priest.

The new translations are a great improvement in many ways over the current translation. Hopefully, we can experience a certain excitement that we will soon be proclaiming and hearing not something that was created in the 1970s and early 1980s, but rather something that is much closer to what the Church has prayed for centuries, and which Catholics are praying in other languages around the world!

In the next article, I will treat specific examples of the changes that will be found in the upcoming liturgical translations.

This is the fourth article....

Latin? English? What’s the fuss? What Kind of Changes? Part I

The US Bishops Committee on Divine Worship has posted a chart on its website (<http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/missalformation/peoplesparts.pdf>) which reveals the changes to parts of the Mass in which the people speak. (They also have a website with various resources on the new translation: <http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/missalformation/>). Over the next several articles, I will borrow from that chart and provide some commentary in an attempt to explain at least some of the reasons for the new translation.

PART OF MASS	PRESENT TEXT FOR PEOPLE	NEW TEXT FOR PEOPLE
Greeting	<i>Priest:</i> The Lord be with you. <i>People:</i> And also with you.	<i>Priest:</i> The Lord be with you. <i>People:</i> And with your spirit.

Many have probably heard of this change. This is one in which the Bishops did not have a choice. The document on liturgical translations, *Liturgiam authenticam*, no. 57, specifically mentions that this expression of the Latin, *Et cum spiritu tuo*, must be translated as literally as possible. Of the major European languages, English is the only one which doesn’t mention the spirit. In addition to the mandate from Rome, and the need to catch up to the rest of the world there is also a theological rationale behind the phrase “And with your spirit.” It is only used in response to an ordained minister. In those instances in the liturgy when a non-ordained member leads the assembly in prayer (e.g. a wake service, a Holy Communion service, the Liturgy of the Hours), they will never say “The Lord be with you” because, in part, they do not receive the phrase in return “And with your spirit.” The “spirit” that is mentioned here refers to the spirit received in ordination. It is an affirmation by the assembly that this person has received the proper anointing with the spirit in order to lead them in sacramental ministry. It is less about the *person* of the priest, than the *office of the priesthood*, which is supported and guaranteed by the Spirit of God given in ordination.

PART OF MASS	PRESENT TEXT FOR PEOPLE	NEW TEXT FOR PEOPLE
Penitential Act, Form A (<i>Confiteor</i>)	I confess to almighty God, and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned through my own fault , in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do; and I ask blessed Mary, ever virgin,	I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous

	all the angels and saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord, our God.	fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.
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This was another change mandated by no. 57 in *Liturgiam authenticam*. The actual prayer of the Church has the threefold admission of fault, and the English translation currently in use simply did not translate it. In the language of Jesus (Hebrew), a threefold repetition of something marks a superlative degree. Thus, for example, “holy, holy, holy, Lord” is the same as saying “most holy Lord,” though perhaps more poetically. It also stresses the personal nature of sin and the reality of sin—things which Christians do well never to forget.

PART OF MASS	PRESENT TEXT FOR PEOPLE	NEW TEXT FOR PEOPLE
Penitential Act, Form B	<i>Priest:</i> Lord, we have sinned against you: Lord, have mercy. <i>People:</i> Lord, have mercy. <i>Priest:</i> Lord, show us your mercy and love. <i>People:</i> And grant us your salvation.	<i>Priest:</i> Have mercy on us, O Lord. <i>People:</i> For we have sinned against you. <i>Priest:</i> Show us, O Lord, your mercy. <i>People:</i> And grant us your salvation.

This is an option for the Penitential Act which is not much used in parishes. All four lines are from the Old Testament: the first two from Baruch 3:2, and the next two from Psalm 85:8. Possibly the current translation was designed to simplify the people’s parts, but the actual prayer of the Church calls for the dialogue, which is restored in the new translation.

PART OF MASS	PRESENT TEXT FOR PEOPLE	NEW TEXT FOR PEOPLE
Gloria	Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.	Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. ¹ We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, ² Lord God, heavenly King,

	<p>Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God,</p> <p>you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.</p> <p>For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.</p>	<p>O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,³ Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world,⁴ receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.</p>
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My comments regarding the new translation of the *Gloria* are given *per* the “footnotes” in the text above.

¹“People of good will” is a well-known phrase, moreover, a closer translation of the Latin original. Plus, theologically, the Church loves to stress the importance of the will, both human and divine. When a human will is ordered to the divine will, then it is a “good will,” and then, they will experience true peace.

²The prayer of the Church actually has five verbs here (as in the new translation). The current translation only renders three of them. This was a common practice in the original translation. The Latin was believed to be too florid for contemporary English, and so many of the adjectives were simply dropped, and phrases were often combined or reduced.

³This is another example in the current translation of combining terms. The original prayer of the Church has, as with the new translation, “Only begotten Son” and later “Son of the Father.” It is important to add the modifier “begotten” because the Father has many children both by creation and by adoption, but only one Son who was begotten from before the world began.

⁴The original prayer of the Church repeats this line from John the Baptist twice (cf. John 1:29: “Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”). Each time, however, it is followed by a different response: first, “have mercy on us” and then “receive our prayer.” The current translation effectively rewrites part of this prayer in accord with its own peculiar principles.

PART OF MASS	PRESENT TEXT FOR PEOPLE	NEW TEXT FOR PEOPLE
Nicene Creed	<p>We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.</p> <p>We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in Being with the Father.</p> <p>Through him all things were made.</p> <p>For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man.</p> <p>For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered, died, and was buried.</p> <p>On the third day he rose again in fulfillment of the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.</p> <p>We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.</p> <p>We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.</p>	<p>I believe¹ in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.²</p> <p>And³ in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages.</p> <p>God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;⁴</p> <p>through him all things were made.</p> <p>For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,⁵ and became man.</p> <p>For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.⁶</p> <p>He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.</p> <p>And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.</p> <p>And one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.</p>

	<p>We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.</p>	<p>I confess⁷ one baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to⁸ the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.</p>
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Again, my comments are given *per* the “footnotes” in the text above.

¹In its original form, the Nicene Creed begins “We believe,” yet the traditions of both the Latin and Greek Christians have traditionally begun with “I believe” when it is used within the liturgy. St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologiae* IIa IIae 1, 9) says that the Church proclaims the Creed as a single person, made one by faith. The Church is calling us to take personal responsibility for our faith by the use of the singular “I.”

²This is a reference to the New Testament, Col. 1:16, “for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible...” The change from the current version “seen and unseen” was made because something can be unseen and yet, in principle, visible (e.g. a remote galaxy), or unseen and entirely invisible (e.g. an angel).

³Whereas the current translation repeats the “We believe” for rhetorical emphasis for each of the persons of the Trinity and for the Church, the new version follows the original Latin, which makes the whole creed flow from the initial resounding “I believe!”

⁴The use of the term “consubstantial” has been carefully weighed before being chosen, but it also brings some complexities with it. The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments recommended its use. The root word “substance” is originally a technical, philosophical term that refers to the most real part of a being. Literally, it refers to that which “stands under,” its base, that which is at the heart of someone or something. This is fine as long as one doesn’t equate substance with only the physical or external dimension. Today, we can use the word substance in reference to the essential, e.g., “the substance of the matter,” but we can also use it in a rather mundane and materialistic manner, e.g., “help me wash this grimy substance off my hands!” Within the liturgy, of course, the Church is thinking of the former.

The other part of this term, which is very attractive, is the first three letters “con.” This comes from the Latin preposition *cum* meaning “together with.” Within the creed, consubstantial means that Christ was of one substance with the Father, but it also implies one substance with our humanity. He is co-substantial, referring therein to the two natures of Christ. The current translation “one in being” does not have this kind of multivalence. Also, it is believed that the current phrase is not as precise. The English word “being” has a broader meaning than the philosophical term substance. Insofar as my being comes from the Father, one could argue that myself and all creation, all that is, shares “being” with the Father, though we do not share the same interior substance.

⁵Earlier, the creed stated that the Son was “born of the Father before all ages.” Here, in relation to Mary, a different word is used. Christ was not simply “born” of the virgin. He was enfleshed by her, he was “incarnate” by her. Mary’s unique role in our salvation was to provide the humanity, the flesh, for Christ. The new translation makes this more explicit and precise. Also, the new translation changes “by the power of the Holy Spirit” to simply “by the Holy Spirit.” This is what the creed of the Church actually professes. One must be precise in a creed. Christ was not conceived by some emanation of the Holy Spirit, by a removed “power” of the Spirit. Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit himself. The new translation rectifies this potential confusion.

⁶The literal wording of the Latin creed here states only “he suffered and was buried.” The translators inserted “death” for the sake of clarity, and this was approved by Rome. The end of this sentence “in accordance with the scriptures” adheres more closely to the text as given in Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians 15:3-4.

⁷To confess something means more than simply acknowledging it. It means to proclaim it and encourage it upon others. The Latin original is the same verb used in the penitential rite, *confiteor*.

⁸The creed does not intend that we simply sit and wait for the resurrection to come to us, but rather that we are straining forward toward it as well. Sometimes subtle changes bring about increased richness in meaning.

More changes will be reviewed and commented upon in the next issue of the Catholic Missourian.

This is the fifth article...

**Latin? English? What’s the fuss?
What kind of changes? Part II**

This continues the commentary on the changes in the new Mass translation that will affect the assembly’s parts of the Mass.

PART OF MASS	PRESENT TEXT FOR PEOPLE	NEW TEXT FOR PEOPLE
The Apostles’ Creed	<p>I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again.</p> <p>He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.</p>	<p>I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.</p>

Some of the changes made in the Apostles’ Creed have already been given comment in the Nicene Creed. There remain two changes to highlight. First, “he descended into hell.” The original Latin word for “hell” here is *inferos*, literally, “the lower ones,” i.e. the underworld. In early English, this abode of the dead was called “hell.” Thus, the story of Christ in the tomb, descending to the lower regions to free all those from Adam and Eve on who were awaiting redemption, was given the title in medieval times “the harrowing of hell.” Here, “hell” refers to this abode of the dead, and not to a place of eternal damnation.

The second change to mention is the phrase, he rose again “from the dead.” The new version has two phrases: Christ descended to “hell” (*inferos*), and he rose again “from the dead” (*a mortuis*). The current translation only renders one of these phrases and leaves the other out. The new translation pays attention to both. It is important to state that Christ rose “from the dead” because it makes clear that he has conquered death and left behind all traces of it. Because of Christ’s resurrection, there is no death in him at all, and this is the hope for all who follow him!

PART OF MASS	PRESENT TEXT FOR PEOPLE	NEW TEXT FOR PEOPLE
<i>Suscipiat Dominus</i>	May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good, and the good of all his Church.	May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

This is the prayer which the assembly prays at the close of the preparation of the gifts, just before the priest-celebrant begins the preface dialogue. The new translation restores the adjective “holy” to the Church. If the Church is the Body of Christ, and the Body of Christ is holy, then the Church, too, by all means, is holy.

PART OF MASS	PRESENT TEXT FOR PEOPLE	NEW TEXT FOR PEOPLE
Preface Dialogue	<i>Priest:</i> The Lord be with you. <i>People:</i> And also with you. <i>Priest:</i> Lift up your hearts. <i>People:</i> We lift them up to the Lord. <i>Priest:</i> Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. <i>People:</i> It is right to give him thanks and praise.	<i>Priest:</i> The Lord be with you. <i>People:</i> And with your spirit. <i>Priest:</i> Lift up your hearts. <i>People:</i> We lift them up to the Lord. <i>Priest:</i> Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. <i>People:</i> It is right and just.

The first of the two changes made here has received comment in the previous article. The second change is a more accurate rendering of the Latin original. The two adjectives “right” and “just” refer both to the goodness (right) as well as the duty (just) to return thanks to God. These two words also act as prelude to the first words of the prayer which follows (the preface). That prayer begins, “It is truly right and just...”

PART OF MASS	PRESENT TEXT FOR PEOPLE	NEW TEXT FOR PEOPLE
<i>Sanctus</i>	Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might.	Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.

	Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.	Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.
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The current translation is actually taken from the Anglican Book of Common Prayer. The new version is not only a more accurate account of the original prayer of the Church, but also embodies a more precise echo of Isaiah 6:3. “God of hosts” is a translation of the Latin “Deus *Sabaoth*.” *Sabaoth* is plural and evokes the image of the angelic armies who serve God night and day.

PART OF MASS	PRESENT TEXT FOR PEOPLE	NEW TEXT FOR PEOPLE
Mystery of Faith (formerly the Memorial Acclamation)	<p><i>Priest: Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:</i> <i>People:</i> A – Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.</p> <p><i>or B – Dying you destroyed our death, rising you restored our life.</i> Lord Jesus, come in glory.</p> <p><i>or C – When we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus,</i> until you come in glory.</p> <p><i>or D – Lord, by your cross and resurrection, you have set us free.</i> You are the Savior of the World.</p>	<p><i>Priest: The mystery of faith.</i>¹ <i>People:</i> [Christ has died... a U.S. adaptation yet to be decided by Holy See]</p> <p>A – We proclaim your death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.²</p> <p><i>or B – When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your death, O Lord,</i> until you come again.³</p> <p><i>or C – Save us, Savior of the world,</i> for by your Cross and Resurrection, you have set us free.⁴</p>

My comments are given *per* the “footnotes” in the text above.

¹Prior to the Second Vatican Council, the phrase “the mystery of faith” was not a separate acclamation, but simply part of the Eucharistic Prayer prayed by the priest (actually a part of the Institution Narrative, specifically the words over the Chalice). With the liturgical reforms following the council, Pope Paul VI approved making this phrase the introductory line for an acclamation recited by all. The current English translation

facilitated that shift by adding the words “Let us proclaim” to “the mystery of faith.” The actual text of the Church, however, had never changed. The new translation removes the additions for a couple of reasons: first, in order to be more accurate to the actual prayer of the Church, but second, the shortened phrase can now relate to what has gone before in the prayer as well as to what follows. It is no longer simply an introductory line, but also a proclamation in its own right. The priest prays the words of Christ over the bread and wine, genuflects and then says “The mystery of faith.” This announces to all what is happening on the altar. The assembly responds to the sacrifice of the cross on the altar by proclaiming one of the acclamations that follow.

In the Roman Missal, the Church provides three options for this acclamation by the people that is our response to the great mystery present on the altar. The acclamation “Christ has died...” is not in the Roman Missal. It was created and approved by the U.S. Church (with the blessing of Rome) following the Second Vatican Council. At the present time, Rome has simply approved the translation which is common for the whole English-speaking world. Specific adaptations of each country are still awaiting approval.

²The first acclamation comes almost entirely from 1 Cor. 11:26. The new translation returns to this more biblical rendering. The current translation is rhetorically pleasing, but simply portrays the Church telling Christ what he is doing “Dying, you destroyed our death; rising, you restored our life.” Rather, the Church’s prayer is actually a profession of faith in what Christ has done: “We proclaim your death...and profess your resurrection.” The last line of this acclamation is not a command to Christ as the current translation would have it, “Lord Jesus, come in glory.” Rather, it is a statement of our resolve to profess our faith and never to cease doing so until the Lord returns.

³The changes to the second acclamation are minor adjustments to make it more accurate to the prayer of the Church. This acclamation, too, is a slightly different edit of the same scriptural citation from 1 Cor 11:26 as before.

⁴The third acclamation is also scriptural in origin, from the Gospel of John 4:42 (“We know that this is truly the Savior of the world.”). This is a plea to the Savior, present in the mystery on the altar, to save us by the sacrifice of his cross and resurrection.

The reworking of these three acclamations succeeds in bringing forth more clearly the fact that we are responding to (and addressing!) the mystery present on the altar. The new translation returns to the Church’s intention of drawing the assembly more deeply into the mystery re-presented on the altar. This acclamation is not meant as a wake up call or simply a way to give the people more lines in the Mass. It is an engagement and a response to the mystery of the cross and resurrection on the altar.

PART OF MASS	PRESENT TEXT FOR PEOPLE	NEW TEXT FOR PEOPLE
<i>Ecce Agnus Dei</i>	<i>Priest:</i> This is the Lamb of God who takes away	<i>Priest:</i> Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away

	<p>the sins of the world. Happy are those who are called to his supper. <i>All:</i> Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed.</p>	<p>the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb. <i>All:</i> Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.</p>
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The last translation change which affects the assembly in the Mass is the “Lamb of God.” First, the priest-celebrant’s introduction is slightly different. It begins with the more evocative and poetic “Behold” instead of the prosaic “This is...” One of the goals in the new translation has been to create through language use a greater sense of the sacred, thus “Blessed” replaces “Happy.” The last phrase of the priest’s introduction is a quote from Rev. 19:9: “Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” The new translation brings out more faithfully and clearly the connection between our Eucharist and the heavenly banquet for which we long.

In the original prayer of the Church, the assembly’s response is a quote from Luke 7:6-7. The new translation is more faithful to the scripture which underlies this prayer, calling to mind the faith, humility and reverence of the centurion in Luke’s Gospel who sought the healing power of Jesus, but felt unworthy to have Jesus come under the roof of his house. The Christian who approaches the altar should have the same faith, humility and reverence in preparing to receive the holy Eucharist under the “roof” of our body. Just as the roof is the external shelter for what is most important, so too is our body the “roof” or external shelter for that which is most precious—our soul.

It is important for Catholics to realize how thoroughly scriptural are the prayers and actions of the Mass and indeed all of Catholic liturgy. The new translation does well to allow the underlying scriptural texts to stand forth more strongly, even at the cost of a slightly odd turn of phrase.

Unfortunately, some Catholics—laity and priest alike—will be upset by the upcoming changes. The reasons for their upset may well range from the deeply theological (“I disagree with the vocabulary choice or style”) to the deeply personal (“I have been hurt in the past by Church leaders and their choices, and do not trust their judgments”), or even to the deeply immature (“I don’t like the new translations and I won’t say them!”). I hope that others will be patient with their brothers and sisters who may struggle with these changes. Change is often not easy, and particularly change that affects the way we worship. Worship is such an intensely personal (and communitarian) act, and it stirs up strong emotions. This is ok. It is alright for someone to be upset with the Church. The Church must respond with patience and love and understanding. Are the new translations perfect? By no means. But then, neither is the Church perfect. She has been promised the eternal protection of the One who is all holy and perfect, but in this life, she will

always be on pilgrimage. *Ecclesia semper reformanda* (“The Church is always in need of reform”).

The new translations will bring a different linguistic style and there will be some new vocabulary, and it will take some time to accustom ourselves to it. But perhaps that is also an important lesson in conversion: we should not demand the faith to conform to us, but rather be willing to conform ourselves to the faith. When these new translations are approved by the Holy Father and published for our use, we will be asked by the Church to conform our faith to this particular expression of it, admittedly an imperfect and even stumbling expression of the person of Jesus Christ and the Blessed Trinity. But then, even Latin and Greek stumble to express those divine and mighty mysteries...I hope we can give the new translations a chance to raise and deepen our faith and our understanding of it. They are filled with beautiful images and metaphors from scripture and our tradition. We should give that scripture and tradition a chance to work on and in us.

The next (last) article will cover a few miscellaneous—though important—matters referring to liturgical vocabulary for the new Roman Missal.

Sixth Article...

This is the sixth and final article dealing with the language used in the liturgy. It covers three recent changes all coming from the Holy Father, Pope Benedict himself.

Latin? English? What's the fuss? The Divine Name, *Pro multis* and new Dismissal Formulas

The Divine Name

(affecting such Catholic favorite songs as You are Near, Sing a New Song, and Psalm 25: I lift up my Soul)

Many Catholics were surprised to hear the Holy Father's decree about the divine name of God (Y-HW-H), also called the tetragrammaton (literally, "the four letters"). Impress your friends and neighbors with that one! In short, we are not to pronounce the divine name in the liturgy. As succinctly as possible, I want to sum up the reasons behind this decree.

First, we are referring to the divine name revealed to Moses on Mt. Sinai. Jews and Christians both believe that there is power in a name. When God asked Adam to name the animals, he was giving Adam power over the animals. When Jesus demanded the demon's name in Mk. 5:9, he was gaining power over it in order to expel it. The apostles were able to perform mighty works by the power of Jesus' name (e.g., Lk. 10:17). In the book of Judges 13:18, the angel of the LORD, in response to Manoah's request for his name, responds, "Why do you ask my name, which is mysterious?" The angel is speaking on behalf of God, and so is stating that the divine name is not to be pronounced. Jews will never pronounce the divine name. They always substitute a title in its place, e.g. Adonai or Elohim. This is because for a human being to pronounce the divine name is tantamount to claiming power over God. In St. Paul's great Christological hymn written in his letter to the Philippians 2:6ff, he writes that because Jesus suffered the cross in obedience to the Father, God "bestowed on him the name above every other name...Jesus Christ is LORD." The name bestowed is the divine name. The Father is declaring Jesus to be equal to himself by giving him his own name. Notice that St. Paul uses the title "LORD" as a substitute for the divine name, which he reverently refuses to write, let alone pronounce aloud. Throughout all of Jewish history to this day, the Jews refuse to pronounce the divine name. Throughout all of Christian history, Christians have never pronounced the divine name within the liturgy. It is only in recent decades that certain songs have made bold to use the name, but still today there are no scripture passages and no prayer texts that use the name in the liturgy.

In sum, we do not pronounce the divine name because, 1) theologically, it would claim a power over God which we do not have; 2) throughout all of our history, we have never done so; and 3) out of respect for our Jewish elder brothers in the faith, who consider it blasphemous to do so.

Pro multis

In October 2006, Francis Cardinal Arinze, the prefect for the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, wrote a letter to the presidents of all the bishops' conferences throughout the world. In that letter, he communicated the instructions of Pope Benedict XVI regarding the translation of the Latin words *pro multis* in the Eucharistic Prayers. In the current translation, the Eucharistic Prayer goes as follows:

“Take this, all of you, and drink from it, for this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and eternal covenant; it will be poured out for you and **for all** for the forgiveness of sins.”

The two words in bold are the words in question. The Pope has slightly emended this to the following:

“Take this, all of you, and drink from it, for this is the chalice of my blood, the blood of the new and eternal covenant; which will be poured out for you and **for many** for the forgiveness of sins.”

Though this will seem quite surprising for many at first, there are strong and sound reasons which the Holy Father has given to support this change.

- 1) The Synoptic Gospels (Mt 26,28; Mk 14,24) make specific reference to “many” for whom the Lord is offering the Sacrifice, and this wording has been emphasized by some biblical scholars in connection with the words of the prophet Isaiah (53,11-12). It would have been entirely possible in the Gospel texts to have said “for all” (for example, cf. Luke 12,41); instead, the formula given in the institution narrative is “for many,” and the words have been faithfully translated thus in most modern biblical versions.
- 2) The Roman Rite in Latin has always said *pro multis* (for many) and never *pro omnibus* (for all) in the consecration of the chalice.
- 3) The anaphoras (Eucharistic Prayers) of the various Oriental Rites, whether in Greek, Syriac, Armenian, the Slavic languages, etc., contain the verbal equivalent of the Latin *pro multis* in their respective languages.
- 4) “For many” is a faithful translation of *pro multis*, whereas “for all” is rather an explanation of the sort that belongs properly to catechesis.
- 5) The formula “for all” certainly corresponds to a correct interpretation of the Lord’s intention expressed in the scriptures. Even more, it is a dogma of faith that Christ died on the Cross for all men and women (cf. John 11:52; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Titus 2:11; 1 John 2:2).
- 6) However, the expression “for many” is scriptural, historical, ecumenical, and has the following solid theological interpretation: “for many” is a reminder that, while salvation

is offered to all, all do not accept it. Salvation is not imposed in some kind of mechanical way, against one's free will or participation. It is freely offered **to all** to accept in faith, and **many** do indeed accept it. Some do not. As for those who reject the gift, the Church entrusts them to the mercy of God, but they place themselves outside of the Church's liturgical offering.

7) Lastly, in line with the Instruction *Liturgiam authenticam*, translations should be more faithful to the actual prayer of the Church—the Latin text as given, not as interpreted.

Given all of the reasons listed above, the hope of the Church is that when the faithful hear the words over the Chalice “for many,” they will be inspired to make a personal affirmation of their faith in and desire for the gift of salvation freely offered in Christ Jesus to the whole world.

New Dismissal Formulas

On October 17, 2008 Cardinal Arinze published a communication in the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, that the Holy Father, Pope Benedict, had approved three new formulas for the dismissal at the end of Mass. The current formula is "Ite, missa est," (literally, “Go, you are sent forth.”), now translated as "The Mass is ended, go in peace." The new options are:

- "Ite ad Evangelium Domini annuntiandum" (Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord).
- "Ite in pace, glorificando vita vestra Dominum" (Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life).
- "Ite in pace" (Go in peace).

Father Richard B. Hilgartner, associate director of the Secretariat of Divine Worship for the U.S. Bishops' Conference, said in an interview with *Catholic News Service* that, "the Holy Father had a desire to find ways to express more clearly the connection between what's celebrated in the liturgy and how the faithful live their lives beyond liturgy, that movement from the altar to the world."

The Holy Father's action came in response to one of the propositions put forth by the Bishops who attended the World Synod of Bishops in 2005 on the Eucharist. At the end of the month-long discussions, the Synod participants put together a series of propositions which were presented to the Pope. Usually, the Pope then publishes a document that sums up and responds to the work of the Synod. Proposition 24 of the Synod on the Eucharist recommended new acclamations for the Mass dismissal:

To make more explicit the relationship between Eucharist and mission, which belongs to the heart of this Synod, it is suggested that new dismissal formulas be prepared (solemn blessings, prayers over the people or others), which underline the mission in the world of the faithful who have participated in the Eucharist.

The English translation for these formulas was given the “recognition” from Rome along with the Order of the Mass, though they may not yet be used in an English language Mass until the entire translation is given approval for liturgical use. They are a marvelous pastoral response by the Holy Father. And they are a reminder and clear call to our baptismal duty to be missionaries of the Gospel!