

THE NEW TRANSLATION OF THE ROMAN MISSAL

Sunday October 23

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The changes that the new translation of the Roman Missal will introduce at Sunday Mass on November 27, 2011 are intended to help us deepen our prayer life and energize our commitment as Catholics in the community. The words expressing the Mystery of the Eucharist communicate God's Word to the assembly and they communicate the assembly's prayer and praise to God.

The Mass is a dialogue. It is much more than a dialogue between the priest and the people; for example, ***"The Lord be with you.... And with your spirit"***. Primarily, the Mass is a dialogue between God and God's people gathered in worship. With prayer we express our praise and gratitude for God's blessings; we give God glory; we make our needs known to God; we express our sorrow for our sins and our failings. God speaks to us during Mass in order to teach us, to reconcile us, to encourage us, to give us hope, to forgive us. As one priest put it, ***"Spoken words of the liturgy do more than just communicate truth or articulate sentiments; they must move the heart and lead worshippers to a sense of devotion."*** (Fr. Richard Hilgartner, *Catholic Update*. St. Anthony Messenger, March 2011). Pope Benedict XVI put it this way, ***"A Eucharist which does not pass over into the concrete practice of love is intrinsically fragmented."*** #14 *Deus Caritas Est*, (Vatican 2006)

The prayers in the 1974 Sacramentary were translated for brevity and conciseness. The texts of the Roman Missal offer us a more poetic form of expression. For example, in the Ninth Sunday of Ordinary Time the Opening Prayer from the 1974 Sacramentary reads, ***"Father, your love never fails. Hear our call. Keep us from danger, and provide for all our needs."*** From the Roman Missal, the priest will now say, ***"O God, whose providence never fails in its design, keep from us, we humbly beseech you, all that might harm us and grant all that works for our good."*** The meaning of both texts expresses the same truth, but the Roman Missal is a more robust expression. Also, expressions such as ***"we humbly beseech you"*** which is very common in the new translation assists the worshiper to assume a proper stance before God. Another example from the Second Eucharistic Prayer and before the words of Consecration, the 1974 Sacramentary reads, ***"From age to age you gather a people to yourself, so that from east to west a perfect offering may be made to the glory of your name."*** From the Latin, that same phrase in the Roman Missal is translated, ***"you never cease to gather a people to yourself, so that, from the rising of the sun to its setting, pure sacrifice may be offered to your name."*** For people who live in the far north or deep south this new phrasing is welcome. The imagery of a rising and setting sun is much more evocative, and it accurately renders the Latin text which quotes directly from Psalm 113, ***"From the rising of the sun to its setting, may the name of the Lord be***

praised.”

Many Catholics will notice not much difference in the wording of their prayers and responses. The prayers of course remain familiar such as the Confiteor, Glory to God,,Creed, Responses at the Gospel, the Holy, Holy, Holy, Sign of Peace and Lord I am not worthy. You will notice that in some of these prayers only one word is added while in the longer prayers, such as the Creed as much as twelve additional words have emerged expressing fully the meaning of the original Latin text. In the past few weeks the Diocesan Liturgy Committee has been most helpful by inserting announcements in your Sunday Bulletin explaining the reasons for some textual changes such as ***“And with your Spirit”*** and the triple statement in the Confiteor, ***“through my fault”***. I am most grateful to the Liturgy Committee for their help in this regard and for the many workshops they have hosted in preparation for November 27. Parish Priests may provide you with a Mass Card in the pew with your prayers and responses or you may rely on your Sunday Missal which will contain all the prayers of the Mass according to the Roman Missal.

I welcome the changes in the text of the Mass and I exhort every priest, all liturgical ministers, and every Catholic parishioner to do the same. In the next four weeks I will describe the purpose and meaning of other aspects of the Roman Missal.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
Bishop Richard Grecco,
Diocese of Charlottetown.