

Preparing for the Third Edition of the Roman Missal

As you may have heard, Catholic parishes throughout the United States will be implementing a new English translation of the *Missale Romanum* (Roman Missal) on the First Sunday of Advent, Nov. 27, 2011. The Roman Missal is the ritual text that contains prayers and instructions for the celebration of the Mass. It outlines the acclamations and responses that we proclaim each week during the Liturgy, the Eucharistic prayers that the celebrant says when consecrating the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, and some of the music and chants that we sing during our liturgical celebrations. The forthcoming implementation of the new translations represents the first major changes to the English text in over 35 years.

But how did the text that we currently use come about in the first place? What is the need for a new translation of the Roman Missal now and, most importantly, how will this affect how we celebrate Mass on a daily and weekly basis?

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has set up a Web site at www.usccb.org/romanmissal that outlines the history of the Roman Missal and gives answers to some frequently asked questions. According to the bishops, the Roman Missal “was promulgated by Pope Paul VI in 1970 as the definitive text of the reformed liturgy of the Second Vatican Council. That Latin text, the *editio typica* (typical edition), was translated into various languages for use around the world; the English edition was published in the United States in 1973. The Holy See issued a revised text, the *editio typica altera*, in 1975. Pope John Paul II promulgated the third edition (*editio typica tertia*) of the *Missale Romanum* during the Jubilee Year in 2000.”

“Among other things, the third edition contains prayers for the celebration of recently canonized saints, additional prefaces for the Eucharistic Prayers, additional Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Intentions, and some updated and revised rubrics (instructions) for the celebration of the Mass.”

In 2007, the Congregation for Divine Worship outlined specific rules for the translation of the third edition of the Roman Missal into English. And after the hard work and consultative dialogue of many authoritative groups including the International Commission on English in the Liturgy and the USCCB, and approval by the Vatican, the official English translation is now ready for implementation on the parish level.

In coming issues of this newsletter, we will outline in further detail some of the changes to things we will be hearing and proclaiming during Mass each week starting in November, what they mean, and why they are taking place. While change can sometimes be uncomfortable, please know that these efforts are being made to more closely reflect the original Latin texts of the Roman Missal. As you reflect on these changes, please remain open to the possibility that you will find things to appreciate in the rich language of the new texts. The more you read, study, and pray them, the more familiar and comfortable they will become, and the more you will appreciate the theological depth they convey.

In the meantime, please continue to pray for priests throughout the country as they prepare to implement the new translation of the Roman Missal. And if you'd like to further study the new texts and learn more about the changes, please visit the USCCB's Web site listed above.