

Understanding the New Roman Missal

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

As we continue to prepare for the implementation of the new English translation of the Roman Missal in November, we will focus this month on changes to the Liturgy of the Eucharist – the source and summit of our Catholic Faith.

Much of the Liturgy of the Eucharist is led by the celebrant, and primarily requires the congregation to listen and pray in silence. The majority of the changes to this part of the Mass will revolve around what we hear the priest say, rather than what we will say ourselves. However, there are a few small changes to some of the congregation's acclamations and responses during the Liturgy of the Eucharist that this article will focus on.

The first of these changes will come during the Preparation of the Gifts, when the priest invites us to prayer after washing his hands. Whereas the congregation has traditionally responded by saying, "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," we will now respond in kind, but with the addition of the word "holy" before "Church." The word "holy" appears in the Latin text, and this will also more closely correspond to the description of the Church in the Nicene Creed. As Fr. Paul Turner points out in *Understanding the Revised Mass Texts*, "The reason that the Lord will hear the prayer and accept the sacrifice of the humble priest has to do with the holiness of the Church, which benefits from his prayer" (26).

Another noticeable change will take place during the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer. When the priest says, "The Lord be with you," we will now respond by saying, "And with your spirit," as we have to this greeting in earlier parts of the Mass. And when the priest gives the instruction, "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God," we will now say the words, "It is right and just," instead of "it is right to give him thanks and praise." This is simply a case of the translation being a lot closer to the Latin text – "just a declarative statement without explanation" (Turner 31).

Perhaps the most significant and prevalently utilized change to what we say during the Liturgy of the Eucharist will take place just before the distribution of Holy Communion. Traditionally, when the priest has entered into the "Lamb of God" dialogue, we have responded by saying, "Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed." We will now respond to a revised introduction by the priest by saying, "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed."

The first part of this response will now more clearly correspond to the story in Matthew 8:8 and Luke 7:6, where a Gentile Centurion has asked Jesus to heal his servant. Because Jesus talks directly to the Centurion in Matthew's account, and talks to the Centurion's delegates in Luke's version of the story, the word "enter" was chosen because it works for both accounts of this event (Turner 45-46).

The change in text from the word "I" to "my soul" is meant to more specifically address the type of healing for which we are asking as part of this response. As Fr. Turner says, "In this context, it shows we are not asking for a generic healing or even a physical healing, which could be understood by the word "I." Instead, we are asking for the spiritual healing that alone can cure 'my soul'" (46).

In addition to these modifications, there will be changes in our response during one of the four versions of the Acclamation of Faith, as well as a slight change to the "Holy, Holy, Holy." For more information on these and other changes to the new English translation of the *Missale Romanum*, please visit the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Web site at www.usccb.org/romanmissal.