

From Fr. Michael

On November 27, 2011, the First Sunday of Advent, Catholics throughout the English-speaking world will begin to use a new translation of the Roman Missal – the prayers we use to celebrate the Mass. Here at Saint Bartholomew, we’re doing many things to prepare for this new translation. It is our intention that this period is a time not only to learn new words but also to develop a deeper appreciation of the liturgy we celebrate. To that end, we will be publishing in the bulletin a series of articles written by Joe Paprocki and D. Todd Williamson (used by permission of Loyola Press). This week’s article is entitled:

The Roman Missal Changes – Part 1

Give it To Me Straight: The Introductory Rites

Having laid the groundwork in previous articles for understanding the new Roman Missal changes, let’s take a look at some of the most significant changes in the text, beginning with the Introductory Rites.

Roman Missal changes start with the greeting

The Mass begins with a greeting that this is no ordinary, “Hi! How ya doin?” greeting, but is rather a ritual greeting and response – “The Lord be with you / And with your spirit.” This is not so much a way to say “hello” but more of a way to enter into the liturgical rite by extending a solemn wish to someone undertaking a profound task. In fact, this ritual exchange takes place at several other critical moments in the Mass:

- as we are about to hear the Gospel proclaimed,
- as we enter into the Eucharistic Prayer,
- as we are about to be dismissed.

The priest’s greeting represents his prayer that the Lord be with us as we are about to undertake these profound tasks. Our response, “and with your spirit,” is much more than a “back at ya.” It is our prayer that the Lord be with the priest in his unique role as the ordained celebrant of the liturgy and as the head of the gathered body, i.e., the liturgical assembly. Finally, the words, “and with your spirit” more closely correspond to the Latin and are more consistent with the response as it appears in other languages.

Roman Missal changes to the Penitential Act

Next, we move into the Penitential Act. Note that referring to this as an act rather than a *rite* more strongly conveys the reality that admitting guilt and asking for forgiveness are efficacious actions – i.e., the very uttering of these words achieves the desired effect of true contrition. One of the options for the Penitential Act is the prayer we call the Confiteor (“I confess to almighty God...”). In the revised translation, we will admit that we have *greatly* sinned, echoing a scriptural allusion found in the Latin text – David’s humble admission of his own failings (1 Chronicles 21:8). The translation then includes the phrase, *through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault*, a more direct translation of the words that appear in the Latin. This phrase follows the literary element of repetition found in other parts of the ritual texts – e.g., the *Holy, Holy, Holy* of the Sanctus; the three invocations of *Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy*. These additions will add to a more humble disposition as we prepare to celebrate the liturgy.

Roman Missal changes to the Gloria

We next break into the great song of praise, the Gloria. It is the first part of the Gloria that will now sound slightly different: *Glory to God in the Highest and on earth peace to people of good will*. This is almost a direct quote from Luke’s Gospel (2:14), a good example of the new translation’s emphasis on biblical allusions found in the Latin text. The hymn then follows with words that resemble a litany of praise:

*We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory...”*

As mentioned previously, this is another literary tool of the Latin text which works to build, almost into a crescendo, our praise and thanks to God.