

National Chaplain's Message

Being Open to Changes in Worship

Our Diocese like many others is currently scheduling workshops to prepare for the new English translation of the Roman Missal, which we will all be experiencing probably sometime next year. The translation will take a little getting used to, and it may not totally please everyone. It will adhere more faithfully and accurately to the original Latin text, without omissions, additions, and paraphrases. It will follow to some extent the style of the original Latin and occasionally will sound a bit stilted. We will be hearing English that is more formal and less "everyday," different from what we have been used to.

Translating a text from one language and culture to another is a complex art and science. The translators of the Missal have taken into account the history of the ancient text (a history of which we are often largely unaware), and in some instances they have made clearer the many biblical allusions in the text of the Roman Missal. To say it again, not everyone, at least at first, will welcome this new translation; but many will do so, even while taking issue with one or another word or phrase.

Among the numerous changes, small and large, in the new text, I'd like to mention three in particular. The first is the response of the assembly to the priest's greeting, "The Lord be with you." Instead of answering "and also with you," the people will say, "and with your spirit." This is, of course, the literal translation of the Latin *et cum spiritu tuo*, the original and ancient phrase of the liturgy. This response, by the way, has already been retained in all the major vernacular translations except the English. Our English greeting, "and also with you," does not do full justice to the original, even though the precise meaning of "your spirit" may not be totally clear.

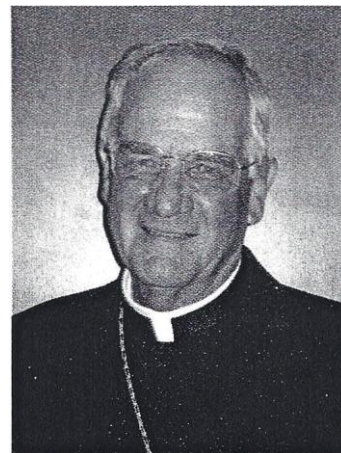
The celebrant's "The Lord be with you" and the response of the assembly is more than just a personal and polite exchange of greetings. The celebrant is praying that the Lord be truly present within the gathered assembly. The assembly is acknowledging that the celebrant is not merely representing himself during the sacred liturgy, but that he genuinely represents Christ who is most truly present and in whose name the priest pronounces the sacred words and performs the sacred actions of the Mass. The response, "and with your spirit," is addressed only to an ordained minister. Thus the word spirit in this context is connected with the conferral of Holy Orders and may possibly refer to the gift of the Spirit received at ordination.

The second change I would mention is found in the so-called Nicene Creed, professed by people and priest after the Gospel in many Masses. Currently we pray, "We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ [...], one in being with the Father." The revised translation is "consubstantial with the Father," a transliteration of the Latin *consustantialem*, which means having the same substance as the Father. While one may argue that "one in being" and "having the same substance" are equivalent, the Holy See considers it preferable, and probably more accurate, to use the Latin term.

Third and last, there is a change in the formula for the consecration of the wine. Presently the priest proclaims, "this is the cup of my blood [...]. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven." The new translation will retain the original Latin, "for many" [*pro multis*]. Theologically it is correct to say that Christ died for all, but it is the phrase "for many" which is found in the Gospels according to Matthew and Mark. And so the new wording conforms to the biblical text.

There is much more to be said, of course, about the revised English translation, and perhaps not everyone will find the topic as interesting as I. But the new wording will be at the center of our prayer and worship for years to come, and I believe that we do best to try to welcome and appreciate it, aware of the fact, as the saying goes, that every translation limps.

God's blessings on you all.



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