

THE NEW TRANSLATION OF THE ROMAN MISSAL

The Dismissal & Sacred Language

After the priest has recited or sung the Prayer after Communion, we arrive at the Concluding Rites. For the last time during the Mass, the priest says, “The Lord be with you,” and we respond, “And with your spirit.”

Then comes the final blessing (sometimes preceded by a prayer or three-fold solemn blessing on special occasions, or by the pontifical blessing if a Bishop is celebrant): “May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”

Following our response of “Amen” to the final blessing, Mass is concluded with the dismissal, said or sung by the priest (or a deacon, if one is present). With the new Missal, our three previous dismissal formulas have been replaced by four options.

The first corresponds to the actual Latin dismissal, which is familiar to many: “*Ite, missa est.*” In fact, this is where the word “Mass” comes from - “*missa est*” - which at its most fundamental level means “it is sent” or “it is the dismissal.” More than a mere declaration that it is time to leave, this has the function of emphasizing our Christian call to “mission” (a word with the same Latin origins).

Pope Benedict XVI spoke of this in *Sacramentum Caritatis*, the Apostolic Exhortation he released in 2007 as a follow-up to the 2005 Bishops' Synod on the Holy Eucharist. He said our participation in the Eucharistic liturgy should translate into a life in imitation of Christ, such that from the sacred liturgy should spring forth the “missionary nature of the Church.”

Previous Translation	New Translation
<i>Priest (or Deacon):</i> The Mass is ended, go in peace. <i>Or:</i> Go in the peace of Christ. <i>Or:</i> Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.	<i>Priest (or Deacon):</i> Go forth, the Mass is ended. <i>Or:</i> Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord. <i>Or:</i> Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life. <i>Or:</i> Go in peace.

He wrote that it would be helpful to “provide new texts” for the final blessing “in order to make this connection clear.” Therefore, the Holy Father himself selected the three other new dismissal formulas, and they were added to the actual Latin text of the Missal.

Our response at the dismissal remains the same: “Thanks be to God.” What else can we do except give thanks to God? He has provided us with an inestimable gift in the holy Mass, and a means by which He draws us and the entire world into closer communion with Him.

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

This Sunday, it is helpful to look again at one of the proper prayers said by the priest. Let us examine the Collect (the opening prayer) from today’s Mass, the Fourth Sunday of Advent.

The old prayer, used last year, went like this:

Previous Translation
Collect, Fourth Sunday of Advent
Lord, fill our hearts with your love, and as you revealed to us by an angel the coming of your Son as man, so lead us through his suffering and death to the glory of his Resurrection.

(Continued...)

The old translation was a descriptive, eloquent prayer that contained significant content about the Annunciation, the Incarnation, and the Paschal Mystery – all in just a few lines.

However, there is something interesting about the new translation of this same prayer, which we heard at Mass today:

New Translation

Collect, Fourth Sunday of Advent

Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord,
your grace into our hearts,
that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ your Son
was made known by the message of an Angel,
may by his Passion and Cross
be brought to the glory of his Resurrection.

Not only does the new translation carry an even more detailed version of the same rich content, but it also does so while preserving the beautiful wording of a traditional Catholic prayer that many readers may recognize: the Angelus. The Angelus is a devotional prayer, said at particular times during the day, which focuses on the salvific mystery of Our Lord’s Incarnation through the lens of the Archangel Gabriel’s appearance to the Blessed Virgin Mary at the Annunciation.

Surely, many people in the pews today recognized the familiar wording as the priest spoke this prayer. However, even most Catholics who are very familiar with the Angelus may never have realized, while we were using the former translation, that this Collect is supposed to be the same prayer said at the conclusion of the Angelus. And it truly is the exact same prayer, for the Latin texts of the Angelus and of this Collect are identical.

How wonderful that the new translation enables this connection to shine through more clearly, especially given the appropriateness of this prayer, one week away from Christmas!

This Collect also illustrates another point – that the recovery of traditional devotional language, such as the language of the Angelus, can be helpful for prayer. Many will recall how hand missals and prayer books decades ago all contained this sort of grand, formal style. This approach was largely abandoned around the time that the previous Mass translation was completed, but it has since seen a resurgence, perhaps precisely because there is a certain timelessness to this manner of speech.

We may consider the use of words like “thy” and “thou” as archaic and odd in conversational English, but they remain fervently prayed and easily memorized in the Our Father, Hail Mary, 10 Commandments, and such hymns as the Notre Dame Alma Mater. There is a timeless appeal to the wording and content of these prayers. Similar things might also be said by Protestants about the King James Version of the Bible. Examples can even be found in the secular world: the Declaration of Independence, the National Anthem, or the Gettysburg Address.

There is a universal sense that these important texts are most properly preserved in a more majestic style of speech, to show that they are exceptional and distinct from the commonplace.

So, we should be attentive not only to the new prayers that we in the pews are learning to speak, but also to all the new prayers that the priest offers aloud at Mass. Especially during special liturgical feasts and seasons, the beauty and richness of these prayers will provide theological depth and give us more to contemplate in both public and private prayer at the Mass.

This series was prepared by the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. For more Roman Missal resources, please visit <http://www.diocesefwsb.org/diocesan-offices/worship-office/roman-missal/>