

THE NEW TRANSLATION OF THE ROMAN MISSAL

The *Sanctus* & “for many”

At the conclusion of the Preface comes the *Sanctus*, which in Latin means “Holy.” The *Sanctus*, like the *Gloria*, is intended to be sung – in fact, many different settings of these Latin texts exist even in Gregorian chant.

New Translation: <i>Sanctus</i> (changes in bold)

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts . Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.
--

The only textual difference from our current version of the *Sanctus* is that “God of power and might” becomes “**God of hosts**.” The word “hosts” refers to a great gathering or multitude, and speaks here of God’s command over the heavenly host of angelic armies.

This reference has a Biblical foundation in Isaiah 6:1-3, where the prophet writes, “I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne... Seraphim were stationed above... ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts!’ they cried one to the other. ‘All the earth is filled with his glory!’”

And in Luke 2:13, a “multitude of the heavenly host” also announces the birth of Jesus to the shepherds.

The words of the final three lines of the *Sanctus* can be found in the Gospel of Matthew, during the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem before His Passion, as the people shouted, “Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest” (Mt 21:9). Versions of this acclamation appear in the other Gospel accounts, and the “Blessed is he...” line comes from Psalm 118, amidst a passage that became understood as a reference to Christ.

The *Sanctus* reminds us that all creatures of “heaven and earth” owe thanksgiving to God (“Eucharist” actually means “thanksgiving”). And because we truly believe that the angels are also present and worshipping with us as we celebrate the Holy Eucharist, then every fiber of our being should be made to reflect the utmost reverence. Therefore, immediately after the *Sanctus*, we kneel. Kneeling is a sign of respect and humility that is distinctly human and bodily – it is something that even the angels, being pure spirit, cannot do.

The Eucharistic Prayers

There are four main Eucharistic Prayers used during the Mass. Eucharistic Prayer I (the Roman Canon) was formerly the only Eucharistic Prayer used in Roman Catholic worship. As the name suggests, it came from Rome, and invokes many early Roman Popes and Martyrs (“We honor Linus, Cletus, Clement, Sixtus...”). After the Second Vatican Council, we received Eucharistic Prayers II, III, and IV – all of which also have origins in regional liturgies of the Early Church.

The Eucharistic Prayers are rich texts, and will feature some noteworthy changes. An example comes in Eucharistic Prayer III. There is a familiar line that currently reads: “from east to west, a perfect offering may be made to the glory of your name.” This will instead become a more faithful rendering of Malachi 1:11: “from the rising of the sun to its setting a pure sacrifice may be offered...” While the geographic east-west imagery is beautiful in its own right, it does not carry the full cosmic scope of both space and time implied in the rising and setting of the sun. The new imagery conveys the sense that the Holy Mass and the one Sacrifice of Jesus Christ have a truly eternal quality.

(Continued...)

Former Translation	New Translation
<p><i>Priest:</i></p> <p>Take this, all of you, and drink from it: this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me.</p>	<p><i>Priest:</i></p> <p>Take this, all of you, and drink from it: for this is the chalice of my Blood, the Blood of the new and eternal covenant, which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in memory of me.</p>

During the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest repeats the words by which Christ instituted the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper, and by which the bread and wine become the true Body and Blood of Christ for us today.

The changes at the consecration of the bread are minor, but there are a few changes in the text for the consecration of the wine (shown above) that are worth explaining.

First is the replacement of “cup” with “chalice.” Both refer to vessels from which we drink, and both terms appear in the Bible. However, “chalice” implies a special kind of cup – one that is precious and set aside for a noble purpose (in this case, for the “new and eternal covenant”).

This is part of the dignified language brought out by the new translation: just as we do not refer to the altar of sacrifice as merely a “table,” so saying “chalice” at this moment emphasizes that the Blood of Christ is no ordinary drink. Such language can help foster greater reverence at the Holy Mass.

A significant change is the revision of the current phrase, “shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven,” to “**poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.**”

One observation regarding the new wording is that the imagery of Blood being “poured out” is more vivid than “shed” - it portrays His Blood as true drink (Jn 6:55) and accentuates that Jesus entirely emptied Himself (Phil 2:7) out of love for us.

However, the more noticeable revision in those same lines is the replacement of “for all” with “**for many.**” At a basic level, “for many” is a faithful translation of the original Latin phrase, “*pro multis.*” Turning to Scripture, Isaiah 53:12 prophesied that the Messiah would take away “the sins of many,” and Christ Himself at the Last Supper also said His Blood would be shed for “many” (Mt 26:28, Mk 14:24).

This does not mean that Christ did not die for the sake of all humanity, for that, too, is indisputable from Scripture. We need only recall 2 Cor 5:15 - “He indeed died for all, so that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.”

Rather, “for many” upholds the reality that each individual must also accept and abide in the grace won by Christ in order to attain eternal life. The recovery of this wording affirms that salvation is not completely automatic.

Nonetheless, it should also not be interpreted as overly restrictive. The fact that Jesus addressed only the Apostles in the Upper Room while saying, “for you and for many,” implies far-reaching inclusion – that many more besides the Twelve would benefit from this new covenant.

So, the revised translation of “*pro multis*” is Scriptural and important, but requires catechesis, due to potential misunderstandings.

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/>