

THE NEW TRANSLATION OF THE ROMAN MISSAL

“And with your spirit”

Let us begin looking at the “Order of Mass” - that is, those parts of the Mass that we pray every week, with only slight variations. For instance, the priest always begins Mass by saying, “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” We respond, “Amen.” By the way, these familiar words will not change with the new Missal!

Immediately after the Sign of the Cross, the celebrant extends one of three different liturgical greetings to the people. The one that is perhaps most commonly used is “The Lord be with you.” It is a familiar line that will remain unchanged with the new translation.

However, our new response will be the first major change in the Order of Mass. Instead of “And also with you,” we will now be saying, “**And with your spirit.**” This same response will also be made at the four other times during Mass when this dialogue occurs: at the reading of the Gospel, at the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer, during the Our Father (after the priest says, “The peace of the Lord be with you always”), and at the conclusion of Mass.

| Current Translation | New Translation |
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| <i>Priest:</i> The Lord be with you. | <i>Priest:</i> The Lord be with you. |
| <i>People:</i> And also with you. | <i>People:</i> And with your spirit. |

Why the change? At the most basic level, “And with your spirit” is the proper translation of the original Latin text: “*Et cum spiritu tuo.*” By correctly expressing this dialogue in English, we are actually aligning our translation with that of all the other major language groups, which have long been translating the Latin properly. For example, in Spanish, the response is “*Y con tu espíritu.*”

But even beyond the linguistic, the recovery of the word “spirit” also carries Scriptural meaning. One form or other of “The Lord be with you” appears multiple times in the Bible, including the greeting given by the Archangel Gabriel to Mary at the Annunciation: “Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you” (Lk 1:28). Then, in the Pauline epistles, multiple variations of “The Lord be with your spirit” are employed as parting words to different church communities. Understood together, this liturgical dialogue in the Mass is an exchange whereby all present - both priest and congregation - ask that the Holy Spirit (whom we call “the Lord, the giver of life” in the Nicene Creed) establish a stronger communion among us.

In addition, for the congregation to answer the priest, “And with your spirit,” is actually a theological statement about what Catholics believe regarding ordained ministers. Through Holy Orders, Christ forever configures the priest's soul to Himself in a special way, by the power of the Holy Spirit. The priest is enabled to act *in persona Christi*, to lead us as head of the gathered Body of Christ in celebrating the Mass. By specifically referencing the priest's spirit, we affirm this transformation and pray for his ministry.

This new response of “And with your spirit” will be a difficult change to remember - perhaps one of the most difficult for us laity. However, it will not take long to grow accustomed to the new wording, especially given its frequency. Above all, we should reflect on how it conveys the content of Sacred Scripture, as well as the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

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/>