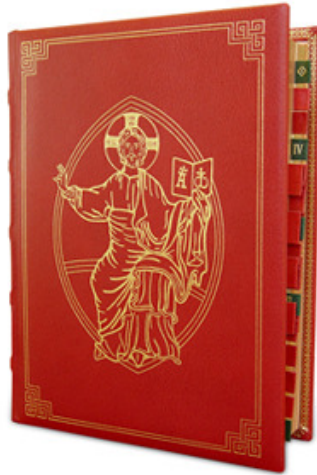


THE NEW TRANSLATION OF THE ROMAN MISSAL

Why a New Translation?

On the First Sunday of Advent - November 27, 2011 - the Roman Catholic Church in the United States will begin using a new English translation of the Roman Missal, the ritual book that contains all the prayers for the Holy Mass.

These new English texts are the culmination of a process that has lasted many years. Our existing English edition of the Mass comes from a hasty initial translation of the “new Mass” in the 1970s, which employed a translation principle that allowed for paraphrasing the official Latin texts.



However, the need to prepare an improved and more careful translation was commonly understood, and it was Blessed John Paul II who sought to ensure that all the vernacular translations of liturgical texts throughout the world would more closely correspond to the original Latin. The Holy Father was an accomplished linguist himself, and had observed major discrepancies in liturgical books during his travels. Often, especially in the English version, entire phrases of the original prayers were being lost in translation! With a renewed emphasis on faithful adherence to the Latin, translations would carry more accurate content, and also maintain greater universality.

The International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) is the organization charged with preparing our new translation - an effort that took almost a full decade to complete, and has involved many phases. As one can imagine, it is a daunting task to coordinate a single translation for English-speaking nations as diverse as **the United States, Canada, England, Wales, Ireland, Scotland, South Africa, Pakistan, India, Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines** - in addi-

tion to communities in places such as **Nigeria, Ghana, Singapore, and Bangladesh**.

In bulletin inserts during the coming weeks, we will examine some of the major changes. We will see that the new prayers are much closer to the original Latin, which remains the official language of the Roman Catholic Church. And by fidelity to the Latin, our liturgical prayer in English is much closer to what is being prayed in other languages. All vernacular translations of the Mass are meant to reflect the Latin texts, which are centuries old and have a tremendous history behind them.

The prayers of the Mass are also very Scriptural in origin, and the new translation will more effectively draw out the Biblical references that have not been as clear in our current translation. Again, accuracy in translation will be a hallmark of the new Missal, and this will bring with it stronger theological content and catechetical opportunities.

Another fruit of the new translation will be its beauty. It will feature a rich, dignified, and often poetic language – markedly different from our everyday conversational English today, or from the style of our current Mass prayers.

It is also essential to keep in mind that while the words we pray at Mass will be different, the Mass itself is not changing. This is not like the dramatic changes after the Second Vatican Council, nor is it a reversal of the liturgical reforms.

Although replacing a set of prayers we have used for over forty years will not be easy, it nonetheless presents a great opportunity for the English-speaking Church. The new translation will make possible an increased sense of beauty and reverence in the sacred liturgy, which will hopefully contribute to our common vocation to holiness.

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/>