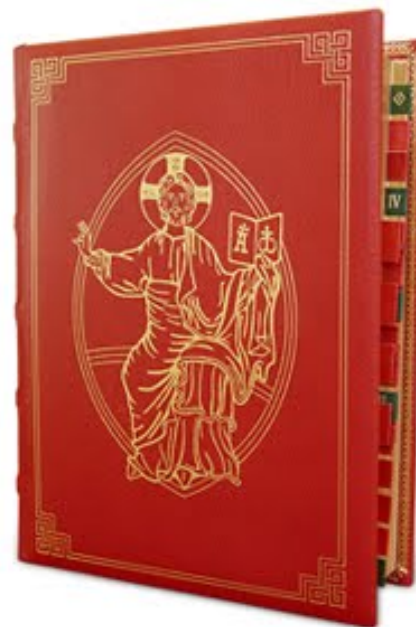


THE NEW TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY MASS: AN INTRODUCTION

By Brian MacMichael

On the First Sunday of Advent next year (Nov. 27, 2011), English-speaking Roman Catholic communities around the world will begin using a new English translation of the Roman Missal. The Vatican's Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments gave its "recognitio," or approval, to the new translation in late April. However, the delivery of the final texts and the announcement of an implementation date were delayed until now, largely in order to incorporate concluding edits recommended by the eleven different English-speaking conferences of bishops that have been working on this project.



The Roman Missal is the ritual book that contains the prayers and instructions for the Holy Mass. The word "missal" is derived from "missa," the Latin word for Mass. In recent years, we have often called this book the "Sacramentary," which is a historical title as well. But the term "Roman Missal" more properly conveys the important fact that we are part of the Roman Rite of the universal Catholic Church. Just as a Byzantine Catholic, for example, has a distinctive manner of worship, so our Roman Rite identity should be integral to how we pray.

This identity helps keep the new translation of the Mass in perspective — the Mass is our central act of Christian worship, which has developed from an apostolic tradition over the course of two millennia. Therefore, it is extremely important to make certain that we pray it well, in a way that gives fitting glory to God and maintains continuity with the Church's worship in centuries past.

These new English texts are the culmination of a discernment process that has lasted many years. Our existing English edition of the Mass is based on the hasty initial translation of the "new Mass" in the 1970s, which then underwent some relatively minor adaptations in a 1985 edition. Still, the need to prepare an

improved and more careful translation was commonly understood, and a completely revised translation was in fact developed and proposed by the late 1990s. However, a fresh start was necessitated by two developments: The announcement of an updated Latin edition of the Roman Missal in 2000 (the Latin editions remain the authoritative versions of the Missal even today), and the subsequent release of a Vatican instruction entitled "Liturgiam Authenticam" ("authentic liturgy").

Begun in 1997 at the request of Pope John Paul II, Liturgiam Authenticam was published in 2001. Having observed major discrepancies in liturgical books during his travels, and being an accomplished linguist himself, the Holy Father recognized a need to provide a guide to ensure that all the vernacular translations of liturgical texts throughout the world would more closely correspond to the original Latin. Often, entire phrases of the original prayers were being lost in translation. With "Liturgiam Authenticam's" renewed emphasis on faithful adherence to the Latin, the respective translations would carry more accurate theological and scriptural content, and also maintain greater universality.

The International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) was the organization charged with preparing our current translation, according to the principles outlined under Pope John Paul II and affirmed under Pope Benedict XVI. In addition, a special committee of bishops, called Vox Clara ("a clear voice"), regularly convened in Rome to advise the Holy See on the English translations. The present translation effort will have taken almost a full decade to complete, and has involved many phases. The national conferences of bishops would examine initial drafts of parts of the Missal, offering recommended changes. Then, ICEL would make revisions and send a new draft to the bishops. Once each section was approved by the conferences, it would be sent to Rome for the "recognitio."

As one can imagine, coordinating a single English translation for so many different countries is a daunting task. Even when comparing American and British idioms, there are numerous clear differences in the way we use words. For example, what we would call a "flashlight" is known as a "torch" in England. Moreover, words can change meaning over time, and particular manners of speech can fall in and out of favor.

Now, imagine the need to develop a single, worthy English translation for use in worship in all these English-speaking nations: the United States, Canada, England, Wales, Ireland, Scotland, South Africa, Pakistan, India, Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines. These are the places where our new translation will be employed, along with many other English-speaking communities across the globe, such as in Ghana, Nigeria, Bangladesh and Singapore.

So, clearly, the work of translating so important a text is a long and extraordinarily tedious process. The translators, bishops, popes and others who have worked so hard to provide us with words suitable for use in the sacred liturgy truly deserve our thanks.

In a series of articles, we will examine the many reasons for the new translation, as well as the tremendous benefits it offers. It will also be important to address the misconceptions or misinformation that have been promoted in the media and by some outspoken critics of the effort. It is essential to keep in mind that the words we pray at Mass will be different, but 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.

The motto offered on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Roman Missal Web site is "New words: A deeper meaning, but the same Mass." That is an apt description, and as we all prepare for the arrival of the new Missal, the faithful are also encouraged to look over the texts and resources available on that Web site (<http://usccb.org/romanmissal/>) — including comparisons of some current and forthcoming versions of Mass prayers.

Although this adjustment from a set of prayers with which we have grown familiar over 40 years will not be easy, it will nonetheless present a great opportunity for the English-speaking Church. We wish to show how the new translation makes possible an increased sense of beauty and reverence in the sacred liturgy, which will hopefully contribute to our common vocation to holiness. Let us pray that the effects of this renewal will be far-reaching, and ultimately enable us to experience a more profound encounter with Christ.

The First Sunday of Advent

By Brian MacMichael

Several weeks ago, we published an introductory article about the new English translation of the Roman Missal, the prayer book for the Holy Mass. All of us will start using this new translation in one year, on the First Sunday of Advent (Nov. 27) in 2011. Advent is the beginning of the Church's liturgical year, therefore offering an ideal time for such an important change, which has been four decades in the making.

There will be a great many benefits to the new translation of the texts of the Mass, and we will examine them in detail in this series of articles. The prayers will be much closer to the original Latin, which remains the official language of the Roman Catholic Church. By fidelity to the Latin, we will also find that our liturgical prayer in English is much closer to what is being prayed in other languages. All the vernacular translations of the Mass are meant to reflect the Latin texts, which are many centuries old and have a tremendous history behind them.

The prayers of the Mass are also very Scriptural in their origins, 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.

The advantages of the new texts are best illustrated by example. The following is the current opening prayer for Mass this Sunday, the First Sunday of Advent:

All-powerful God, increase our strength of will for doing good that Christ may find an eager welcome at His coming and call us to His side in the kingdom of heaven ...

Now, when we begin using the new texts in a year, the same prayer from the same Mass will look like this final draft translation:

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that your faithful may resolve to run forth with righteous deeds to meet your Christ who is coming, so that, gathered at His right hand, they may be worthy to possess the heavenly kingdom ...

What is immediately striking about the new prayer is its eloquence. It is also longer than the current translation, because the translators who worked on the new Missal made every effort to preserve and convey the full content of the Latin. The result is the much grander imagery of not simply waiting to welcome Christ, but running forth to meet Him “with righteous deeds.”

This beautiful prayer is appropriate on several levels. First, it is a terrific way to begin the Advent season, which is actually meant to be a penitential time during which we prepare ourselves for Christmas. We properly welcome the incarnate Messiah by repenting of our sins and seeking Him out, as did the shepherds and the Magi in the Gospels. Imitation of Christ is the goal of our entire lives as Christians, with the ultimate hope of joining the saints in His “heavenly kingdom.”

It also reveals an eschatological trajectory to the Church’s calendar (“eschatology” is the theological focus on the “last things” — death, judgment and eternity). At the end of the liturgical year is the Solemnity of Christ the King, which we celebrated just last Sunday. Christ is the alpha and the omega; the beginning and end.

Finally, this prayer will set a very good tone at its inaugural use on the First Sunday of Advent next year, as we welcome the new English translation of the holy Mass and seek to draw closer to our Lord through a renewed sense of reverence in the sacred liturgy. In the meantime, I encourage individuals or families to consider collecting examples of these new texts to pray at home.

May we resolve to enter more deeply into the words of the Mass over the next 12 months, in the interest of an ever more fruitful encounter with Jesus Christ.

'And with your spirit'

By Brian MacMichael

Last week, we looked at the newly translated opening prayer for Mass on the First Sunday of Advent, which we will start using as part of the revised Roman Missal in a year. Again, right now is a great time to learn about the new English translation of the Mass, because Advent is a liturgical season meant for preparing ourselves to welcome Jesus Christ. And since Christ is especially present to us in the holy sacrifice of the Mass, the words we use during worship are extremely important.

This week, we 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 most common of which is simply, "The Lord be with you." That, too, will remain the same. 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 new 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, and at the conclusion of Mass.

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."

There is an oft-told story of how Venerable Pope John Paul II initiated this new English translation. John Paul II was renowned as a world traveler, and he was also a very accomplished linguist, fluent in eight languages. During his trips abroad, he prayed from many different translations of the Roman Missal, and he began to notice discrepancies. So, he examined multiple books side by side — such texts as the Latin, Italian, German, French, Polish and English. What he discovered was that our existing English translation was in need of considerable improvement. It is likely that the Holy Father's attention was particularly drawn to the fact that the English did not say, "And with your spirit."

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 we Catholics believe regarding ordained ministers. The catechism (No. 367) speaks of how “spirit” can refer to an elevation of the soul, whereby the soul “is raised beyond all it deserves to communion with God.” Through Holy Orders, Christ has forever configured the priest’s soul to Himself in a special way, by the power of the Holy Spirit. By specifically referencing the priest’s spirit, we can 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. Although it is a seemingly minor adjustment, our current response has become second nature to us. 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.

The Confiteor

By Brian MacMichael

Last week, we began looking at the Introductory Rites in the Order of Mass by focusing on the change in the greeting from “And also with you” to “And with your spirit.”

Now, we will turn to the Penitential Act, which immediately follows the greeting dialogue. The major changes occur in the first form of the Penitential Act, which is the commonly used formula called the Confiteor. “Confiteor” is Latin for “I confess,” and comes from the first line of the prayer. Here is the full text of the newly translated Confiteor:

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have **greatly sinned** in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, **through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault**; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

Most of this text remains the same as the version we presently use. However, the two key modifications are highlighted in bold. The first replaces our current wording of “I have sinned through my own fault” with “I have greatly sinned.” This is another instance of the new text reflecting the Latin wording, which includes the adverb “nimis,” meaning “very much.”

The second set of changes occurs about halfway through the Confiteor, and is more significant. The words removed from the first section, “through my own fault,” are being returned to their proper place here, but with the expression’s full content. “Through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault” is a direct translation of the Latin phrase “mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa.” As a well-known line from the old Latin Mass, “mea culpa” has even become a familiar part of our secular parlance, by which one admits having made a mistake. Some might wonder, why this seemingly heavier emphasis on sin in the revised English Confiteor? Looking beyond simple fidelity to the Latin, language that calls to mind our fallen human nature is actually very important in the sacred liturgy. It is good to acknowledge our sinfulness at particular times, just as we should do at sacramental Confession. This Penitential Act is akin to the Act of Contrition, whereby an individual pledges remorse for not loving God and neighbor as he or she ought.

Unlike Reconciliation, we are not sacramentally absolved of our sins at this point during the holy Mass. Nevertheless, it is an appropriate way to “prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries,” as the priest says at the beginning of the Penitential Act. We must strive to approach the altar of God with humble dispositions, and should receive the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ free from grave sin, and in a worthy fashion, as St. Paul exhorts us in 1 Cor. 11:23-29.

There is an element of the Confiteor that is often neglected, and that is the fact that the faithful are supposed to “strike their breast” while saying, “through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault.” This prescribed “striking” is a symbolic tapping of the chest with a clenched fist over one’s heart, signifying remorse. This is part of the beauty of our Catholic liturgy — sacramental words are complemented by sacramental actions.

The striking of the breast is supposed to be done even now, within the current translation of the Confiteor. Hopefully, it will become more natural with the new translation, especially since a threefold striking was the universal practice during the “*mea culpa ...*” of the old Latin Mass, and remains ingrained in the memories of many.

The Confiteor ends with the individual asking for the prayers of the saints and the rest of the congregation, led by the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose sinlessness by the grace of God is the perfect model for our own Christian lives.

The conclusion of the entire Act of Penitence remains the same, with the Confiteor always being followed by the invocation, “Lord, have mercy ... Christ, have mercy...Lord, have mercy.” This supplication may also be said in the original tongue: “Kyrie, eleison ... Christe, eleison ... Kyrie, eleison.” The Kyrie is actually not Latin, but Greek, which is a still more ancient liturgical language.

Please consider saving the new English text of the Confiteor from this article, for use as a regular prayer of contrition with your family (perhaps after a traditional nightly personal examination of conscience), so that we will be ready to enter into it wholeheartedly at Mass next Advent.

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

By Brian MacMichael

We are already nearing the end of Advent, and as the number of penance services and special confession times offered in recent days reminds us, it is important to make good use of the remainder of this season to prepare ourselves spiritually for Christmas. We likewise continue our study and preparation for the new English translation of the Holy Mass, which we will begin using next Advent.

Over the last couple of weeks, we have been examining texts from the Order of Mass — the prayers that are constant from week to week. This week, as we did for the First Sunday of Advent, we will instead examine a prayer from the Proper of the Mass, which includes all the prayers that change depending on the liturgical day or season (such as the Proper of Saints).

The Opening Prayer of the Mass, traditionally called the Collect Prayer, would be considered part of the Proper. It is called the Collect because it “collects” all the people’s prayers from the Introductory Rites of the Mass into a single prayer said by the priest. It also serves to express the character of the particular liturgical celebration.

Let us look at the current Collect for the Fourth Sunday of Advent (there are two that can be used, but this is the primary option given):

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.

We can see that the current translation is a descriptive, eloquent prayer that contains 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 will look like this:

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 the 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.

Many Catholics who are very familiar with the Angelus may never have realized, from our current translation, that this Collect is 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 will enable this connection to shine through more clearly, especially given the appropriateness of this prayer so close to 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 current Mass translation was completed, but 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 even 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 properly preserved in a more majestic style of speech, to show that they are important and distinct from the commonplace.

May we seek this inspiring splendor in Christ and His sacred liturgy as we ready to welcome Him at Christmas!

Christmas

By Brian MacMichael

Christus natus est nobis! Christ is born unto us! After our Advent time of preparation, we rejoice in Jesus Christ's coming at Christmas. The celebration of Christmas is so sacred (it ranks second in the liturgical year after the Easter Triduum), that it is observed with an Octave — that is, eight days, symbolizing a heavenly perfection that transcends our earthly reckoning of a seven-day week. The Octave of Christmas culminates in the solemnity of Mary, Mother of God on Jan. 1.

Although Advent of 2010 is now complete, our preparation must continue for next Advent, when we will begin using the new English translation of the holy Mass. The liturgical observance of Christmas actually provides many opportunities to reflect on the fruits of the new Missal, because the Nativity of the Lord is celebrated with four different sets of Mass texts, corresponding to different times. The Masses of Christmas are: the Vigil in the evening of Dec. 24, the Midnight Mass, the Mass at Dawn on Dec. 25, and Mass during the Day on Dec. 25. Let us examine a couple of the anticipated translations of the proper prayers for Christmas.

The following is the current Prayer over the Offerings for the Christmas Mass at Dawn, said by the celebrant after the gifts of bread and wine are brought forward before the Eucharistic Prayer:

Father, may we follow the example of your Son who became man and lived among us. May we receive the gift of divine life through these offerings here on earth.

The new translation of this same prayer will look like this:

May these gifts, O Lord, we pray, offered on this feast of our Savior's birth, be worthy of the mystery we celebrate: just as he who was born a man shone forth also as God, so may these earthly gifts bring us gifts divine.

The new translation makes explicit reference to the day of Christ's birth, and the entire prayer flows much more poetically. In addition, it maintains the imagery of light that characterizes the prayers of the Christmas Mass at Dawn. Light not only corresponds to the hour of daybreak at which this Mass is celebrated, but also is a revered symbol for Christ. When the prayer says Christ "shone forth also as God," it especially calls to mind the prologue of the Gospel of John, wherein the Word who "was God" became man "and made His dwelling among us" as the light that "shines in the darkness."

Another example is the Collect for Christmas Mass during the Day. This is the current translation, which this year we are hearing for the final time:

Lord God, we praise you for creating man, and still more for restoring him in Christ. Your Son shared our weakness: may we share his glory.

That prayer will be replaced by the new translation next year:

O God, who wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and still more wonderfully restored it, grant, we pray, that we may partake in the divinity of him who humbled himself to share in our humanity.

Once again, in fully conveying the rich content of the original Latin prayer, the new translation achieves both beauty and eloquence, while also expressing the great mystery of the Incarnation more clearly — Christ “humbled Himself (Phil. 2:8) to share in our humanity” so that we might share in the divine nature (2 Pt. 1:4) in heaven.

Certain texts from the Order of Mass also have a special connection to the Nativity. The Gloria, which returns at Christmas after being absent for most of the Advent season, recalls the angels’ chorus of praise before the shepherds on the night of Christ’s birth: “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests.” — Lk. 2:14.

Moreover, at Christmas and on the solemnity of the Annunciation (March 25), we genuflect during the Creed at the words that reference the Incarnation, because these two feasts are the primary liturgical celebrations of Christ’s coming as man, with Christ’s birth observed exactly nine months after the Annunciation. By touching a knee to the ground, we reverence the fact that the Son of God humbled Himself to dwell on earth.

In the weeks to come, we will examine both the Gloria and the Creed in more detail. For now, let us welcome the holy Infant Jesus into our hearts and homes, and ask the incarnate Word to help us readily receive the words of His sacred liturgy with joy.

The Gloria

By Brian MacMichael

Contrary to the secular holiday calendar that advertises Christmas throughout the fall before promptly switching to Valentine's Day décor after the New Year, the liturgical season of Christmas begins with the Nativity and lasts until the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord (Jan. 9 this year). Within this season is also the Solemnity of the Epiphany, when we commemorate the coming of the Magi (who represent the Gentiles) to visit the Child Jesus. All of these events — the Nativity, the Epiphany, and the Baptism of the Lord — involve God revealing or manifesting Himself to the world and mankind.

In a sense, we can prepare for the new English translation of the Roman Missal as a gift that provides a fuller manifestation of truth and beauty, such that we may recognize and encounter the Divine more readily in the prayers of the sacred liturgy.

This week, we continue our study of the Order of Mass by examining parts of the Gloria, which the General Instruction of the Roman Missal describes as "a very ancient and venerable hymn in which the Church, gathered together in the Holy Spirit, glorifies and entreats God the Father and the Lamb." The Gloria dates back to the early Church, and should be sung on all Sundays outside Advent and Lent, as well as on feasts, solemnities and certain special celebrations.

The following is the full text of the newly-translated Gloria:

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Much of the text of the Gloria comes from Scripture: we previously noted how the

first lines are derived from the angels heralding the glad tidings of Christ's birth in Luke 2:14 — "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests." The opening words of "Glory to God in the highest" also correspond to the Latin, "Gloria in excelsis Deo" (a phrase universally familiar from the popular Christmas carol, "Angels We Have Heard on High").

There are clearly substantial differences between this new text and the Gloria translation that we have been using. The current text reads, "peace to His people on earth," which the new liturgical text expands to "on earth peace to people of good will." It helps to know that certain translations of the Bible render Luke 2:14 as "... on earth peace, good will toward men" or "... peace among those in whom He is well pleased." The new translation of the Gloria is a richer reference to the fact that the Messiah's coming brings the world a higher order of divine peace that only the incarnate Son of God can bestow. Those who live in accordance with God's will and receive His grace shall experience the fullness of this peace.

Turning to the second sentence of the new Gloria, we notice something striking — the new translation recovers entire phrases that were left out of the current translation. Right now, we sing, "we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory." However, the Latin text of the hymn offers five successive ways in which we should pay homage to God: "We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory." In a general sense, it is true that these all convey the same idea of worshiping God. But liturgical prayer is enhanced by poetic repetition, and these five descriptions of worship do hold distinct connotations if examined closely. Together, they combine to express the extent to which it is our Christian duty to give "glory to God."

Next time, we shall examine the second half of the Gloria, as well as some implications that the new text carries for sacred music.

Gloria text reproduced with permission of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy.

The Gloria

By Brian MacMichael

After examining the first part of the Gloria last week, we turn to the second half of this beautiful, ancient hymn. It is helpful once again to reproduce the entire text of the new Gloria translation:

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The first half of the hymn is addressed to God the Father, whereas the remainder is addressed to God the Son. Right at the beginning, we notice a change, with “only Son of the Father” being replaced by the title, “Only Begotten Son.” The phrase “Son of the Father” is moved to after “Lord God, Lamb of God.”

The addition of “Only Begotten Son” recovers a key phrase from the Latin text — “Fili Unigenite.” This is a venerable title of Jesus Christ, which speaks of the fact that the Son of God comes forth from the Father, yet is no less an eternal Person of the Divine Trinity. We may draw a connection to the Nicene Creed, in which we profess that Jesus Christ is “begotten, not made.”

The subsequent lines contain the final changes in the new Gloria. Unlike our current translation, this text includes two lines (rather than one) that begin with “you take away the sins of the world,” thereby reflecting the Latin text. By regaining this line and an additional “have mercy on us” in the next line, the new translation features a classic threefold structure of supplication: “have mercy on us ... receive our prayer ... have mercy on us.” We also see this sort of structure in the Kyrie and Lamb of God.

In addition, there is a slight change within the phrase, “you take away the sins of the world” (which comes from John 1:29). The current translation has “sin of the world,” while the new translation will have the plural, “sins” (in Latin, “peccata”). Though a seemingly minor change, it does give greater emphasis to the fact that Christ does not just conquer sin in general, but also forgives all our individual sins.

Having examined the text of the Gloria, it is appropriate to say a few words about the musical implications. The new translation of the Order of Mass will, of course, necessitate that new sung settings be written for the parts of the Mass. Due to substantial changes in wording, the Gloria will be the most challenging piece for sacred music composers to render in English. For instance, the fivefold description of worship — “We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory” — is quite different from the current phrasing. It is important to recognize that the Gloria really should be sung whenever possible — it is a hymn, after all. The text of the Gloria is also most clearly expressed when it is sung straight through (“through-composed”) without refrains (i.e., repetition of the opening line). This maintains its overall structure and flow. Recall again that the first half is addressed to the Father, and the second half to the Son — interjecting lines from one part into another disrupts the content.

Having musical settings that are simple to learn, yet very beautiful, will contribute greatly to making Mass more reverent and giving proper glory to God. The best-known Latin chant version of the “Gloria in excelsis Deo” (the one from Mass VIII) is both simple and sublime, allowing the singer to linger gracefully upon such phrases as the aforementioned five descriptions of worship, all within the fluid rhythm of Gregorian chant. Official, intuitive English chant versions of the Gloria and other Mass parts have also been developed, drawing inspiration from various traditional Latin settings.

The new translation will present many similar opportunities in the area of sacred music.

Gloria text reproduced with permission of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy.

The Creed, Part I

By Brian MacMichael

Our look at the new translation of the Order of Mass continues with the Nicene Creed, which is a profession, or “symbol,” of the truths of the Christian faith. This Creed was originally adopted at the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325 and then updated at the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381, during times in which clarifying right doctrine was especially important for the Church. It is therefore also referred to as the “Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed.” (The “Filioque” clause, by which the Catholic Church affirms that the Holy Spirit “proceeds from the Father and the Son,” was recognized later.)

The Nicene Creed is used at all Masses on Sundays and solemnities (although the older, shorter Apostles’ Creed will also be an option with the new Missal), and it may be recited or even sung, just as the Latin text was chanted. The following is the complete new English text of the Nicene Creed, with changes in bold:

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of **all things visible and invisible.**

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only **Begotten** Son of God, **born** of the Father **before all ages.** God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, **consubstantial** with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

and by the Holy Spirit **was incarnate** of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, **he suffered death** and was buried, **and rose again on the third day** in **accordance** with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, **who** with the Father and the Son is **adored** and glorified, **who** has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. **I confess** one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins **and I look forward** to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen

The first major change is difficult to miss: the Creed will now say "I believe" instead of "We believe." Other language groups have been using "I believe" in the vernacular, because it is a straightforward translation of the ancient Latin text, which begins with "Credo in unum Deum" ("I believe in one God"). The Catechism of the Catholic Church offers a reflection on this phrase: "Whoever says 'I believe' says 'I pledge myself to what we believe.'" — no. 185. It is a recurring opportunity to reaffirm one's personal faith, just as when individuals respond, "I do," if there is a renewal of baptismal promises during Mass.

The next change is the line, "all things visible and invisible," which is currently "seen and unseen." The Latin "visibílium" and "invisibílium" convey a more specific demarcation between the bodily and the spiritual realms. For instance, a child playing hide-and-seek may be unseen yet is still considered visible, whereas one's guardian angel is indeed invisible by nature.

In addition, the new Creed translation recovers Christ's title, "Only Begotten Son" ("Fili Unigenite"), which we also saw in the revised Gloria. To say the Son is "born of the Father before all ages" is a very profound theological truth, for the Son is not "born" in the human sense of beginning one's life, but eternally proceeds from the Father while being always fully God.

This observation leads us to a major wording change: from "one in being" to "consubstantial with the Father." "Consubstantial" ("consubstantialém" in the Latin text) is an unusual word that will require some catechesis, but it is a crucial early theological term, asserting that the Son is of the "same substance" with the Father — meaning He equally shares the Father's divinity as a Person of the Holy Trinity.

Although it carries the same basic meaning as "one in being," the more precise use of "consubstantial" is an acknowledgement of how the Greek equivalent of the word was so important for safeguarding orthodoxy in the Early Church. In the 4th century, the description "homoousios" ("same substance") was affirmed over "homoiousios" ("like substance"). The reality of who Christ is thus hinged upon a single letter!

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The Creed, Part 2

By Brian MacMichael

Last week, we reviewed the origins of the Creed, and began looking at the changes in the new translation, such as “I believe,” and “consubstantial.” Now, we will look at a few additional elements of this ancient profession of faith. Once again, the newly translated Nicene Creed is fully reproduced below, changes in bold:

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of **all things visible and invisible**.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only **Begotten** Son of God, **born** of the Father **before all ages**. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, **consubstantial** with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

and by the Holy Spirit **was incarnate** of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, **he suffered death** and was buried, **and rose again on the third day** in **accordance** with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, **who** with the Father and the Son is **adored** and glorified, **who** has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. **I confess** one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins **and I look forward** to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen

In looking at the Creed as a whole, we recognize a definite structure: the first section speaks of God the Father, the second focuses on the Son, the third on the Holy Spirit, and the fourth on the Church. The portion on God the Son is by far the longest, for as we have seen previously, the need to affirm right doctrine about Jesus Christ was of utmost importance in the Early Church.

Let us turn to the phrase that stands alone in the middle of the Creed: “and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.” Our current translation reads, “by the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary,

and became man.” This simple change from “born” to “incarnate” is perhaps the most important amendment in the new text of the Creed, because it more accurately conveys the truth of the Incarnation — when the Son of God took flesh.

The current wording can easily be interpreted to mean that Christ did not actually become man until the moment He was born. Of course, the reality is that the Son of God took on human nature from the moment of His conception in the Blessed Virgin Mary’s womb, at the Annunciation. The Lord’s birth in Bethlehem is certainly a profound, public epiphany; but Mary’s “yes” to the Archangel Gabriel in Nazareth is understood as the moment when the Son first “came down from heaven” to dwell among us. In using the term, “incarnate,” the new translation leaves no ambiguity.

The significance of this line is also underscored by the fact that the faithful are supposed to make a “profound bow” (that is, a bow of the body from the waist) while reciting it, as an expression of reverence towards the great mystery of the Incarnation. This gesture is not something new with the coming translation — we all should be doing it even now whenever the Creed is recited, though many are unaware of this.

Although it is not a change, there is an interesting significance to the subsequent mention of Pontius Pilate in the Creed. It functions to affirm and profess the authenticity of the events surrounding Christ’s Passion by situating them within a definite historical context — when Pilate was Roman governor of Judea.

There are a handful of remaining minor changes in the new Creed translation. Describing the Resurrection as being “in accordance with the Scriptures” speaks inclusively of the New Testament, in addition to “fulfillment” of Old Testament prophecy surrounding Christ’s rising. Towards the end, “I confess one baptism” carries more conviction than “acknowledge.”

And by saying, “I look forward to the resurrection of the dead,” one expresses a sincere desire, rather than simply “looking for” the resurrection. The Latin “exspecto” conveys a sense of anxious waiting and expectation!

Creed text reproduced with permission of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

By Brian MacMichael

We continue our review of the upcoming translation changes in the Order of Mass by starting into the Liturgy of the Eucharist, which begins with the Preparation of the Gifts. When the gifts of bread and wine are placed upon the altar and raised by the priest as an offering to God, we often hear two prayers spoken aloud over each element (they can also be spoken quietly by the priest).

The current versions of these two prayers are very familiar, so it is easy to see that the differences (shown in bold) are relatively minor. The following is the new translation of the prayer spoken when the priest lifts the paten (the sacred vessel that holds the unleavened bread):

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation, **for** through your goodness we have **received the bread we offer you: fruit of the earth** and **work of human hands**, it will become for us the bread of life.

And this will be the new prayer at the lifting of the chalice:

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation, **for** through your goodness we have **received the wine we offer you: fruit of the vine** and work of human hands, it will become our spiritual drink.

The people's response to both prayers remains, "Blessed be God for ever."

These prayers over the bread and wine are very important, because they express the sacramental reality of the sacred liturgy. Through our human work amidst creation, we offer back to God what is already His (the new translation highlights that we first "received" these gifts from Him), and He brings it to its heavenly fulfillment. In an overarching sense, this applies to our entire Christian lives on earth. Just as the bread and wine become Christ's Body and Blood, we look forward to our resurrection in glorified bodies (as we profess in the Creed), and also to the perfection of all creation in the heavenly Jerusalem.

After reciting a couple quiet prayers for humility and purity, the priest then washes his hands, and extends this invitation to prayer:

Pray, brethren (brothers and sisters), that **my sacrifice and yours** may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

Whereas the current translation has “our sacrifice,” the new translation is changed to “my sacrifice and yours.” This seemingly slight distinction, found in the original Latin, actually conveys the reality that those who are gathered offer the holy sacrifice of the Mass in different ways. The priest offers it on our behalf in a special manner, in persona Christi (in the person of Christ), by virtue of his ordination.

But those of us in the pews are not idle spectators. The Second Vatican Council’s Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy no. 48 says that the faithful should be “conscious” participants “by offering the Immaculate Victim, not only through the hands of the priest, but also with him, they should learn also to offer themselves.”

This call to join ourselves to the action of the priest is answered when the people stand and make the following response:

May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his **holy** Church.

The addition of “holy” reminds us that the Church belongs to Christ, and is founded on His grace. Afterwards comes the priest’s “Prayer over the Offerings” — part of the proper prayers that change depending on the liturgical day. Just as with the Collects at the beginning of Mass, many of these will feature richer and fuller content.

The Eucharistic Prayer itself then begins with this dialogue:

Priest: The Lord be with you. People: **And with your spirit.** Priest: Lift up your hearts. People: We lift them up to the Lord. Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. People: **It is right and just.**

Of the two highlighted changes, we have already seen “And with your spirit.” The phrase, “It is right and just,” is a simple rendering of the Latin, “Dignum et iustum est,” emphasizing the fact that it is fitting and fair (“just”) to give thanks to God, since He is both our Creator and Redeemer.

This dialogue is followed by the Preface, a more lengthy prayer that can vary depending on the liturgical occasion. Most Prefaces in the new translation expand upon the words of the preceding dialogue by beginning, “It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks.”

Eucharistic Prayer, Part 1

By Brian MacMichael

Last week, we began looking at the new translations we shall encounter in the Liturgy of the Eucharist, and we made our way to the Preface. 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 the Latin text exist even in Gregorian chant. Here is the English translation we will begin singing this Advent:

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 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 announced the birth of Jesus to the shepherds.

The words of the final three lines 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 Gospels, 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 on “heaven and earth” owe thanksgiving to God (“Eucharist” actually means “thanksgiving”). And if we truly believe that the angels are also present and worshiping with us as we celebrate the Holy Eucharist, then every fiber of our being should 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.

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 was used in 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, but here we will examine just a couple of noteworthy translation changes. The first is in Eucharistic Prayer II, when the priest asks God, "Make holy, therefore, these gifts, we pray, by sending down your Spirit upon them like the dewfall." This new mention of "dewfall" may sound odd, but it is actually a powerful Biblical image. In Exodus 16, the Lord tells Moses that He will rain down a daily portion of bread, which would appear as "dew" in the morning. Numbers 11:9 says, "When the **dew fell** upon the camp in the night, the manna fell with it."

The Eucharistic connection between manna and the dew becomes even more profound when we consider that the Our Father, which we pray before Holy Communion, also speaks of our daily bread. The manna was only to be gathered as a daily portion, in order to cultivate complete trust in the Lord. The Eucharist, as the fulfillment of the manna, is our constant recourse and sustenance.

The second 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.

Eucharistic Prayer, Part 2

By Brian MacMichael

We continue our overview of the new translations in the Eucharistic Prayer by looking at the revised texts for the words of consecration, also known as the words of institution. At every Mass, the priest repeats these 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 following are the words of consecration over the bread and wine, with changes in bold.

Take this, all of you, and eat of it, **for** this is my Body, which will be given up for you.

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.

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 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, 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.” 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 most noticeable revision in those same lines is the replacement of “for all” with “for many.” At the most basic level, “for many” is a faithful translation of the original Latin phrase, “pro multis.” Moreover, Isaiah 53:12 prophesied that the Messiah would take away “the sins of many,” and Christ Himself 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 is indisputable from Scripture. Rather, it 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 the wording, “for many,” affirms that salvation is not completely automatic.

Nonetheless, it should not be interpreted as overly restrictive, either. The fact that Jesus was addressing 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 important, but may require some of the most careful catechesis, due to potential misunderstandings.

Then, after the consecration, the priest will simply announce, “The mystery of faith” (“Mysterium fidei”) — a declarative statement about the Eucharist now present. Venerable Pope John Paul II reflected on these words in his encyclical, “Ecclesia de Eucharistia,” writing that the very thought of the mysterious gift of the Holy Eucharist should fill us with “profound amazement and gratitude.” In response, the people shall make one of these acclamations:

We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.

Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.

All three are rooted in Scripture (1 Cor 11:26, Jn 4:42). But what is conspicuously absent is the popular current acclamation, “Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.” This line, although powerful, is not found in the Latin. In addition, it does not directly address Christ made present in the Blessed Sacrament, nor does it speak of our relationship with Him, as the others do.

The Communion Rite

By Brian MacMichael

This week, we review the Communion Rite as it appears in the new Roman Missal. Following the people's "Amen" at the end of the Eucharistic Prayer, we begin the Communion Rite with the recitation or singing of the Our Father.

Most will be pleased to hear that the text of the Lord's Prayer itself (as well as our familiar English chant setting) will remain unchanged. Not only is the prayer a sufficient translation of the Latin "Pater noster," but the devotional language of the Our Father (complete with phrases like "Who art in heaven" and "hallowed be Thy name") has also become a deeply ingrained and rich part of our vernacular prayer. Every English-speaking Christian knows this prayer, and it is used a great deal outside of the Holy Mass.

However, the priest's words before, during, and after the Our Father will feature some changes. For instance, the current translation offers three options for the priest's introduction to the Our Father, but the new translation will match the single Latin line in saying, "At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say ..." To address our almighty, transcendent Creator as "Father" is actually an incredible thing, for it affirms a tender and personal aspect to our relationship with Him. And we do this at the direction of His Son — this is why we "dare to" use the name, "Father."

After the sign of peace (which should always be shared in a dignified fashion, for it is Christ's peace — not our own — that we impart here), we sing the Agnus Dei ("Lamb of God") as the priest breaks the sacred host. The Agnus Dei text remains unchanged as well, though it is always good to recall its origin in the words of John the Baptist, as he heralds Christ's arrival at the River Jordan: "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." — Jn 1:29.

That passage from the Gospel of John is also embedded in the subsequent line spoken by the priest, while he holds the host over the chalice. Here is the new text, with changes in bold:

Behold the Lamb of God, **behold him** who takes away the sins of the world. **Blessed** are those **called to the supper of the Lamb**.

The new translation recovers the word, "behold," which also evokes the words of Pilate to the crowd in presenting the scourged Jesus: "Behold, the man" ("Ecce

homo” — Jn 19:5). The Holy Eucharist is a re-presentation of that same sacrificial Victim, and our partaking in it is a foretaste of the heavenly wedding banquet of the Lamb. — Rev 19:9. Then come the words we pray in response, before the distribution of Holy Communion begins:

Lord, I am not worthy **that you should enter under my roof**, but only say the word and **my soul** shall be healed.

The replacement of our current, relatively terse “not worthy to receive you” with the bolded line is a significant change. The new line comes directly from the Gospels, particularly Matthew 8:8, in which the faith-filled centurion begs Jesus to heal his paralyzed servant: “Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof; only say the word and my servant will be healed.” It is therefore a Biblical text that conveys humanity’s unworthiness on account of sin, and our need for sincere humility before receiving the Holy Eucharist.

Nonetheless, speaking of “my roof” may seem strange before Holy Communion, since Christ is coming to us in the form of food — not literally entering into our houses. Certainly the clear association with Matthew Chapter 8 has a figurative intent, but it may also be helpful to recall that St. Paul says, “your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you.” — 1 Cor 6:19.

We are therefore to make our bodies into fitting homes for God’s grace to dwell within our souls. The Eucharist is true food that provides spiritual nourishment, which is why we will refer more specifically to “my soul” in the last line. But this sacramental strength for our souls in turn informs both our mental and physical deeds (recall the Confiteor also incorporated both types of action), such that the totality of our bodies, souls, and lives may become suitable instruments of the Lord.

For the distribution and reception of Holy Communion, the words shall all remain the same: “The Body (or “Blood”) of Christ” with a response of “Amen.”

Next week, we will complete our look at the Order of Mass.

The Concluding Rites

By Brian MacMichael

The Communion Rite, which we examined last week, ends with the Prayer after Communion — the prayer said by the priest after a period of meditative silence following Holy Communion. Like the Collect Prayer at the beginning of the liturgy, the Prayer after Communion is a part of the Proper of the Mass, changing from day to day.

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

Then comes the final blessing (sometimes preceded by a prayer or threefold 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.” While the wording for the final blessing is not changing, it should be noted that the priest does not bestow the blessing by saying, “in the name of the Father...” Rather, by virtue of his ordination, the priest simply invokes the Holy Trinity, and God grants the blessing through His ordained minister. After all, it would not make sense for God to bless us in His own name.

Following our response of “Amen” to the final blessing, Mass is concluded with the dismissal, said by the priest (or a deacon, if one is present). With the new Missal, our three current dismissal formulas will be replaced by these four:

- Go forth, the Mass is ended.
- Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.
- Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.
- Go in peace.

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 document he released after the Bishops’ Synod on the Holy Eucharist. Our participation in the Eucharistic liturgy should translate into a life in imitation of Christ, such that from the sacred liturgy springs forth the “missionary nature of the Church.” He wrote that it would be helpful to “provide new texts” for the prayer final blessing “in order

to make this connection clear.”

Therefore, the Holy Father himself selected the three other beautiful dismissal formulas we see above, and they were added to the 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.

So ends our exploration of the newly translated Order of Mass. There is much more that could be said, but for the moment, let us consider one clear consequence of the new translation: Our priests will have to adapt to far more textual changes than we laity in the pews. Aside from all the prayers in the Order of Mass (including the entirety of the Eucharistic Prayers and a number of priestly prayers we have not examined in detail, some of which are prayed quietly), priests must prepare to offer new prayers from the Proper of the Mass every day.

It will be fascinating to listen attentively to the new translations of these proper prayers, which promise a depth and richness that may not have always been apparent in our current translation. This richness will help priests pray for us with even greater focus and intensity, but priests will also need our prayers, encouragement and understanding as they strive to adjust to the new words of our beloved Mass.

Next week, we will have some closing thoughts on the benefits of the new translation. But to finish this week’s article, we include both the current and anticipated future versions of the Collect for this Sunday, the Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time:

Current: Father, your love never fails. Hear our call. Keep us from danger and provide for all our needs.

New: O God, whose providence never fails in its design, humbly we implore you to banish all that would harm us and to grant all that works for our good.

Final reflection

By Brian MacMichael

Over the last few months, we have studied the upcoming new English translation of the Roman Missal, which we shall begin using on the First Sunday of Advent — Nov. 27, 2011.

Much still needs to be done as we ready ourselves for the implementation, and there will also surely be a little sadness as we bid farewell to the Mass translation we have become accustomed to over the last 40 years. However, despite some opposition and criticisms we may encounter, it is important to keep in mind that the process by which we have received the new Missal has been very methodical and comprehensive. There is never such a thing as a perfect translation, for each language has its own unique character. But many experts and Church leaders have worked diligently over the last decade to ensure we receive the most suitable and accurate translation of all the prayers as possible.

In a very real way, this new Missal should help foster the full, active and conscious participation of the faithful — especially with respect to renewed interior participation at Mass. The rituals and actions of the Mass are not changing; rather, we are receiving richer translations of the original Latin words of the Mass. The new words will require priests and laity alike to be even more attentive to the deep meaning of the prayers.

As we have seen, the new translation will reveal the Scriptural origins of the Mass more powerfully. And although some of the prayers may be longer or more complex than those we use right now, they would not be terribly different in length or style from many sentences among the Pauline readings that we currently hear in the Lectionary.

The new texts also demonstrate the evolution of the Church's understanding of how to use the vernacular most effectively in prayer. In fact, many aspects are a recovery of the devotional language that is familiar from private prayer books. It is an effort to cultivate a "sacred vernacular" — an elevated style of speech that illustrates the significance of the occasion, and helps us enter a context of divine worship. As Pope Paul VI urged in 1969, the language used in the sacred liturgy "should always be worthy of the noble realities it signifies, set apart from the everyday speech of the street and the marketplace."

These elements of the new translation are integral to prayer and worship in the

Roman Rite, which in turn are key to our identity as Roman Catholics. It is this need to maintain a distinctive Catholic identity that makes the new Missal so important. Through it, we will achieve greater unity with Mass translations in other languages. But perhaps more significantly, our new translation of the Mass will help us to set ourselves apart from the culture at large.

It will require us to exercise patience and discipline as we engage the new texts for the first time. It will necessitate deeper study of the faith by presenting the splendor of truth with greater precision. Even if there are difficult words or prayers, their meanings can be taught — and the opportunity to catechize on the depth and mystery found in the words of the Mass can have great evangelizing potential.

What better way to advance the New Evangelization than through the Holy Mass itself? The sacred liturgy is meant to transform and mold us, not vice versa! If we are uneasy with the Church's prayer, perhaps we should strive to understand and enter more fully into that life of prayer.

Particularly as young people today find themselves having to combat radical secularism at every turn, it is of tremendous benefit to worship in a manner that is meant to radiate reverence, truth and beauty unambiguously and abundantly. A renewed expression of the immensity of what happens at the sacred liturgy is essential — this will inspire more seekers of truth to recognize their home in Christ's Church. And ultimately, I believe such beauty in the Mass will lead to an increase in vocations to the holy priesthood. We should therefore approach the new translation with joy, supporting our priests wholeheartedly as they strive to implement the texts.

We began our reflection in Advent, a season of preparation. So it is appropriate that we conclude at the beginning of Lent, another time of heightened preparation and prayer. May we use this season, and all the days until the implementation of the new Missal, to prepare ourselves for a fruitful encounter with the divine Word of God, Jesus Christ, in the words of every Mass. As the new Collect Prayer for Mass on the First Sunday of Lent will say in 2012, may we "grow in understanding of the riches hidden in Christ and by worthy conduct pursue their effects."