

February 11, 2011

Dearest Parishioners,

Part II: A Brief History of the Roman Missal in English

Peace in the Lord. As I have explained to you in two previous letters (September and October 2010 – see these letters on our parish website), the Church is revising the English translation of the Roman Missal. The Roman Missal is the book containing all the prayers of the Mass for the Roman Rite of the Catholic Church as a follow-up to Vatican Council II (1962-65).

Our present Roman Rite Mass (the so-called “Mass of Pope Paul VI”) first went into effect in 1969. The Roman Missal’s original language is Latin; translations, therefore, had to be made into the numerous world languages. The **first translation or edition in the English language** was published in 1970. As revisions were made to the Latin edition of the Roman Missal, so revisions were made to the English edition. Thus, a **second edition** was published in the English language in 1985. This contained some minor revisions of the Mass text. Finally, in the year 2001, a **third edition** of the Roman Missal in Latin was published. Since then, numerous attempts have been made to translate the third Latin edition into English. Finally, the third English edition of the Roman Missal is almost complete and will be officially implemented on **NOVEMBER 27, 2011 – THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT**. In short, this means that the Mass prayers and responses that we are accustomed to praying now will be revised with *slightly different wording*. To put it succinctly: *New Words: A Deeper Meaning, but the Same Mass*.

For *both* the clergy and lay people, we will have to accustom ourselves to new texts and wording. Much of this preparation will come from the parish; however, each parishioner should take the time to educate him/herself. Later this year handy booklets or cards will be available in the pews so that you can read the new text very easily. However, you should also begin informing yourselves: you may read my previous letters on this topic found on our parish website; also be attuned to articles that will be published in our diocesan newspaper, *The Catholic Star Herald*; and, finally, you may familiarize yourself with the new revision by going to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ website -www.usccb.org/romanmissal or to the website of the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions at www.fdlc.org.

My friends, this third edition of the English translation of the Roman Missal will not only affect the people of the United States, but every nation that uses English as an official language: the United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, Nigeria, the Philippines, South Africa, Australia, among others. Thus we are only one part of the greater Church that is going through change. While the latest revision presents some challenges to ingrained habits; in the end, it is a golden opportunity to grow in our understanding of the Mass and to make it more a part of our Catholic life and identity.

Regarding this opportunity, Cardinal George of Chicago has proposed this time of preparation as a “long moment to look again at what the Mass is, at what we are doing to participate fully and actively in its celebration, and how the liturgy connects us to the life of the entire Church for the

sake of the conversion of the world.” He said that if the faithful take the time to “deepen our understanding of ourselves as a priestly people, a eucharistic assembly,” then this time “can be a blessed time for us, bearing good fruit in our life of prayer and service.”

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