

March 21, 2011

Dearest Parishioners,

Part III: Some Final Thoughts on the Roman Missal

Peace in the Lord. This is my fourth and final letter to you regarding the revisions being made to the *Roman Missal* (the official book that contains the prayers of the Mass; the Missalettes in the pews are a condensed version of it). You can read my other letters posted on our parish website at www.churchofstbridget.com. The Roman Missal was revised according to the dictates of Vatican Council II (1962-65), which was a series of meetings of the bishops of the world with Blessed Pope John XXIII (1962) and Pope Paul VI (1963-65). One of the goals of Vatican Council II was to reform the Church's Liturgy. The primary goal of this reform was to promote the active participation of the laity in the Liturgy. The first document of Vatican Council II was The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC) promulgated in 1963. The key paragraph of SC called for people to be led to "that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations called for by the very nature of the liturgy" (SC, article 14). As a result, since Vatican Council II, the Church has revised all its liturgical books regarding the Mass, the Sacraments, and other devotions so as to bring about this fuller, more conscious and active participation. The original liturgical books of the Roman Rite (our parish's rite) were written in Latin and then translated into the various languages of the world. The Roman Missal – which is our main concern here – went through various editions in English. These editions were published in 1969, 1985, and now, the latest, 2011. The latest revision of the *Roman Missal* will take effect on the **FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT, NOVEMBER 27, 2011**. This latest revision will be a more literal English translation, reflecting a more Latinized and somewhat more poetic style. This means that the Mass prayers and responses that we are accustomed to now will be revised with a *slightly different wording*. To put it succinctly: ***New Words: A Deeper Meaning, but the Same Mass.***

Since Vatican Council II, other books associated with the Liturgy were also formulated or revised: the Lectionary of the Mass – the book that contains the readings of the Mass (1969, 1983, 1998, 2001), the Book of the Gospels (2000), the Lectionary for Masses with Children (1993, USA), and the Collection of Masses for the Blessed Virgin Mary (1992). Other liturgical books that were revised in English were: Rite of Baptism for Children (1969), Rite of Penance (1973), Rite of Confirmation (1973), Pastoral Care of the Sick (1972, 1983, USA), Rite of Marriage (1969, 1991), Rite of Ordination (2003), Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside of Mass (1973), Book of Blessings (1989), among others. So, as you see, the *Roman Missal* is only one liturgical book among many that have been revised since Vatican Council II. All these revisions bring about a richer, more extended view of our Catholic faith that fosters to promote a "full, conscious, and active participation" in the liturgy.

As we prepare ourselves to welcome the revised *Roman Missal*, you will receive over the next several months a series of inserts in our parish bulletin explaining the Mass and the revisions. There will also be other initiatives carried out in our parish for particular groups – lectors, Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist, the choir, altar servers, etc. Your leaders will keep you up-to-date on these initiatives. Be attentive, also, 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 at

www.usccb.org/romanmissal or to the website of the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions at www.fdlc.org. Use these aids not only for your own personal growth, but also share them with your families and your prayer groups. Let us journey together and make this an opportune time of grace to grow in our understanding of the most beautiful form of prayer – the Holy Mass.

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Pastor