



Frequently Asked Questions – The New Roman Missal

What is the Roman Missal?

English-speaking, Roman Catholic dioceses in North America will begin using a new translation of the Roman Missal as part of our worship beginning the first Sunday of Advent (November 27, 2011). The Roman Missal is the ritual book used by the priest or bishop during the Mass, which contains all the texts prayed by both the clergy and the people during the celebration of Eucharist (Mass). In Canada, this liturgical book has been called the Sacramentary since the publication of the 1st edition in 1974. With the promulgation of a 3rd edition of the Roman Missal in 2000 by Blessed John Paul II, efforts have been well underway to translate the texts contained in this ritual book into English. The title of this newest edition will be the Roman Missal.

Why is there a new translation of the Roman Missal?

During the Second Vatican Council, the Council Fathers permitted the Mass to be celebrated in the language of the people. Subsequently, there was a rapid process of translating the Mass from Latin into the many languages found throughout world. This enabled the people to more easily understand and to participate more fully in the celebration of the Mass. It was generally agreed that, in due time, the original translation of the Missal would need to be revisited. The promulgation of a 3rd edition of the Roman Missal in 2000 provided a new opportunity to retranslate the original Latin text into English. Forty years of study and reflection have led the translators to use a different standard for translating the ritual texts. The new translation will be implemented at English speaking Masses throughout North America on the 1st Sunday of Advent 2011 (November 27).

Is the Mass changing with the new translation of the Roman Missal?

No, the Mass is not changing from the Order of the Mass (Novus Ordo) promulgated after the Second Vatican Council. The 3rd edition of the Roman Missal is based on the original Latin text from the Holy See, which is the way we celebrate Mass today. The structure of our Mass remains the same. Additional prayers have been added to this newest edition, such as: the many new feast days of saints canonized by Blessed John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI, more prefaces, and additional Masses for various needs and intentions.

While the way we celebrate Mass is not changing, the “sound” of the Mass will be different. Translators have used a more formal approach when translating the ritual texts from Latin into English. As a result, we will notice changes to sentence structure, greater use of scripture references, and some words will replace others that have become familiar. Also, many options found in the 2nd edition will no longer be contained in the 3rd edition due to the more literal, translation methods being employed.

How does this translation differ from the current edition?

The translation guidelines have changed through which the original Latin text (the editio typica) of the 3rd edition of the Roman Missal has been translated into English. An editio typica is a “master copy” of a ritual text produced by the Holy See. It is written in Latin and is meant to be translated into the vernacular by episcopal conferences throughout the world. Earlier editions were translated following the instruction on the translation of liturgical texts called “Comme le Prevoit,” which was issued by the Consilium in 1969. The principle of translation advocated in “Comme le Prevoit” is known as the principle of “dynamic equivalence.” Following this method, translators were concerned not only with the meaning in the original Latin form, but also about how the translated text would be understood by the community for which it was being translated. The 1st and 2nd

English editions of the Roman Missal were not word for word translations of the original text, but were also shaped with attentiveness to common characteristics of the receiving language, such as: style, idioms and colloquialisms.

The new translation of the 3rd edition uses a different approach based on the instruction “Liturgiam Authenticam” issued by the Vatican’s Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments in 2001. The principle of translation advocated by the Congregation in this instruction is called “formal equivalence”. The emphasis is on a word-for-word translation, that is, more direct from the original Latin text. It is hoped that this will preserve a heightened, sacred style in English by maintaining, as much as possible, the structure of the original Latin text, and ensure accuracy between the two languages so that nothing gets “lost in translation.”

Who has been involved in the translation process?

Literally thousands of experts have been involved in the new translation. The International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) has been responsible for translating the Roman Missal from Latin into English. The translated texts were presented in various stages to the English-speaking conferences of Catholic Bishops for approval, comment, clarification, modification, etc. A consultative group of English-speaking bishops called the Vox Clara Committee was formed in 2002 to assist with the implementation of the instruction “Liturgiam Authenticam” and to advise the (Vatican) Holy See’s Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments during the translation process.

When will we use the 3rd edition of the Roman Missal in Canada?

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops has received recognitio (final approval) from the Holy See for all sections of the English translation of the 3rd edition of the Roman Missal for use in Canada. The Permanent Council of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops has agreed that the First Sunday of Advent, November 27, 2011, will be the date for the implementation of this new English translation of the Roman Missal across Canada. Toronto Archbishop, Thomas Collins, has authorized that parishes in the Archdiocese of Toronto may begin to learn the new, sung mass settings and employ them in the liturgy as of September 25, 2011. Other than these settings, the newly translated prayers (collects, prefaces, etc.) of the Missal may not be used without specific permission before the First Sunday of Advent. After the implementation date, the current 2nd edition of the Roman Missal will no longer be used.

What about changes to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal?

In 2002, a new General Instruction of the Roman Missal was produced. It will be implemented at the same time as the 3rd edition of the Roman Missal in Canada. The General Instruction acts as a guideline for the celebration of the Eucharist. There have been some clarifications and adjustments made to this document in order to ensure the fruitful participation of the faithful in the Eucharist.

What will the implementation process look like in the Archdiocese of Toronto?

In the Archdiocese of Toronto, clergy have participated in seminars in both 2010 and 2011 around the new translation of the Roman Missal and the General Instruction. In September 2011, all priests, deacons, and parish staff received extensive materials to assist with introducing the revised texts to their parishioners. Musicians also held several workshops to review the new musical settings that will be adapted with the new translation. These settings have been rehearsed in parishes since late September 2011. Ten public workshops were held throughout the Archdiocese in the fall of 2011 and an extensive website www.archtoronto.org/romanmissal continues to provide additional information. 175,000 brochures outlining the changes have been shipped to parishes to assist Catholics with the new text as of November 27, 2011.

Between January and June 2012, there will be additional opportunities for reflection on our celebration of the Eucharist in order to deepen our appreciation of these new translations and the profound impact the Eucharist has in our lives.