

The Amen Corner

Many users of the English translation of the third edition of the Roman Missal acknowledge some theological gains but criticize its lengthy sentences, unfocused layout, complicated grammatical structures, unidiomatic superlatives, and the absence of prayers composed in the vernacular for the local church. A recently published missal has alleviated many of these problems, which has eased the transition to its country's third edition. Almost everything that English-speaking Catholics want was granted in 2014 to Mexico.

The *Misal Romano* is published in several different versions. Spanish varies around the world even more than English does. There is no Spanish equivalent to the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL), which aims for one common translation among its member countries. Spanish editions of the missal are published independently. This survey reviews those from Spain (2014); Argentina (2009) (also used in Bolivia Chile, Uruguay and Paraguay); Colombia (2008) and Mexico (2014). Spain is still using its 1988 missal, republished every few years.

Layout

Several differences to the layout of the Mexican book are noteworthy. The richness of musical notation in the English edition promotes the singing of dialogues. However, the pages are difficult for the priest to read because so many texts appear twice, and the church still awaits the increase in singing dialogues. None of the Spanish missals includes much music, not even for the prefaces, and it has almost all been relegated to an appendix, even the exsultet.

Collects in previous editions of the *Misal Romano* ended only with the first few words of the concluding formula ("*Por nuestro Señor*"), imitating the Latin typical edition. The rest of the conclusion appeared only once in the *Ordinario de la misa*. But many priests, especially those who had Spanish as a second language, strove to remember the complete formula. Now it appears with every collect of all Spanish-language missals, as it always has in English.

Shortly after the English third edition went to press, the Vatican added the name of St. Joseph to Eucharistic Prayers II, III, and IV. Of the Spanish translations, only the Mexican edition has so far included him in those three prayers.

The four versions of the Eucharistic Prayer for Use in Masses for Various Needs have been renumbered since they first appeared. The present numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 match the old numbers 4, 1, 2 and 3. The missal from Spain retains the earlier sequence, but the revised order is now found in the Colombian and Mexican editions. Spain's translation of these prayers differs considerably from that of Latin America, probably the single greatest discrepancy among the Spanish-language missals.

The Order of Mass includes examples for the third form of the penitential act. These appear in an appendix in English so that the Order of Mass more closely resembles the *Ordo missæ* of the Latin edition. But all the Spanish examples appear within the *Ordinario de la misa*, making them easier to find.

The Amen Corner

The Eucharistic Prayers for Masses with Children were added to the Latin typical edition in 2002 and removed in 2008 because one would never pray them aloud in Latin. The English edition, which imitates the Latin content, excludes them. But they find a home in all the Spanish editions of the missal, even those published in 2014. These eucharistic prayers now have a revised Latin source, which has added an epiclesis to each of them. The English prayers always had an epiclesis because the first translators added it. The revised first eucharistic prayer for masses with children oddly mentions the names of the pope and local bishop twice. The revised Spanish translation faithfully follows the Latin, even though the second mention could be a mistake in the original.

The Order of Mass in all the Spanish missals includes an expanded explanation of the universal prayer, or prayer of the faithful. Whereas the Latin (and English) simply acknowledges when the prayer takes place, the Spanish translations explain its various parts.

Overall, the layout of Mexico's *Misal Romano* takes into consideration some practical needs.

Expansions

All Spanish translations offer a wider variety of commonly spoken texts than the English missal supplies. This has not changed with the publication of Mexico's third edition. For example, following the Latin, the English translation gives three possible forms of the greeting in the introductory rites of the mass. Missals from Spain and Colombia add four seasonal greetings. During Christmas time, for example, the presider may say, "*La paz y amor de Dios, nuestro Padre, que se han manifestado en Cristo, nacido para nuestra salvación, estén con todos ustedes.*" A total of eight possible greetings appears in the Argentine missal. The Mexican missal now offers 25 in all, most of them arranged by season.

Instead of one introduction to the penitential act, Mexico's missal has eight, most of these borrowed from other Spanish missals and rearranged for easier use. The third form of the penitential act has always allowed the free composition of its invocations. The English translation has eight examples of this third formula. The Mexican missal has 29, arranged by season. These include all those from Spain's missal, which Colombia also adopted. The Argentine missal has 40 samples all situated within the Order of Mass. Those that emphasized the sin of the community (for example, "*Por nuestra falta de fe: Señor, ten piedad*") instead of the power of Christ were not carried into Mexico's missal.

In Latin and in English, after the proclamation of the gospel, the people say, "Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ." In all Spanish translations since the Council, when this final dialogue is sung, there are three more possibilities, including, for example, "*Tu palabra, Señor, es lámpara que alumbramos nuestros pasos*".

Two additional options are offered for the *Orate fratres*, again consistent with other Spanish missals. For example, the priest may say, "*Oren, hermanos,*

The Amen Corner

para que, trayendo al altar los gozos y las fatigas de cada día, nos dispongamos a ofrecer el sacrificio agradable a Dios, Padre todopoderoso.”

All the Spanish missals offer three additional introductions for the Lord's Prayer (for example, “*Llenos de alegría por ser hijos de Dios, digamos confiadamente la oración que Cristo nos enseñó*”), except for the Argentine missal, which adds five. All offer three more ways for the deacon or priest to invite the sign of peace. The Spanish missals have been offering five different dismissal formulas, and the Mexican missal has added a sixth: “*En la paz de Cristo, vayan a servir a Dios y a sus hermanos*”). These bear no relationship to the four dismissal formulas that Pope Benedict XVI put into the Latin typical edition in 2008.

Additional expansions appear in the eucharistic prayers. Consistent with other Spanish-language missals, the number of prefaces in Mexico's missal has increased beyond those in the Latin and English editions. Advent has four, not two. Lent has five, not four. Ascension still has two preface options, but another has been added for the days between Ascension and Pentecost. Ordinary Time has ten prefaces, not eight. A preface for masses with baptism has been added, along with a second option for masses with confirmation, though these do not appear in Colombia's missal; the second confirmation preface is also missing from Spain's. All the Spanish missals have a third preface for the most holy eucharist. Curiously, they all add one for the sacrament of penance, the one sacrament that may not be celebrated at mass. All the Spanish missals offer a preface for the anointing of the sick; Mexico's has two of them. All have five prefaces for the Blessed Virgin Mary, not two. All of them have nine common prefaces, not six.

All four main eucharistic prayers in all Spanish missals have more optional inserts than appear in English. In Latin and English the Roman Canon includes special inserts for days such as Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Ascension and Pentecost. The Spanish translations include such inserts for Eucharistic Prayers II and III as well. Spanish inserts exist for occasions such as first communion and for any mass taking place on a Sunday. In Eucharistic Prayer III, for example, the priest using the Mexican missal may add this on any Sunday: “*Atiende los deseos y súplicas de esta familia que has congregado en tu presencia en el domingo, día en que Cristo ha vencido a la muerte y nos ha hecho partícipes de su vida inmortal.*” He may add this to the same eucharistic prayer at a mass when children receive their first communion: “*Ayuda a tus hijos (N. y N.), que por vez primera invitas en este día a participar del pan de vida y del cáliz de salvación, en la mesa de tu familia; concédeles crecer siempre en tu amistad y en la comunión con tu Iglesia.*”

The three possible memorial acclamations each carry their own introductions in Spanish. In this way, the priest may cue the people which acclamation to use. He also has two generic introductions, not one: *Éste es el Misterio de la fe. Or Éste es el Sacramento de nuestra fe.*

The Amen Corner

The Latin third edition of the missal removed the solemn blessings for Lent, in order to promote the usage of the prayer over the people in their place. The English followed suit. However, the Mexican missal still includes solemn blessings for Lent and penitential celebrations. Seven more blessings have been added.

The Spanish-speaking Church has a long postconciliar tradition of possessing expanded options for introductions and prayers at mass. The Mexican third edition of the missal preserves and increases the practice.

Translation

Freedom in the application of *Liturgiam authenticam* is evident throughout the missal. The Vatican's revised rules ask that the original text be translated, insofar as possible, in the most exact manner. More latitude appears in Spanish than in English.

When the English translation was revised, familiar responses, acclamations and hymns changed. This did not happen so much in the Mexican missal. In some places, the only change is from the *vosotros* to the *ustedes* form. Often the very word or phrase that was changed for the third edition in English remains unchanged in Mexico. For example, the second option for the greeting at the beginning of mass is still "*La gracia y la paz de parte de Dios, nuestro Padre, y de Jesucristo, el Señor, estén con todos ustedes*". This better cues the people's response but departs from the biblical source that now appears in English: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

The words that the deacon or priest says when kissing the book of the gospels ("*Las palabras del Evangelio borren nuestros pecados*") still resemble the former English translation, now changed to "Through the words of the Gospel may our sins be wiped away." The word now rendered "consubstantial" in English remains "*de la misma naturaleza del Padre*" in Spanish. In the Apostles' Creed, "hell" was introduced into English where the Spanish still has "*de entre los muertos*." The Spanish equivalent to "my sacrifice and yours" still adds a demonstrative pronoun: "*este sacrificio, mio y de ustedes*". The opening line of the Sanctus in Spanish still includes a main verb (*Santo, Santo, Santo es el Señor*), which was approved in English in 2008, but then rescinded in 2011. The first memorial acclamation in Spanish still includes a petition absent from the Latin: "*¡Ven, Señor Jesus!*" In Spanish the Gloria, the Lamb of God and the priest's invitation to communion all retain the biblical singular form of "*el pecado del mundo*", in place of the liturgical plural form, which now appears in all those places in English: "the sins of the world." In the dialogue before communion, English now includes the words "roof" and "soul", but the Spanish translation remains unchanged: "*Señor, no soy digno de que entres en mi casa, pero una palabra tuya bastará para sanarme*." The English translation of the deacon's command before the final blessing has changed from "Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing" to "Bow down for the blessing," which more correctly commands what the rubrics request: All bow from the waist. However, the

The Amen Corner

Spanish translation still has “*Inclenen la cabeza para recibir la bendición,*” which departs from the Latin original.

More examples abound throughout the Spanish eucharistic prayers. Some Latin words still go untranslated, and some grammatical structures remain simplified. In Eucharistic Prayer II the phrase that now includes “dewfall” in English is unchanged in Spanish: “*con la efusión de tu Espíritu.*” The Spanish translation continues to eliminate numerous occurrences of Latin words such as *dignare, propitius, and quæsumus*, formerly omitted but rendered now in English as “be pleased to,” “graciously” and “we ask.” The same is true of presidential prayers such as the collect for St. Benedict’s day, where the Spanish translation omits any reference to the Latin *quæsumus*. Even superlatives are simplified, such as the four places in Eucharistic Prayer IV where the English now follows the Latin with the form of address “Father most holy;” the Spanish retains “*Padre santo.*” Near the end of eucharistic prayer III no modifiers or capital letters for “apostles” and “saints” appeared in the first English translation, but now they match the Latin: “blessed Apostles and glorious Martyrs.” No such change appears in Spanish. They are still “*los apóstoles y los mártires.*”

Normally the verb “to bless” is intransitive or has “God” as its object. In Eucharistic Prayer IV, though, the priest declares that Jesus blessed bread. The English translation honors this because of Mark 6:41, where Jesus blesses loaves and fish. The Spanish translation, however, keeps the verb intransitive in all the eucharistic prayers.

Although much remains unchanged in Spanish, the word *todos* became *muchos*, as happened in English. The priest, quoting Jesus, says of his blood that it will be shed “for many,” not “for all.”

The Spanish translation always had longer sentences than the first English translation, and these perdure. However, they seem to flow more naturally. For example, in the English Roman Canon, the priest prays this for the living: “For them, we offer you this sacrifice of praise or they offer it for themselves and all who are dear to them: for the redemption of their souls, in hope of health and well-being, and paying their homage to you, the eternal God, living and true.” In Spanish, he prays, “*por ellos y todos los suyos, por el perdón de sus pecados y la salvación que esperan, te ofrecemos, y ellos mismos te ofrecen, este sacrificio de alabanza, a ti, eterno Dios, vivo y verdadero.*” Certain ideas have changed within the sentence, but what it lacks in precision it gains in expression.

The concluding formula to the collect in Spanish remains the same: “*Por nuestro Señor Jesucristo, tu Hijo, que vive y reina contigo en la unidad del Espíritu Santo y es Dios por los siglos de los siglos.*” In spite of ICEL’s efforts, the Vatican did not permit a similar translation in English, one that explicitly identifies Jesus as God (“*y es Dios*”), in keeping with the Latin grammar.

The Spanish translation still shows little evidence of the debate over inclusive language. In two places from the Order of Mass where the English translation offers a choice between “brethren” and “brothers and sisters,” the Spanish translation has “*hermanos*”. The Nicene Creed continues to say that

The Amen Corner

Jesus became an “*hombre*” in order to save “*hombres*”. Where Eucharistic Prayer III prays for “our departed brothers and sisters,” the Spanish translation still prays for “*nuestros hermanos difuntos*”. Both translations fail to rework Eucharistic Prayer IV where it says, “You formed man in your own image” (“*A imagen tuya creaste al hombre*”). However, the title for the third preface for Sundays in Ordinary Time is *Nuestra humanidad salvada por la humanidad de Cristo*, in place of the English missal’s “The salvation of man by a man.”

The first English translation took more liberties with the Latin source than the first Spanish translations did, but the English is now more literal than the Spanish.

Not all is rosy. Deficiencies in the first Spanish translation have carried into the second unchanged. Translators opted for the *status quo*, not taking the opportunity to make some theological enhancements. For example, the revised English translation clarifies that the Roman Canon no longer prays for an angel to take the sacrifice from the altar in church to the altar in heaven. There is only one altar. But the Spanish translation preserves the separation.

It would be speculative to say why the Mexican missal received these freedoms. The reasons could be authoritative, administrative, subsidiary, national, ecclesial, theological, ideological, interpretative, traditional, liberal, practical or accidental. All are plausible. Whatever the reason, the 2014 *Misal Romano* of the *Conferencia del Episcopado Mexicano* has achieved much of what critics feel the English translation lacks.

“The Amen Corner: *Misal Romano*: A Tale of Two Translations.” *Worship* 89/6
(November 2015):553-562.