

The Roman Missal: Preparation and Reception



Introducer's concluding remark: Now let us discover the catechetical, musical, and liturgical tools that can prepare us and our communities to receive these new texts [of the mass] so as to bring new life to the celebration of the liturgy and help us all "Sing to the Lord!" To set the tone for this talk, our speaker will play a short piece of music on the piano. Please welcome Father Paul Turner.

♫ [Mission: Impossible Theme]

I did not play that for the reason you think I played it. We will soon receive a new English translation for the texts of the mass, and many people would have you think that bringing new life to the liturgy through those new texts is mission impossible. It's not. I played that piece for a very different reason. It's a transcription. Lalo Schifrin wrote that music for a small orchestra. I played a transcription for piano. But you know, it works. A piano picks up the rhythms and drama of that short piece very well. Now, the published version of this particular transcription has problems. Inexplicably it omits the opening trill, which I added because it's such an iconic feature to the piece. Then near the end, an inner voice appears on the score in small notes, indicating you can skip it if you want to – or if you have to. Well, you need quite a wingspan to pull it off; you grab an 11th with your right hand. At one point, you can only play the notes on the page if your right hand can stretch an octave and a sixth, or if your left hand can stretch two full octaves. Talk about mission impossible. Fine print on the bottom of the score reads, "Any arrangement or adaptation of this composition without the consent of the publisher is an infringement of copyright." Well, arrest me, but I adjusted the rhythm in that particular line and sounded one inner note a half beat later. Otherwise, it is impossible to play. But on the whole, this transcription as published is very effective. Even if you've never heard this piece for orchestra, it sounds right on the piano.

Not every transcription works so well. Pachelbel's Canon in D Major has convinced the most musically illiterate people that they know all about classical music, and when one of them gets engaged, he or she will ask the organist to play their favorite piece of classical music for the wedding. Have you ever played a transcription of Pachelbel's Canon in D for organ? It doesn't work. Pachelbel wrote quite a few pieces for organ. One of them is not the Canon in D. There's a reason. You need those independent string voices cascading against one another for the piece to have its effect. A transcription for keyboard sounds rather boring. Will some of the organists back me up on this?

Do you that orchestral piece by Brahms, *Variations on a Theme by Haydn*? Bum-da-dum-dum, DUM DUM. Last year a friend of mine found an arrangement of all those variations, scored for two pianos. I was very skeptical. I envisioned it would be impossible to play; you can't just reduce that complex orchestral score and expect it to work on a keyboard. The same problem exists with those piano accompaniments you find to Handel's *Messiah*. Many of them just can't be played. Well, I sat down to practice the Klavier II part of the Brahms variations, and shut my mouth. It worked. I couldn't believe it. I called my friend to ask if she knew who wrote the transcription because the score did not credit the arranger. Do you know the answer to this? Brahms. In fact, it's the orchestral version that is his transcription; Brahms wrote it first for two pianos. It's a great piece; you must go home and practice it.

Some transcriptions work; some don't. If you have a faulty transcription, you probably make some adjustments so that it will work. And maybe, later on, someone will figure out how to write a better transcription so you can play it.

Translating from one language to another carries the same perils and promises. Sometimes the results are great; you can't believe you're reading a translation. Other times they are not; the translator keeps getting in the way. In skillful hands, a translation can be done, and it can be done very well.

The English translation of the mass we've been using for the past 40 years is in the shop. The new model will soon be ready. The book we've known as the Sacramentary will have some new content, some new structure, and a new title, the Roman Missal. You can hear a wide range of opinions about the new translation from Latin to English. Some people can hardly wait; they think the results will bring the Second Coming: It will lift minds beyond daily cares, bring strays back to church, and heal the wounds inflicted by rabid reformers. Others think the new translation is the beginning of the end: It will sound clunky, overturn history, and plunge worshipers into the darkness of impenetrable sentences.

I want to explore the apprehensions to the project because I believe they have to be faced before catechesis can be given. Then we'll look more positively at what the mass offers the world and what the translation offers us. After that I will acknowledge a few lingering concerns. Only then will I help you discover the catechetical, musical, and liturgical tools that the description of this talk promised. Just remember: What's happening is a translation. That's all. It's like a transcription from one musical instrument to another. At least, that's what it's supposed to be, but the project has been caught in a churning landscape of pastoral, theological, and historical issues.

Apprehensions



In the American Catholic Church – but not exclusively here – there are apprehensions about the translation of the missal. No one speaks for everyone, but I want to name these issues, because we cannot catechize unless we understand the challenges the missal faces. I'll group these under three headings: recent products and directives, suspicions about motives, and the setting of priorities.

Some people in the field of liturgy have been puzzled by recent products and directives. I will cite just two examples. First, the 1998 translation of the lectionary has some imperfections. Some passages need better incipits – the introductions that explain who is speaking or what is going on; some words are difficult; some sentences are complex; and some pronouns have unclear antecedents; for example, when Jesus cures a blind man on the Fourth Sunday of Lent, he rubs mud in his eyes, and it sounds for all the world like Jesus is making his own face dirty. So the track record on translations is spotty. (Parenthetically, some of this can be fixed, and a new translation of the lectionary is being prepared under different auspices from the missal project; but some of it is difficult to fix because the bible itself comes to us with some of these issues in place.)

Second, many have been puzzled by some recent directives concerning communion ministers. They are to be called “extraordinary ministers of holy communion” (all 15 syllables), we received restrictions on when they approach the altar, who pours the cups and when, the materials from which cups may be made, and who may clean the cups. We've made the adjustments, but it still isn't clear why these issues merited global attention, and if the new laws have made things better. So one apprehension expressed by some people is that nowadays changes to the liturgy do not necessarily mean enhancements of the liturgy.

Second, some people are suspicious about motives. If a new translation is coming, that means something must be wrong with the one we've been using the past 40 years. But that translation has served us well, helping us pray the liturgy in our vernacular language for the first time. Is something really wrong with the translation, or is there some other motive instigating the whole process? Namely, is it just about who's in charge?

Suspicion about authorities comes with the territory in the United States, where partisan politics makes it impossible to find national heroes, and every celebrity faces the possibility that his or her sins will be revealed to an unforgiving populace. In a democracy, we treasure a wide range of opinions and the freedom to express them; and even though we do not exercise very well our precious right to vote, we still like the idea that we are in control of who holds the authority in our country.

The Catholic Church doesn't work that way. Never has. We have a hierarchy. Because of our culture, we criticize hierarchical decisions not just for their conclusions, but for the



process that reaches them. The hierarchy could make the greatest decision in the world, but because it comes from the top down, many Americans are prejudicially suspicious about the results. One of the challenges with the new translation is that it is not being requested from the bottom up; nobody stops me after mass on Sunday and says, “Father, I sure wish we had a new translation for Eucharistic Prayer III.” Not happening in Cameron, Missouri.

The suspicion that the new translation is just about authority is fed from several streams. There have been questions about the quality of Church leadership. Some people feel that what our leaders lack in wisdom they make up for with decisiveness. Criticizing bishops is more popular than football, partly because there is no off-season. But at heart we are all grateful for the good men who accept this ministry and serve the Church with love and skill in spite of the agony it brings them. Still, criticism remains about the managerial skills and judgment of some leaders. The sex abuse crisis brought these matters to the fore.

The media help us evangelize, but they sometimes make caricatures of the authority of the Church. When Pope Benedict named a new head of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, the most frequently emailed photo showed the cardinal decked out in a *cappa magna* – little guy, big clothes. Such actions feed the perception that new leaders are trying to undo the Second Vatican Council and put everything back the way it was. This is not the case, but the perception lives.

Many women have suffered throughout. They do not occupy positions of authority in our Church the same way that men do, and they have heard language in the liturgy that sounds as if they are excluded or at least don’t count. Women do count, but many have experienced treatment that makes them suspicious.

There is also some suspicion over the translation process. Nobody claims that the translation we now have is perfect; there is wide agreement that improvements can and should be made. However, in 1997, after many years of work, a new translation of the sacramentary was completed and passed by the English-speaking conferences of bishops around the world. Rome did not approve the work; instead, it issued in 2001 new rules for translation, *Liturgiam authenticam*, which placed that laborious project in private archives. ICEL, the International Commission on English in the Liturgy, went through a change of command and constitution. The new philosophy of translation is raising fears that it will put faithfulness to the Latin ahead of the ability to pray.

The forthcoming changes to the words of consecration at the mass feed this fear of authority gone wild. We now hear that Jesus died he died “for all,” but the new translation will have him say he died “for many.” Literally, historically, and biblically, that will be a sound translation, but it will hand evidence to people who feel that self-contented authorities want to push others aside.



Most people would be happy if the Vatican just said something like this: “The Second Vatican Council strongly desired to preserve with care the authentic Liturgy, which flows forth from the Church’s living and most ancient spiritual tradition, and to adapt it with pastoral wisdom to the genius of the various peoples so that the faithful might find in their full, conscious, and active participation in the sacred actions – especially the celebration of the Sacraments – an abundant source of graces and a means for their own continual formation in the Christian mystery.” In fact, the Vatican has said this. That’s the first sentence of *Liturgiam authenticam*, which contains the revised rules for translation. The Vatican has said this is its motive, but suspicion occupies a deeper place in the soul, and it is overcome by the long process of building trust.

Third, briefly, there are questions of priorities. Some people ask, “Why are we doing this when there are so many other problems in the world?” We’ve all got issues we think demand attention: the economy, respect for life, attendance at mass, the role of women – you name it. We all have something. For you it might be congregations that sing; or jobs that pay. When it comes to a new translation, many people think our efforts belongs elsewhere, not with the liturgy. If your parish has been planning a capital campaign for two years, pray that pledge weekend is not the same weekend we start using the new translation.

These are some apprehensions that have created static on the reception of the new missal. Anyone can respond to these issues – past changes were made by fallible but well-meaning administrations; we deal with suspicion all the time, but it doesn’t stop us from being Catholic and loving our Church; and the mass should be our top priority – it is what Jesus told us to do. The missal is caught in this landscape, making it difficult for the work to be appreciated on its own merit. It stands at the confluence of many issues we face as the Body of Christ – the eucharist, how we pray it, the diversity of the Spirit’s gifts, and where we fit as one generation among the many who have received and hand on our Catholic faith.

What the mass offers the world

Perhaps it is the nature of the missal to attract these concerns because the liturgy is the source and summit of our lives as a Church. If these concerns do not flow into the liturgy for healing, they cannot flow out again for mission.

The new translation is throwing attention on the mass, as well it should. Sunday mass is the most important thing we Catholics do. And I like to think it’s the most important thing for the whole world, even if the world does not know it. Pope John Paul II wrote, “The Eucharist is not only a particularly intense expression of the reality of the Church’s life, but also in a sense its ‘fountain-head’. The Eucharist feeds and forms the Church” (*Dies Domini* 32).

We celebrate the eucharist in the midst of a society more charmed by stimulus than by concentration, by impulse more than reflection; where information is more available than it is reliable; where silence is suspect; where science determines morality based on the possible more than the common good; where people who used to attend events now are virtually present to sports, concerts, and relationships; where people judge what is right and wrong based on what they can afford and on what saves money. I can't tell you how many engaged couples explain to me the reason for their cohabitation in terms of finances. "It saves money," they say, as if being thrifty is the greatest moral imperative human beings should ever follow.

In this world we celebrate the eucharist. We believe in our past, in the God who created us, sustains us according to a plan, and whose footprints reach from one generation to the next. We believe in our future, that Christ has prepared a home for us. And we believe in our present, that we possess apt gifts of the Holy Spirit to form a culture, be a people, and discover the depths of the presence of God. We believe in sacrifice for the sake of others, and in joyous communion with our brothers and sisters. We believe that the Word became flesh, and that creation can always lead us back to God, through water, oil, bread and wine, ash and branch. We believe that Christ judges our behavior, that the Spirit guides us to decide right and wrong, and that certain times and spaces are sacred.

Our eucharist offers something to the world. It offers meaning and patterns where there is chaos and misdirection; it offers hope and salvation where there is self-centeredness and despair. We are not perfect. Go to any Sunday mass at a typical parish on an arbitrary weekend and you'll wonder why people do this. But go every week, to that same parish, meet the people, put yourself at risk with them, shoulder the difficult task of intense prayer, serve the needy there – and you will understand. The eucharist is the center of our life; it is the most important face we show – warts and all.

What the translation offers us

The new translation is raising much concern. It should. It touches the eucharist, the center of our lives. But it is not going to bring the paradise that some desire, nor will it undermine the Church's growth as others fear.

Step aside from it for a moment, and ask yourselves, "What do Catholics want?" I think they want to be part of a timeless, authentic liturgical tradition that links the past with the present. They want to share the same faith with other Catholics around the world. They want clarity about their beliefs. They want excellence in words, songs and preaching. And they want to pray, they dearly want to pray. They want a liturgy that expresses praise and petition in their own voice. Catholics enter a sacred space at a sacred time, and they expect

something holy to seize them while they are there. The eucharist fills these hungers, and the new translation should address every one of them.

And please remember this: The translation is changing, but the Order of Mass is not. This seems like a simple statement, but it is a critical point in danger of oblivion. Ask a Catholic who lived through the Second Vatican Council what were the two biggest changes to the liturgy, and this is probably what you'll hear: The mass is in English, and the priest faces the people. Both were significant. But these were the changes that most affected the worshiper's ear and eye. Something even bigger had changed: the Order of Mass, the words and actions we repeat each day from the sign of the cross to the dismissal. The *Novus Ordo*, the new Order of Mass, eliminated the prayers at the foot of the altar and streamlined the introductory rites, introducing spoken parts for the people. It made room for a lectionary that multiplied the readings proclaimed on Sundays. It introduced a responsorial psalm to replace the brief gradual. It restored the prayer of the faithful. It added a procession of the gifts and gave the people parts to say and sing during the preparation of the gifts, a part of the mass formerly obscured by its proleptic use of material that seemed to belong after the consecration. The new Order of Mass multiplied the number of eucharistic prayers. It allowed the faithful to receive communion under both forms. It simplified the conclusion of the mass and eliminated, among other things, the Last Gospel, its vestigial tail end. There were many changes from one missal to the next, but many people were unaware of these because the texts had been in Latin and the people's participation was minimal. What made the postconciliar mass more intelligible to worshipers was not just the vernacular but the restructuring of parts, lending new coherence to the grammar of the mass and strengthening the voice of the people. The primary evidence of the full, conscious, active participation of the people in today's mass is their voice. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy from the Second Vatican Council, said this:

The rite of the Mass is to be revised in such a way that the intrinsic nature and purpose of its several parts, as well as the connection between them, may be more clearly shown, and that devout and active participation by the faithful may be more easily achieved.

To this end, the rites are to be simplified, due care being taken to preserve their substance. Duplications made with the passage of time are to be omitted, as are less useful additions. Other parts which were lost through the vicissitudes of history are to be restored according to the ancient tradition of the holy Fathers, as may seem appropriate or necessary (50).

It is very much the wish of the church that all the faithful should be led to take that full, conscious, and active part in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy, and to which the Christian people, 'a chosen race, a royal

priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people' (1 Pet 2:9, 4-5) have a right and to which they are bound by reason of their Baptism.



In the restoration and development of the sacred liturgy the full and active participation by all the people is the paramount concern, for it is the primary, indeed the indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit (14).

These principles are still binding. The revised Order of Mass put flesh onto these bones, and that flesh is still alive, still breathing. The new translation does not change the Order of Mass. Participation of people and clarity of purpose are here to stay.

The new translation is happening because a generation later, translators have learned more about the origin and meaning of the texts we have. Many of the prayers you hear the priest read from the Sacramentary are over 1000 years old. Many of our responses date to the very first Christian centuries. "The Lord be with you," is found in the bible, and in liturgical texts by the 4th c. "Lift up your hearts" comes from Cyprian around the same time. When we make our responses and hear our prayers we are standing on the shoulders of hundreds of generations of Christian worshipers. We owe it to them to echo their words as best we can. In addition, a new translation will make the English closer to other vernacular languages, allowing the many tongues of earth to unite in common praise of God.

The new translation will give us an opportunity for catechesis. It will reconnect us with the centrality of our Sunday worship. It will help us identify with Catholics of other cultures and times. It will remind us that we are called to live in charity with one another. It will give us an opportunity to invite others to worship with us.

It will raise questions about why we say what we say. When people ask, "Why did that word change?" the simplest answer is almost always, "Well, it is now closer to what it says in Latin." Then a lot of people will follow up with another question, "Why would that be important?" And here's where many people need help.

It's important because Latin is the language in which our prayer grew up. It is the language of people like Augustine and Aquinas who forged so much of what we believe and how we act. The revised translation will get more nuance out of the originals, helping the texts hold up under repetition, study and prayer.

In some smaller language groups around the world, translators don't know Latin, so they translate from another translation, usually English. By that time it doesn't always look like the same prayer. You see, the English we've been using for the past 40 years took a few more liberties with the Latin than other vernacular languages did. It was all in keeping with the rules of translation at the time, all fully approved by the Vatican; that first generation of translators deserves our thanks. But because the Vatican has changed the rules for



translation, the journey from the previous to the new translation is longer in English than it will be, for example, in Spanish. In English, instead of “And also with you,” we will soon be saying, “And with your spirit,” but that is already the case in Spanish. For the Confiteor, the new English will sound like we are a whole lot more sinful than we used to be; we’re not, we’ll just be using a closer translation, which the Spanish has had in place all along. In English the opening prayers for the mass are often in 2 or 3 independent clauses; soon they will be in one with dangling subordinates; but in Spanish, the prayers have been that way for 40 years. Some English-speakers take the new rules of translation as a personal affront, but the results will unite us with patterns of prayer already in existence in many other countries.

I don’t want to sugarcoat this. There are going to be problems when the translation appears. We will struggle with it. But the work has been careful; consultation has been broad. Every text has been prayed aloud, criticized, analyzed and fixed, checked for rhythms, for orality, and for accuracy of vocabulary. Some prayers are not as successful as others – like musical transcriptions; but on the whole the work represents the dedication of international teams striving to let the prayer of the Church be heard in a voice that will enhance our worship and please God.

Some lingering concerns

In my opinion, some of the concerns about the new translation are misinformed, tainted by tangential issues, or just plain wrong. But, again in my opinion, some of the concerns are justified. For example, 40 years ago, the first round of translations for parts of the Order of Mass included consultation with other Christian believers. Today many Christian churches hold common texts for some of the people’s parts of Sunday worship. The same courtesy to other Christians was not extended in this new translation, and many Christian liturgical scholars feel offended. We Roman Catholics are not the only keepers of the vast store of liturgical texts. Working with other Christians would have made even more laborious the task that has taken so long, but it might have improved the translation even more, and it would have affirmed the unity we share in baptism, a unity that the Second Vatican Council hoped to strengthen. The best response I can make to this omission is that Catholics also want uniformity among our own multiple language groups; it seems at this time that for the Vatican that goal outweighed unifying the various Christian voices of one language group. This will not remove the offense that others have felt, but it explains a different value that Rome apparently felt was timely.

Another concern is that the new rules for translation exclude the composition of new liturgical texts. The Vatican wants the English missal simply to translate the Latin missal. But this implies that our generation and tongue are incapable of forming our own voice for public prayer, that we need to rely on previous generations. Then I recall that some of the prayer in

the missal was composed right after the Council. Perhaps the best examples are the Eucharistic Prayers. So the charge that our generation cannot compose its own prayers is not completely true. We can, and some of the best work is in there.

But there won't be prayers that started out in English. Examples of these will still be available in the Order of Christian Funerals, to cite one place. Again my opinion, but I think ICEL was just hitting stride in composing new texts when the new rules for translation took such ideas off the table. Listen to this one: "Lord God, source and destiny of our lives, in your loving providence you gave us [Brittany] to grow in wisdom, age, and grace. Now you have called [her] to yourself. As we grieve the loss of one so young, we seek to understand your purpose. Draw [her] to yourself and give [her] full stature in Christ. May [she] stand with all the angels and saints, who know your love and praise your saving will" (OCF 398/28). We can still use that prayer. I think it's a lovely text, showing great pastoral care for the mourners of a child. We have the ability to compose good prayers, idiomatic to our own age and tongue, and the skill to write such prayers deserves to be honored. But they won't be in the missal. Now, perhaps we need to do this first. Perhaps we have to go back into the prayers we do have, try them one more time, let them speak to us, and give them another chance to form us. Perhaps after that we will have a clearer idea of what prayers we lack, what voice is silent, and how we might please God, who placed a creative spirit within the hearts of all.

Another concern is inclusive language. The new rules for translation give no ground on the ideology. Everyone knows people who repeatedly doctor the current translation to make it more gender-friendly: in the preface dialogue: "It is right to give our thanks and praise;" in the Creed: "for us and for our salvation." And so forth. Language can shape gender roles for good or for ill. But *Liturgiam authenticam* says, "to be avoided is the systematic resort to imprudent solutions such as a mechanical substitution of words, the transition from the singular to the plural, the splitting of a unitary collective term into masculine and feminine parts, or the introduction of impersonal or abstract words, all of which may impede the communication of the true and integral sense of a word or an expression in the original text. Such measures introduce theological and anthropological problems into the translation" (31). You can hear something awry in the tone of that paragraph.

Nonetheless, a quick look at the new translation shows that the introduction to the Penitential Act, the Confiteor, and the invitation to prayer that follows the washing of the hands all address the assembly as "brothers and sisters". Eucharistic Prayers II and III pray for "brothers and sisters" who have died. Although the texts for the presidential prayers have not yet reached their final form, it does appear that the word used in direct address will be "God" rather than "Father". In the current translation, "Father" is used hundreds – perhaps thousands of times as the English translation of "*Deus*". The new translation proposes the more literally accurate word "God". It's not meant to be a manifesto promoting inclusivity,

but it is helping matters in spite of itself. Other examples abound. In the Sacramentary, the opening prayer for the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time asks God “that our efforts in the name of your Son may bring mankind to unity and peace.” Now, many people would suggest you just change it to something like “may bring the world to unity and peace.” But if you go back to the Latin you find that the prayer says something else. It asks that “we may be rich in good works.” In this instance, if you just translate what is there, the offensive word disappears. The bishops on the ICEL commission have handled every such occurrence with great attention. Not everyone will agree with every choice they’ve made. And, of course, the final decision is not theirs anyway. According to the new rules, once ICEL has finished its work, which it has, the conferences of bishops are to finish their comments, which they are doing, and the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments in Rome will determine the final text, which it will. So anything can happen, but if you are sensitive to issues about inclusive language, there should be countless improvements to the text. You won’t even notice most of them, which is a sign of their success.

However, that being said, there are still some places where the text did not change. For example, the new Eucharistic Prayer IV, following the Sanctus, says, “You formed man in your own image and entrusted the whole world to his care.” And the new Nicene Creed still says of Jesus, “For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven.” People will ask, why can’t it just say, “For us and for our salvation”? It means the same thing; in fact, this is what ICEL’s bishops recommended. The Congregation in Rome did not approve it that way, and they would probably argue they could not because their own rules require that every Latin word be represented in some way in English, and the Latin in this case is three words, “*Propter nos homines*,” which requires three English words, “For us men.” I think loyalty to the rule of law is admirable, but in this case a simple change that would have offered no misunderstanding to the meaning of the Creed could have observed the law of charity.

Besides, you can find other places where the English does not exactly represent the Latin. For example, all four of the main eucharistic prayers use a word in Latin that refers to the assembly as the people standing here; but the references were changed in all four instances from “standing” to “being present,” even though in most countries outside the United States people stand up after the memorial acclamation. There is also a troublesome phrase in Eucharistic Prayer III, for which we now say the “the Victim whose death has reconciled us to yourself,” and for which the new translation will say, “the Victim by whose death you willed to reconcile us to yourself.” Not a big change, but the Latin actually says something else. It says something like, the “sacrificial Victim by whose death you willed to be pleased.” A literal translation would make the Father sound a little bloodthirsty about the Son. So the current English translation actually influenced the revised translation, even though it is a bit of an interpretation of what the Latin actually says.

With examples like these, it seems that a similar judgment could have been made regarding “*propter nos homines*” in the Creed. But that did not happen, and it makes catechesis difficult. On the other hand, in some parts of the English-speaking world, the words “for us men” will be clearly understood as inclusive. In my own parish, I expect the opinions would be divided; half the women would be troubled by it and half would not. Popular magazines in the US still use expressions such as “God and man” or “man against nature.” So there are instances in contemporary American usage where the word “man” conveys an inclusive sense. But I suspect if I go on trying to defend that translation, you will recognize in me the sacrificial Victim by whose death you willed to be pleased.

All told, I think there are some beautiful improvements in the missal, and overall we will be getting a better book than the one we have. I really believe that. There are some problems with it. Everyone will find something to love and something to loathe. But listen to these lines from Eucharistic Prayer IV: “And that we might live no longer for ourselves / but for him who died and rose again for us, / he sent the Holy Spirit from you, Father, / as the first fruits for those who believe, / so that, bringing to perfection his work in the world, / he might sanctify creation to the full.” And a few lines later: “For when the hour had come / for him to be glorified by you, Father most holy, / having loved his own who were in the world, / he loved them to the end.” You hear the direct allusion to John’s gospel, chapter 13, at the Last Supper. Just a few verses later there, Jesus is washing feet. It’s a rich translation.

Tools

So, back to the point of this talk. Where was I? Oh, yes, to “discover the catechetical, musical, and liturgical tools that can prepare us and our communities to receive these new texts so as to bring new life to the celebration of the liturgy and help us all ‘Sing to the Lord!’” OK, I think we’re ready.

First, the catechetical tools. We are going to need two different categories of catechetical tools. We’re going to need some immediately to get us through the transition. We’re going to need explanations for everything from “and with your spirit” to “consubstantial” and “incarnate”. What do these words mean? Why are we using them? Why are we changing all these words? Those questions need good answers. And if you don’t know good answers, now is the time to get them. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has a section on the website for formation on the new missal. There are good materials there, and there will be more. Our Conference is not the only one. Every English-speaking conference of bishops is working on its own materials. Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, England and Wales – they’ll all have materials sponsored at the national level.

ICEL has added to its website. The article about music recently published in NPM's magazine, *Pastoral Music*, is available there. An international effort is also underway to provide some common catechesis for all English-speaking countries. ICEL has been involved in a peripheral way. The creators met in Leeds, England, and became known as the "Leeds Group," but representatives come from several different countries, including our own. The product will come out on 5 DVDs with these topics: theology, spirituality, *ars celebrandi*, a walk through the mass, and roles and ministries. It will include video footage, written essays, and links to other catechetical work on the missal. The project is being produced by Fraynetworks, a ministry of the Sisters of Mercy in Australia.

You will also find materials from familiar Catholic publishers. They will produce commentaries and guides to help you out. Many fine writers and speakers are at work. Other organizations have started projects: The Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, the National Organization for the Continuing Education of Roman Catholic Clergy, the Notre Dame Center for Liturgy, National Pastoral Musicians, and many others.

I've been describing one set of catechetical tools that we need: those to help us implement the new translation. But we need a second generation of catechetical tools as well, those that will help us get the most out of the missal once it has been with us for a year or two. Once we've lived with the book for a while, we are going to have different questions – we'll want to know more about the meaning of some of the prayers. We'll need tips for when to use which parts of the book. And questions we cannot even foresee right now will come up. We need to start planning for that catechesis as well. Whatever we write and buy focused on the changes in store will eventually become dated.

Second, the musical tools. Many people are asking, will there be a period when we can grandfather in the new texts (or grandmother them in), so that we can continue singing the parts of the mass we already know? No one knows the answer to this. At least, I haven't heard an answer. And I think that's all right for now. But once the new texts are approved for use, we'll be anxious to get new music for them. In fact, music will help us learn these texts, and make them easier to speak when they are not sung. Our best composers are already at work, and we can anticipate an explosion of fine music to accompany our worship.

The missal itself is coming with many parts of the mass set to a simple chant. ICEL is publishing this work on its website for the benefit of diocesan liturgy offices. The first English translation did not result in a common sung repertoire for something as basic as the preface dialogue. I think one reason so few priests sing the preface is that so few congregations can sing the responses to the dialogue. We have a chance to fix that by getting everybody on board with one common setting of basic English chants. There can be others. Any parish could learn 2 or 3 versions of a preface dialogue, but it would help our sense of unity in the Church if we could all learn one set in common.

I suspect there will be more interest in setting the entrance and communion chants to music once the new translations for these are available. You know what I'm referring to here? We call them antiphons now, and they get used most commonly at those daily masses that have no singing. People may recite an antiphon together. All those texts are being revised. That may spark an interest in new compositions based on those chants. But the number of them is so vast that it will take a generation for this to settle. It's still too early to tell about future musical settings of these texts, but it's something to keep an eye on.

Third, the liturgical tools. Well, I think the best liturgical tool is just doing the liturgy well. Doing it prayerfully, intentionally. Doing it with meaning. It's hard. But we can do it. I mean, so much depends on the spirit we bring to the liturgy. Sometimes we're not really present to the prayer; and that's OK on occasion. That's one reason we pray in common anyway, so the prayers of others can help us out when we don't quite feel up to it. Other times we have the right spirit, but we face distractions in church – a restless child, a coughing pew mate, a ringing cell phone. All these can make the best efforts at praying the new translation even more difficult. If we approach the revised missal personally with apprehension, we will dread going to mass, and we will have problems.

We can use our time right now for soul-searching. What apprehensions do you have? How are they affecting your preparation for the missal? The work will be underappreciated if we are angry about something else – be it authority, style, or whatever. If we can confront those misgivings head-on, we can engage the revised missal in a more fair-minded way.

So our liturgy is our best tool, but there will be challenges. Even if you give the missal a fair chance, you are going to have some problems starting up. The people will muffle their lines, and the priests and deacons will be lost looking for the texts we're supposed to say. We have a lot of the mass memorized, you know. When the deacon first comes up to the priest for the blessing before the gospel, a server may have to hold the missal next to him so the priest can find out what on earth he's supposed to say. When the deacon kisses the gospel book in the ambo, he's going to need the new text from the missal for the quiet prayer that accompanies that gesture. When the deacon adds water to the wine, when the priest bows after receiving it, when he washes his hands, when he prepares for communion, and when cleaning the vessels – all of a sudden, we'll be flipping through pages to find out where we are and what prayer to say. The eucharistic prayers are already tedious for many churchgoers, but in the new translation, when the priest has not yet got the grease of them, they're going to sound stilted. I mean, just change the name of the pope or the local bishop in the eucharistic prayer, and it completely throws us off balance. All these are practical matters we can fully anticipate. And people should not judge the whole translation based on how awkwardly we execute it at the start.

But they will. In fact, I'm apprehensive about this issue as well: the media. The media will be all over this story. These are the biggest changes to the Catholic mass in a generation. It should be a big story. Journalists will be asking Catholics right after mass the first weekend, "Well, what did you think?" And they're going to get the knee-jerk reaction of worshipers – which will be mixed and emotional. What the media won't do is come back a year later and ask, "Now, how's it going?" because it won't be news then. We need to be ready for this. We should not lie or put on a false front, but we should have some answers prepared. Instead of having the media use us, I hope we will use them. The message I hope we could send to the world is, "Look, come and see for yourselves. Come to a Catholic church next Sunday. Meet some of the people. Hear the scriptures with us. Sing the songs with us, and struggle with us as we try out our new prayers. You'll meet people just like you – people who hope for a better day for themselves, their families and their country; people who struggle to find words to say when we pray; people who want to be of service to others; people looking for answers to the questions of life. We're just like you. But what you might find with us that you don't find at home is this: People who believe, people who have hope, people who put their priorities in line with the gospel of Jesus Christ." My brothers and sisters, that is our mission. It is a mission that is possible, a mission that is necessary for us to integrate the eucharist into our lives.

There are many tools we can use as the new translation comes near, but our greatest tool is our faith in God, and our passionate love for the eucharist. If we can let that run free, the Spirit will use our many voices to make this one translation a gift of tongues, a new Pentecost for the Church.

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