

# A Gateway to Mystery

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Legendary Latin scholar Carmelite Father Reginald Foster had produced this text from the Easter sequence for his Latin class in Rome to translate: *Angelicos testes, sudarium et vestes*. It's the part where Mary tells the singers what she saw upon arriving at the tomb. Michael Joncas insists this is a true story. Selecting at random a prim nun from the class, Reginald asked for a translation. The sister settled comfortably into her chair, buried her head into the text and began with the words, "Angelic testicles." Whereupon, Reginald Foster exclaimed, "Context, sister! Context!"

The planners of this FDLC event have asked Kevin and me to address the forthcoming revised translation of the mass in its context - not just to give you a linguistic analysis, but a performative one. What is, to use the expression of Romano Guardini, the liturgical act? He lamented that the act had become atrophied and now has to take on new life. Many, not just this body, have raised the hope that the new translation will help a new generation derive more meaning from the entire mass, not just from an occasional biblical allusion.

To that end, I have agreed to speak about three areas treated in the DVD *Become One Body, One Spirit in Christ: The Roles of the Liturgical Assembly, A Walk through the Mass, and Towards an Ars Celebrandi*. In other words, who is doing what, what is who doing, and how does who do it? I will handle each of these topics by moving through three themes: the liturgical act, the language of the liturgy, and the life of Christians. In doing so, I hope that my comments on the liturgical act will set a context for the changes of the translation, and that these will in turn inspire a way of living that is liturgical and Catholic. Just as Mary found at the tomb angelic witnesses, the shroud and the grave clothes, we hope to discover evidence of the risen Christ in how we live and how we pray.

My first topic is the roles in the liturgical assembly. The liturgical act involves many ministers because, according to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, all the members of the Church's body celebrate "according to their rank, office, and degree of participation in the Eucharist" (91). The active participation of the faithful brings out the ecclesial nature of the celebration (19). The Holy Spirit bestows a diversity of gifts upon the faithful, and we can see them when the assembly gathers.

Throughout the celebration of the mass, the dialogues perhaps best express the Church alive. The General Instruction says that dialogues and acclamations

“foster and bring about the communion between priest and people” (34, see 35-37).

The revised translation offers very few changes to the rubrics that state who does what. In fact, in Latin, the rubrics of the mass have not changed at all. But the first English translation assigned a few responses to the priest and the people that were intended to be given just to the people. There were already plenty of dialogues, so no one took much notice. However, by restoring these few instances, the roles within the assembly will be slightly more sharply drawn.

For example, when the memorial acclamation was introduced into the liturgy in 1969, it was given to the people with only the briefest introduction by the priest: *Mysterium fidei*, he was to say. Then the people made the response. The priest then returned to his prayer addressed to the Father. But the first translation changed the introduction of the priest to words that addressed the entire assembly, including himself, and then had him join the people in making the acclamation. The first acclamation became the most popular of them all, and practically no one noticed that it was the most dynamically translated of the four acclamations. In the first acclamation, everyone including the priest sang a statement about Jesus Christ, even though the original design was that the people would be singing to Jesus Christ. Many people are now lamenting that “Christ Has Died” has died. But with a revised translation of the rubric, the invitation, and the acclamation, the original purpose of the memorial acclamation is coming to light. The priest addresses the entire prayer to the Father, and with the briefest signal cues an acclamation that the people make to Christ while the priest remains silent. Then the priest resumes his prayer to the Father, taking up the very theme about which the people have just sung. It makes sense if you consider the entire liturgical act, not just the loss of “Christ Has Died.”

I know, I know. This creates a practical difficulty. At masses without music, the priest - on the spot - is usually the one who determines which acclamation to say, and starts it. After a few words into the acclamation, the people join him. There are various solutions to this. In my parish we sing the same memorial acclamation for all the Sundays of a season, and then shift to another one in the next season. Over the course of a year we cycle through all the acclamations a couple of times. We've decided on weekdays we'll recite whatever we sing on Sundays. Everyone knows which acclamation to use, and I don't need to be involved at every mass. But there are other solutions including marking a hymn board or assigning the leadership of the acclamation to any liturgical minister: the lector, the sacristan, or that person in the back pew who complains about the sound system.

The conclusion of the eucharistic prayer was also designed to be a dialogue, but this was changed in the first English translation of the rubrics. Today it says priest and people sing “Amen”, but that is not what the original text said. Many priests have asked me, “Now, the people are not supposed to sing ‘Through him, with him, and in him’ with me, are they?” “That’s correct,” I respond. “And you are not supposed to sing ‘Amen’ with them.” It’s their line, just like the amen that concludes the other presidential prayers of the mass. Let the people do their part.

Another clarification of speaking roles comes after the Lord’s Prayer. After the priest says the embolism, the people are supposed to respond with the acclamation, “For the kingdom, the power and glory are yours.” To some of those who decry the slow progress in ecumenism, this looks as though the priest is not supposed to taint his voice by singing those awful Protestant words; let the people sing them. Actually, the line was included as an acclamation of the people to foster both ecumenism and the participation of the people.

The same is also true, incidentally, of the Confiteor. Many people do not like the revised translation at all. For some, their revulsion to the repeated phrase, “through my fault” and the broad expression “I have greatly sinned” is so intense that they defend their innocence by demonstrating the sin of anger. One priest I know proposed a novel solution: instead of saying, “I have greatly sinned,” we should all say, “I have sinned, and it was great.” However, the revised translation is not the pre-Vatican II Confiteor as many surmise. That one included the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, St. Michael the Archangel and St. John the Baptist. This is the post-Vatican II Confiteor that many other language groups translated fully, but that the first English translation abbreviated. Furthermore, the appearance of the Confiteor in this first part of the mass is new to the postconciliar church. Prior to that time, the priest and the servers recited the prayers at the foot of the altar alone. But the framers of the post-Vatican II liturgy believed so strongly in the active participation of the faithful that they wanted the people’s voice to be heard from the get-go. The Confiteor is not just a way of saying how sinful people are, but how valuable their voice is.

One of the lines that is still to be recited by priest and people together is, “Lord, I am not worthy.” We’ve all heard complaints about the words “roof” and “soul” in the revised translation of this line, even though “roof” has biblical roots, and for decades of responsorial psalms we’ve been singing “To you, Lord, I lift up my soul” without any protest. Not to be lost is the liturgical act: for a brief moment, something that looks like a dialogue really isn’t. After the priest says, “Behold the Lamb of God,” he joins the people in confessing his unworthiness that Christ should come to him. Both in the Confiteor and in the words preceding

communion, the entire assembly acknowledges how much each of us depends on God's mercy.

Yes, both the Confiteor and this preparation for communion are spoken in the first person singular, and a similar phenomenon will now happen with the Creed, where we have been using the first person plural. Here again, you are familiar with the basic arguments: The Nicene Creed was composed in the first person plural, but upon entering the liturgy, the first person singular ultimately prevailed, even into the post-Vatican II liturgy, although the English translation put it into the plural. The Creed allows people to express their commitment to their faith as individuals, not just as a community. The singular form retains the same dynamic as the renewal of baptismal promises. Again, no one has objected that over the past many decades, when people were asked in the plural, "Do you believe in God the Father Almighty?" everyone has responded in the singular, "I do." To understand the nature of the change, it is not just a matter of saying, "Well, it's singular in Latin," but to explain why it is singular in Latin. It is time for each person to say, "I believe, and that is why I am here." That is the context of the liturgical act.

The personal investment of individuals in the entire shape of the liturgy is also a highlight of the eucharistic prayer. One of the most revolutionary statements of the postconciliar General Instruction comes in what is now paragraph number 78: "Now the center and summit of the entire celebration begins: namely, the Eucharistic Prayer, that is, the prayer of thanksgiving and sanctification. The priest invites the people to lift up their hearts to the Lord in prayer and thanksgiving; he unites the congregation with himself in the prayer that he addresses in the name of the entire community to God the Father through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the meaning of the Prayer is that the entire congregation of the faithful should join itself with Christ in confessing the great deeds of God and in the offering of Sacrifice. The Eucharistic Prayer demands that all listen to it with reverence and in silence." That last sentence, incidentally, is new to the third edition of the Roman Missal. It appears to have been inserted as a corrective device lest people think their participation would be enhanced by reciting the entire prayer aloud. But, as often happens with newly inserted texts that have not suffered erosion from the winds of contrary opinion, this sentence is incorrect when you consider the dialogues and acclamations that are as much a part of the eucharistic prayer as the lines the priest recites alone. However, looking at the entire paragraph 78 again, its message would have been news in 1969. What is central here? Not the elevations, but the prayer is the center and summit of the entire celebration. It is not a prayer of adoration, but a prayer of thanksgiving and sanctification. The priest does not ask the servers to

lift up their hearts; he asks the people to do so. He does not pray alone; he unites the congregation with himself. The people should not quietly pray their rosary in their pew; rather, the entire congregation should join itself with Christ in confessing the great deeds of God and in the offering of sacrifice. There are many roles in the liturgical assembly, and everyone has a part to play in the eucharistic prayer. This part of the mass still labors to achieve a full sense of participation, and it remains an area that needs more pastoral focus. I think that one of the revisions in the translation helps make the case about the people's participation here. It's another line that has received some criticism. Just before the eucharistic prayer, the priest, having washed his hands, says to the people, "Pray, brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God the Father almighty." Pope John Paul II said of these words, that "they express the character of the entire Eucharistic Liturgy and the fullness of its divine and ecclesial content" (*Dominicae Cena* 9). They do not show a separation of sacrifice, but its ecclesial fullness.

Two aspects of the revision, I think, have hurt the participation of the people in the eucharistic prayer. Both pertain to posture. The first is the decision of the American bishops to retain the practice of kneeling from after the Sanctus until the amen. The universal norm, from which conferences may depart, calls for kneeling from a little before the institution narrative until the memorial acclamation. In my opinion, kneeling diminishes the common participation of the faithful in the prayer that the priest is standing to pray. I believe that inviting the people to stand for the entire prayer, not just the preface and the Sanctus, would command a stronger sense of participation. Secondly, I am astonished that as careful as the revised text has been in giving a more literal translation to the missal, the references to the community standing during the eucharistic prayer have been bleached out of the revision. Many people are familiar with the line in the present translation of Eucharistic Prayer II, "We thank you for counting us worthy to stand in your presence and serve you." In Latin, the word for standing is *astare*. The same Latin word appears in Eucharistic Prayer III, but we have been saying, "Father, hear the prayers of the family you have gathered here before you." A similar word, *circumstantium* appears in Eucharistic Prayer I, where, forty years ago, it was similarly translated as "all of us gathered here before you," and in Eucharistic Prayer IV, where it was rendered "those here present." Here was an opportunity, no, more than an opportunity, an expectation that a more literal rendering of those four words would appear in the revised translation, but in each case, including Eucharistic Prayer II, they have been rendered with a circumlocution, even though in all four instances the word appears in the part of the eucharistic prayer where most of the rest of the Catholic world is standing, except in the United States. I realize there isn't much

one can do at this point, but without mentioning this discrepancy, the voices of those who promote standing for the eucharistic prayer might feel obliged to fall silent. A change in posture could enhance the liturgical act. Many people feel that kneeling throughout the eucharistic prayer enhances one's devotion to the real presence of Christ in the eucharist. However, standing for prayer, according to the fathers of the Church, enhanced one's devotion to the resurrection. St. Basil the Great wrote, "When we pray standing we remind ourselves of the grace given to us on the day of resurrection, not only because having been raised with Christ we ought to seek the things that are above, but that this day may seem an image in some way of the age to come" (*The Holy Spirit* 27). Or, as the anonymous author of *Questions to the Orthodox* wrote, "We do not kneel on Sundays as a sign of the resurrection through which we have been freed from sins by the grace of Christ." I am sympathetic to the value of enhancing people's faith in the real presence of Christ in the eucharist, but I think we also need to proclaim our faith in the resurrection.

Of the parts of the revised translation that have underscored the roles of the liturgical assembly, none has met more controversy than the words *Et cum spiritu tuo*. There is no shortage of questions about why this translation is happening and what these words mean. If it is any consolation, it wasn't clear to the early Church either. We have various explanations for the expression, which only show that the words are quite mysterious. I find it annoying that many people are interpreting the words of John Chrysostom and other Church fathers to prove that the purpose of this brief dialogue is to set the priest apart from the people, as if the point is to have the people acknowledge that the priest has the Holy Spirit and they do not. I find this reprehensible. To uncover the original meaning of this text, one goes to its source, which is biblical. Four of the letters of St. Paul conclude with a prayer that the Lord will be with the spirit of those who read the letter. The conclusions vary slightly, but the one from Galatians will work for the purposes of this presentation. Here is the way it sounds as the end of the second reading on the Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time of Year C: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be your spirit, brothers and sisters. Amen." In three of the four instances from Paul's letters, this farewell is addressed to a community. The only exception is the Second Letter to Timothy, where Paul prays that the Lord will be with Timothy's spirit. But the whole letter is addressed to one individual, so what do you expect? Besides, many biblical scholars question the Pauline authorship of the pastoral letters. However, in Galatians, Philippians and Philemon, Paul prays that the Lord will be with the spirit of the entire community reading or hearing his letter. He did not restrict the expression to those who were ordained. He prayed that the spirit that governed their lives, their thoughts, their attitude and their faith would be infused with the grace of the Lord. It's not a difficult concept:

“You have great school spirit.” “She delivered that speech with just the right spirit.” And so on. It’s not that hard to figure out. May the grace of the Lord be with your spirit.

The earliest evidence for the dialogue, *Dominus vobiscum / Et cum spiritu tuo* comes from the opening formula of eucharistic prayers dating to the third or fourth century, those in the *Apostolic Tradition* and the *Apostolic Constitutions*. The same dialogue appears mysteriously in an anonymous homily from about the same period, delivered on Holy Saturday to describe imaginatively the encounter between Jesus, who was dead but not yet risen, and Adam, who was pretty much in the same boat, though for a longer period of time. Adam sees Jesus approaching him, and he turns to the others who are awaiting resurrection with him, and announces to them, “Hey! Look! The Lord is with you!” And Jesus tells Adam, “And with your spirit.” Comforting words to Adam, those - he is not left out.

To me, the puzzle becomes how did we get from the closing verse of four New Testament letters in the first century to a dialogue two or three hundred years later. It’s all speculation, but I think it is logical that in adopting a biblical formula, the early Church also adopted a biblical style: parallelism. Here are some examples of it from James Kugel’s book, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry*. Psalm 42, verse 9: “By day the Lord sends forth his love / and by night his song is with me.” Psalm 54, verse 4: “Oh God hear my prayer / hearken to the words of my mouth.” Psalm 128, verse 5: “May the Lord of Zion bless you / and [may you] enjoy Jerusalem’s goodness your whole life.” I think it’s a short step from that to, “The Lord be with you. / And with your spirit.” When the priest greets the people, he says nothing less to them than they say to him. If you accept this theory, one solution to the pastoral challenge could be to invite congregations to accent the word “your”. “The Lord be with you. And with *your* spirit.” To me, this would help us focus on the entire liturgical act, recognizing that we are all united in Christ’s spirit, even though we play different roles.

When it comes to our roles in the liturgical assembly, the entire liturgical act speaks most eloquently for itself above and beyond the words that we say when we are the same people outside the liturgy as we are inside it. A priest is the leader of prayer. He is the one who offers sacrifice and who shares communion. We priests, if we are to play our roles with integrity during the mass, have to have these habits outside the mass. We will be good leaders of the community’s prayer if our spiritual life has a deep reserve, if we are committed to private prayer, and if we are comfortable meeting God while doing nothing else time and again throughout each day. We will offer this spiritual sacrifice if it is clear that we are ready to sacrifice in hundreds of ways for the people we serve. One newly

ordained priest in a diocese I will not mention sat down with his pastor for their first conversation this summer and asked his new boss this question: “What is my budget for entertaining my friends over here?” I’d be thinking, “What is my budget for sending you to Uganda for a few years?” But in truth, we are so desperate for seminarians that we promise them a comfortable life if they will just go to the seminary and please, please become a priest. You’ll have servants at home, face recognition throughout the diocese, Christmas gifts like you’ve never had before, and retirement benefits. If we tell them priesthood is about sacrifice, we may lose some candidates. Well, so be it. Everybody ought to know: Priesthood is about sacrifice. We priests need to be ready to do our job even when we don’t feel like it, and we should be ready to tell people how satisfying *that* truly is. Priests should also be builders of communion. Once when I asked a group of priests how they handle distractions at mass, one of them said, “The biggest distraction is cell phones. It’s not just that they go off; people are answering them during the mass.” He continued, “One time after the Lord’s Prayer, when a ringtone played on and on, I yelled at the person to shut it off.” I’m like, “there has to be a better way to build communion.” Yes, the offender needs to be challenged, but maybe not during the liturgy, and probably not by losing our temper just before the sign of peace. I’ve had parishioners stop me immediately after mass to complain in angry tones about something happening in the school, the parish or the liturgy this week. I want to say, “OK, everybody back into the church. We did it wrong today. We did not achieve communion.” A priest has to be able to get that done.

Deacons, your ministry is clear: preaching, liturgical assistance, and service to the community. I think one reason the deacon is invited to give the petitions for the general intercessions and to make the announcements at the end of mass is that the liturgy presumes he is also a deacon when mass is over; that is, that he is so involved with the community, that he knows what happened this week that requires our prayer, and he knows what will happen this coming week that requires us to join him in service. Many deacons are good at this, but their role in the liturgy will have a more powerful effect if they are deacons through and through.

Extraordinary ministers of holy communion, how do you live during the week? Do you spend time with the body of Christ in your brothers and sisters and also in the reserved sacrament?

Lectors, how familiar are you with the Word of God? Are you coming to know the bible more and more deeply?



Cantors, and especially psalmists, have you studied this week's responsorial psalm? Do you know why it has been chosen? Have you ever felt the way the psalm feels this week? These prayers bring you face to face with the raw experience of human life. Perhaps the psalmist could profitably spend part of the week comparing this week's psalm to the current number one country western song. No other genre apart from the psalms nails raw human life.

Greeters, are you being friendly outside of church, or only on Sunday mornings?

Members of the assembly, are you praying at home every day? Do you know what the readings are before you come to church? Do you sing at all during the week? If not, how will your voice be ready on Sundays?

And so on. You know what has to be done. The liturgy should be forming us, so that we are schooled in our responsibilities whenever we gather for worship.

Perhaps this will be our greatest consolation concerning roles in the liturgical assembly as we reassess them in the light of a revised translation. They are, in a sense, just roles because when we pray, it is Christ who prays in us. He is the ultimate minister. He is the one who makes our prayer worthy. When we step aside, putting away our personal preferences and our individualistic pieties, we can enter into a corporate act that otherwise might seem impossible to achieve. Each congregation is one part of the body of Christ. And when we pray, it is not we who pray - it is Christ.

Although I try not to be gone from my parish on weekends, there are some occasions when I am. Cameron, Missouri, is only an hour away from Conception Abbey, so if we submit our request early enough, there's a good chance we can rent a monk for the weekend. Our parish has a mission church, St. Aloysius, in Maysville, Missouri, which is about a third of the way from Cameron to Conception. The church seats 75 and we typically have about 50 people there for our 11:00 mass each Sunday. For me, it's a peaceful way to wrap up the weekend, driving through the Missouri countryside, preferably with the top of my convertible down, and celebrating mass in a church so small we don't even use sound reinforcement. Anyway, one Sunday morning when I was away, the rented monk was celebrating mass for us. The server that day was a girl in junior high. She was a capable server with a helpful personality. During that mass, after the gifts were brought up the aisle, the Benedictine received them and approached the altar. The server stood at the side with the water cruet. As the visiting priest started to pour the wine into the chalice, he glanced up at the size of the congregation, then down at the quantity of wine in the carafe, and, turning while holding the carafe, whispered a question to his server. "How much of this do I use?" She leaned in like a prize accomplice and whispered, "All of it." He nodded and emptied the contents into the chalice. He handed the empty vessel to the server and reached for the water cruet. Before releasing it, however, she leaned in toward him once again; he bent over and turned his ear. She lifted the water and said, "Just a little bit."

The title of this session is "A Walk Through the Mass," and I don't need to do that with you. However, I do want to share some thoughts about certain aspects of the mass and how the revised translation treats these themes. As my first talk considered who does what, this one concerns what does who do. Specifically, I'm interested in the dichotomy between sacrifice and communion, altar and table. The Catholic Church more than other Christian assemblies emphasizes the sacrificial nature of the eucharist. There were concerns at the time of the Second Vatican Council that the mass was being Protestantized, and the leaders of the Church were left explaining on the one hand why that was not the case, and why on the other hand we had so much in common with Protestants that some overlap should be desirable, not offensive. Some changes were made to the eucharistic prayer. For example, in the consecration of the bread, the last few words were added: "which will be given up for you." They were not part of the consecration in the 1962 missal, but they were thought to add to the sacrificial nature of the mass. On the other hand, the communion rite remains the destination of the mass both in the structure of the service and in the hearts of the faithful.

The relationship between sacrifice and communion is often missed. A review of this relationship will contextualize the liturgical act that is underway, allowing us to analyze some of the specific changes to the translation. The reciprocity of sacrifice and communion is fairly straightforward. In the procession of the gifts, we bring forth to the altar bread, wine, and the financial offerings that represent the sacrifice of ourselves. Those gifts are a way that everyone in the assembly puts himself or herself on the altar. Those gifts are transformed, and then they are returned to the people who gave them, so that the people may also be transformed in this communion.

This simple reciprocity of sacrifice and communion can break down in a typical Sunday liturgy, making the liturgical act more difficult to perceive. For example, sometimes the people carrying the gifts to the altar are children too young to receive communion or non-Catholic spouses whom we want to include in some way. The instinct to offer hospitality is a good idea, but it's a little like asking people not invited to a potluck dinner to come on over and bring food that they may not eat. Recently in my parish a newly-married couple brought up the gifts. He is Catholic; she is not. He carried the bread and wine; she carried the money. My liturgical right brain said, "This symbol is so wrong," but my pastor's left brain concluded, "Good call." More common is the practice of distributing communion from previously consecrated bread in the tabernacle. People say they do it as a matter of convenience, but they are sacrificing the sacrifice in the process. Ideally, people are to receive communion from the bread and wine consecrated at this mass, as the priest is obliged to do at every mass, and as the people are obliged to do on Holy Thursday and the Easter Vigil. What's even more disturbing is that most people don't see the problem. They just came to receive communion, after all, so it really doesn't matter if they get it from the altar or from the tabernacle; they just want it, and then they can leave mass early. They don't make the connection between communion and sacrifice - and mission, for that matter. I'm convinced this has played into the controversy over the placement of the tabernacle. We have a hard time convincing people that the tabernacle is not central to the liturgy when they see us distributing communion from the tabernacle at virtually every mass. They are unmoved that many are receiving the communion of someone else's sacrifice. This also explains why so many people don't see the real difference between mass and a communion service. Many celebrations of the eucharist effectively insert a communion service into the communion rite. This happened before the council even more broadly than it does now. And it explains why the Confiteor of the people used to take place before communion. Lack of participation in the blood of Christ only contributes to the dilemma: people are unconvinced of the centrality of the blood symbolism for the sacrifice of the mass, and by passing on the cup some receive completely from

communion consecrated at a different mass. These practices - inattention to who brings up the gifts and how the people are fed - obscure the relationship between sacrifice and communion, which is fundamental to the authentic participation of the people.

I don't expect any single revision in the translation or change in communion practice to achieve a more active participation of the people in the liturgy, but I do think that paying attention to details will help all of us better catechize and celebrate what we are doing.

For example, in Eucharistic Prayer I, there is a change in the paragraph that deals with the altar. In the current translation, as the priest bows, he says, "we pray that your angel may take this sacrifice to your altar in heaven. Then, as we receive from this altar the sacred body and blood of your Son, let us be filled with every grace and blessing." But the revised translation doesn't agree that there are two different altars: "command that these gifts be borne / by the hands of your holy Angel / to your altar on high / in the sight of your divine majesty / so that all of us who through this participation at the altar / receive the most holy Body and Blood of your Son / may be filled with every grace and heavenly blessing." The one altar reminds us that we are participating at a heavenly liturgy and only there.

As we are present to the eschatological liturgy, so we are present to the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary. This is especially evident from the institution narrative that forms a central part of the eucharistic prayer in the Roman rite. Although the narrative is grammatically part of our prayer to God today, performatively it also hearkens back to the Last Supper with a certain "You are there" quality to it. Most famously, again in the Roman Canon, the entire institution narrative is a relative clause that depends on the preceding section, in which we ask God to "bless, acknowledge, / and approve this offering in every respect; / make it spiritual and acceptable, / so that it may become for us / the Body and Blood of your most beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ." The next section begins "On the day before he was to suffer," but in Latin it starts with another word not rendered in either the first or the revised translation: *qui*: "who, on the day before he was to suffer." Grammatically, the first eucharistic prayer suspends the entire institution narrative on the request that the bread and wine may become the Body and Blood of Christ. In its structure, the prayer does not stop in order for a narrative to be inserted. Rather, the narrative is part of our thanksgiving to God. We are telling God why we are making this particular prayer for consecration: It is because Jesus asked us to do this on the day before he was to suffer.

Nonetheless, performatively, the priest does several things that grip the congregation and pull them into the Last Supper: He repeats the words of Jesus. He is told to enunciate them carefully. He picks up the bread and lifts the chalice. In Eucharistic Prayer I he even lifts his eyes to heaven, and - in the revised translation - he says Jesus took not “the cup,” but “*this* precious chalice.” All these elements make us present to the Last Supper. Some priests add to the drama by looking at the congregation, even though this is not specifically called for in the rubrics because the dominant purpose of these lines is that they are prayer to God, not an address to the people. Some priests add to the drama by breaking the bread: “he said the blessing, broke the bread <snap>”, even though the ritual breaking of the bread is supposed to take place later on. We are prone to excesses, but the point is that our celebration of the eucharist is a participation both at the eschatological heavenly altar as well as the table of the Last Supper.

One of the elements that should underscore the active participation of the people in the supper as sacrifice is also the most controversial word of the entire revised translation. We are accustomed to hearing the priest quote Jesus saying of his blood, “It will be shed for you and for all.” But the revised translation has him saying, “which will be poured out for you and for many.” Many people are saying, “Rome is wrong. Jesus poured out his blood for all, not for many.” Well, yes, Jesus did this. The scriptures say so again and again.

- The next day [John] saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, “Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29).
- [Caiaphas] prophesied that Jesus was about to die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the dispersed children of God (John 11:52).
- [Jesus answered,] “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself” (John 12:32).
- [Jesus Christ] is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2).
- And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world (1 John 4:14).
- He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? (Romans 8:32).
- For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them (2 Corinthians 5:14-15).

- [Christ Jesus] gave himself a ransom for all (1 Timothy 2:6).
- For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all (Titus 2:11).

And if the bible isn't good enough for you, here's the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* paragraph 605:

At the end of the parable of the lost sheep Jesus recalled that God's love excludes no one: "So it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish." (Mt 18:14) He affirms that he came "to give his life as a ransom for many"; this last term is not restrictive, but contrasts the whole of humanity with the unique person of the redeemer who hands himself over to save us (Matthew 20:28, see Romans 5:18-19). The Church, following the apostles, teaches that Christ died for all . . . without exception: "There is not, never has been, and never will be a single human being for whom Christ did not suffer <Council of Quiercy (853): DS 624; cf. 2 Cor 5:15; 1 Jn 2:2>".

The problem is, of course, that according to the gospels, Jesus himself said something else at the Last Supper. He said, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many" (Mark 14:23-24); and "Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:27-28). The puzzle then is why Jesus said something else on this particular occasion. I think the obvious answer is that he was referencing the Song of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah: "The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:11b-12).

The point of the word "many" is to show that Jesus is the suffering servant of God, the one who has come to redeem the world. The word is a commentary on the role of Jesus, not a restriction on those who are saved. The word "many" underscores the sacrifice of Jesus at which we participate in every eucharist; the theological point is quite lovely. Will this be misunderstood? Oh, yes. It already is. It is discouraging to see how many people are using the change in translation to focus on a perceived restricted sense of the word "many". Even Cardinal Francis Arinze joined this line of thought: "The expression 'for many,'" he wrote, "while remaining open to the inclusion of each human person, is reflective also of the fact that this salvation is not brought about in some mechanistic way, without one's own willing or participation; rather, the believer is invited to accept in faith the gift that is being offered and to receive the supernatural life that is given to those who participate in this mystery, living it out in their lives as well so as to be

numbered among the ‘many’ to whom the text refers” (Letter to Bishops Prot. no. 467/05/L). Do you know this German word: *schadenfreude*? It means taking delight in someone else’s suffering. To be fair to Cardinal Arinze, he made this argument amid several others explaining the choice of the word “many” in this text, but some people are taking a rather perverse delight in pointing out that some will be saved and others will be doomed, rejoicing at the prospect that this can soon be deduced from every mass. Perhaps they should be told that six times in every mass we will refer to the Lamb of God who takes away the sins *of the world*, twice in the Gloria, where the present translation has it only once, and four times in the moments before receiving communion. The emotion behind this one word seems to be touching the nerve uncovered in the discrepancy between believers who think the Church is too quick to condemn, and those who think the Church is too quick to forgive. Both are key soteriological concepts around which believers construct a whole system of doctrinal and moral life. In its context, the word “many” is not talking so much about who is saved, but who does the saving. It is a word about Jesus Christ, our paschal sacrifice, who fulfills the prophecies of God’s chosen one. He himself used the word in this way at the Last Supper.

So the concept of sacrifice is particularly rich during the course of the mass, but so is the concept of communion. There is a slight but significant change to the translation of the so-called secondary epiclesis in the eucharistic prayer to illustrate this point. After the institution narrative, the eucharistic prayer continues with an anamnesis and a prayer of offering before it launches into a series of petitions, including those for the living and the dead. The first of these petitions has been called a secondary epiclesis because it prays for the coming of Holy Spirit upon the community in words redolent of the earlier epiclesis calling upon the Holy Spirit to change the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. I have often wondered why the priest was never asked to extend his hands over the people for the secondary epiclesis as he does over the gifts for the first one.

The revised translation shows why. A comparison of the texts in Eucharistic Prayer III is a good place to notice this point. In the first translation, the priest says this: “Grant that we, who are nourished by his body and blood, / may be filled with his Holy Spirit, / and become one body, one spirit in Christ.” But the revised translation adheres more closely to the Latin and makes a slightly different prayer. It does not pray that we be filled with the Holy Spirit. It assumes that we are filled with the Holy Spirit as soon as we share communion. The prayer is rather for unity. Listen to the revised text: “grant that we who are nourished / by the Body and Blood of your Son / and filled with his Holy Spirit / may become

one body, one spirit in Christ.” We don’t have to pray for the Spirit. We just have to come up for communion. The Spirit is a gift.

In fact, everything is a gift, but sometimes the translation makes this difficult to grasp. One of the trickiest words to negotiate from the Latin is *mereor*, which ultimately gives us our English word “merit”. It’s a word that sounds downright Pelagian, and the first translation tiptoed around it rather effectively. However, the revised translation has entered the fray differently, and the results are certain to cause concern. There is a particularly vexing example at the end of Eucharistic Prayer II. Today we say, “make us worthy to share eternal life with Mary, the virgin Mother of God, with the apostles, and with all the saints.” But the revised translation asks God to have mercy on us that with the saints, “we may merit to be co-heirs to eternal life.”

The translators believed that the word *mereor* in Latin could be understood with two different words in English, though neither of them works very well in the context of a prayer such as this one. One word is “manage”; you can’t very well say, “that we may manage to be co-heirs to eternal life,” but that is more accurately the sense. It lessens what we do and contextualizes our efforts within the play of other forces. Another word, one that I think is an even better concept, is the word “get”: “that we may get to be co-heirs to eternal life,” but you have the same problem - the word is the wrong register for a liturgical translation. Still, it shows that what we receive is beyond what we could possibly earn. The English word “merit” has a very different sense; it implies that we are responsible for what we get, and with regard to the salvation that comes through this sacrifice, that is Pelagian. So the word “merit” is sure to cause concern in this instance. However, the rest of the clause softens the overall effect. It refers to us as “co-heirs to eternal life.” No one earns the right to be an heir. You become an heir by a gift. So to pray to merit to become co-heirs is a bit of an anomaly. It just seems to me that some other words would have clarified this, and that the present translation, “make us worthy to share eternal life” manages to avoid the controversy.

While we’re on the topic of the intercessions in the eucharistic prayer, I would like to say a word about the manner of praying for the dead. The prayers for the dead in the Roman Canon remember baptized members of the community who have died. In the first centuries of this canon’s usage, something like our prayer of the faithful was part of the eucharist, and deceased non-Christian family and friends could have been remembered at that time. The canon even has places for giving the names of the dead to be remembered at this mass, and the names of the living who requested these prayers. By contrast, the other eucharistic prayers do include prayer for non-believers among both the living and the dead. In many



parish masses, the name of the person for whom the mass is offered is mentioned in the prayer of the faithful, which often concludes with prayers for the dead. However, the General Instruction does not explicitly suggest that we do this. We may, of course, but when it describes the four purposes of the general intercessions, it never mentions prayer for the dead. Nor does it mention prayer for the pope and the local bishop, probably for the same reason - these intercessions acknowledge tacitly that we pray for them and for the dead in the eucharistic prayer instead. However, not all the eucharistic prayers give the priest a bright red letter N. in which to insert the name of a deceased person. Still, where that letter N. appears, the revised translation works better than the present one. Today in Eucharistic Prayer I, we say “Remember, Lord, those who have died and have gone before us marked with the sign of faith, especially those for whom we now pray, John and Mary.” The revision is, “Remember, Lord, your servants John and Mary, who have gone before us with the sign of faith and rest in the sleep of peace.” The line scans better than it did before. We still have to make some pastoral decisions about when is the best time to announce the mass intention and how does it best flow within the course of a walk through the mass.

The revised Order of Mass raised serious questions about the architecture of catholic churches. If the people are to become full active participants in the liturgy, then how does the shape of the building help? Postconciliar church architecture has favored a fan shape in which participants can view other participants, as well as a repositioning of the tabernacle off axis, so that the altar is clearly the center of focus for the celebration. This has met with no small reaction from those who believe that the basilica is still the best shell for Catholic churches. But this is hard to defend absolutely because of the emphasis that the postconciliar liturgy places on dialogues between the priest and the people as well as the double axis of sacrifice and communion. As we have seen, it is not the priest alone who offers the sacrifice. Everybody does that. So the participation of the many around the altar table remains a convincing architectural goal.

The revised translation is not going to have anything specific to say about the architecture of our churches, but the translation’s emphases on sacrifice and communion will affirm the direction that postconciliar architecture has taken.

In any time and season, through any generation, the celebration of the eucharist invites us to sacrifice and communion. We will authentically participate in the eucharist if we live in sacrifice and communion throughout the week. Most Christians do. Especially in family life, we find extraordinary examples of people who enjoy communion with the very people for whom they sacrifice. Perhaps especially at this moment in church history, we need to trust the same principles. There is much concern about the revised English translation of the mass because

people possess deeply-held principles about how the liturgy should sound. We all yearn for the eucharist to be our source of unity with one another and with God. We know we all have to suffer a bit to make this new translation work. That would be fine if we felt that we had chosen the suffering out of love. To have it imposed on us out of authority does not build the same kind of loving community that we envision the Church to be. There will be some difficulties ahead, but we need the eucharist to hold us together. We need to participate there in its one sacrifice and one communion of love.

**[Stardust]**

The liturgical act is an artistic act. Like music, it unfolds in time. Like architecture, it takes place within a stable building. Like theatre, it assigns roles, vesture, and lines. Like poetry, it addresses transcendent realities with well-chosen words.

There is an art to celebrating mass, an art to how who does what. A lot of the focus is on the presider - how he looks, moves, uses his voice, motions with his hands, focuses his eyes, and enunciates the texts, for example. But everyone is a presider at mass. The main difference between liturgy and theatre is that there are no spectators at mass. Everyone has a role to play. Some might argue that even in theatre, the audience really does have a role to play. They react to the plot, they laugh, cry, gasp, and applaud. When they are audibly present to the play, they contribute to the art. Non-congregational art forms exist in the recording industry, for example, where performers execute the music without any listener present in the studio. The reaction happens at home, or in the car, but by that time the art has been removed from live performance; it can be appreciated for its excellence, but it loses the dynamism that comes from live music.

One hope of the revised translation is that it will capture some of the artistry of the original texts. This desire for poetic expression has been countered with an opposing desire to eliminate words absent from ordinary speech. The main burden will fall to the priest - although I have also heard from musicians who say the burden will fall to them, and members of the assembly who say the burden will fall to them. I still think the priest has the most adjusting to do, and in his role as the celebrant, he sets the tone upon which everything else hangs. His primary responsibility is to lead the prayer. Most of the words addressed to God are handed over to the priest. He prays on behalf of everyone, of course, but he is often the spokesperson for the group.

For him to pray effectively, he should pray artfully. This means he should practice the art of praying every day. This is more than practicing the words of the collects and prefaces; he needs to practice the art of praying. When he stands up to say, "Let us pray," everyone should know that he is in his element. It's like an umpire saying, "Play." (That's what he's supposed to say at the start of the game according to the official rules of baseball; "Play ball" is a dynamic equivalence.) When an umpire says "play", you should hear confidence in the tone of his voice. The priest should be familiar with the terrain of prayer, its peaks and valleys, its precipitous climbs, its peaceful meadows, its crashing

shorelines, its dangers in the dark, and its sublimity in the light of eternal day. The priest needs to be that kind of an artist.

God is. The Nicene Creed says so. Most of the ink spilled over the Nicene Creed these days concerns the word “consubstantial”. “No one will be able to pronounce it. No one will know what it means even if they can pronounce it. If it means the same thing as ‘one in being’ why not say that?” And so on. I used to be among those concerned about that word, but I’m not anymore. I’m sympathetic to the argument that it needs to be as close to the original word as possible because the Council of Nicaea worked very hard on that word, and any paraphrase results in an expression that Nicaea would have rejected. Christians needed to name as carefully as possible the unique relationship between Jesus and the Father, and they chose a unique word. So I’m sympathetic to that, and to all the concerns people are raising about the word.

But there’s another word that occasionally gets some pushback - not often, but it’s there. That word is “maker”. “Why don’t we use ‘creator’?” people want to know. “A creator creates from nothing, but a maker is an inventor who uses pre-existing things,” they say. Well, the Council of Nicaea didn’t pick the word for creator. I’m not sure why they didn’t, but they didn’t. In Latin, the word is not “Creatorem”, but “Factorem”. That word, though, is a rather weak translation of a positively brilliant Greek word: *poietaes*. It’s the word that gives us our English word “poet”. We say “maker” in the Creed, but you could also say that God is the poet of heaven and earth; God is the one who gave everything rhythm, and made everything rhyme. When we create art, we continue God’s beautiful work of creation.

The Catholic liturgy is a playground for artists. Whatever your field, you have a home here: music, poetry, architecture, painting, sculpture, stained glass, metallurgy, even dance. The celebration of the eucharist is something living, a breathing art form, one in which heaven and earth meet in a glorious display of creation.

The revised translation is giving us a deeper appreciation of the artistry that gave us the texts of the mass. Now, as you would expect, some of the prayers are more artful than others. Sad to say, some of the newest compositions for the missal do not match the artistic creativity of some of the older ones. But it takes time for a good prayer to evolve. Some of the most beautiful collects and prefaces of the mass date back to the sixth century or earlier. They have had time to mature. Some of the prayers written after the Second Vatican Council have not had much reformatting. Some of the longest sentences in the missal, for example, are from post-Vatican II compositions, efforts to cram a lot of theology into an itty

bitty prayer. For example, people sometimes complain about the length of this sentence in the revised Eucharistic Prayer III: “You are indeed Holy, O Lord, / and all you have created / rightly gives you praise, / for through your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, / by the power and working of the Holy Spirit, / you give life to all things and make them holy, / and you never cease to gather a people to yourself, / so that from the rising of the sun to its setting / a pure sacrifice may be offered to your name.” 72 words, 1 sentence. 47 words in Latin. In the present translation, it is 3 independent sentences. But, just so you know, in Spanish it’s also 1 sentence with 57 words, some of which are compounds. My point is that it’s a newer prayer, and it lacks the concision that distinguishes some older prayers.

As an example of an economical Latin prayer, a real work of art, consider the collect for the optional memorial of St. Stephen of Hungary. It’s hard to know what to make of Stephen. He was born as a duke in the late 10<sup>th</sup> century, but through a series of wars, he consolidated enough land to convince Pope Sylvester II that Stephen should be made a king and have his own archbishop. (Sylvester, by the way, was a scientist before he became pope and, because of his fascination with Arabs and their abilities at arithmetic, he is credited with reintroducing the abacus to Europe, and replacing Roman numerals with Arabic numerals. He was the Steve Jobs of his day, though with a different haberdasher. He is buried in St. John Lateran - Pope Sylvester, that is, not Steve Jobs - or his haberdasher - inside a pillar facing the right aisle not far from the front door. Because of a mistranslation of the Latin inscription on his tomb, there’s a legend that Sylvester’s bones rattle just before the death of a pope. Talk about your *ars celebrandi*.) Back in Hungary, Stephen established dioceses and churches, he took tithes from people, and he reorganized the code of law. He seems to have imposed Christianity upon some unwilling subjects, largely by asking the Benedictines of all people to get busy converting the masses. He used ruthless methods to extinguish paganism throughout the land (and here I’m referring to his armies, not his Benedictines), though biographers say he was very good to the poor. Anyway, for a guy who comes down to us as a canonized bully, and merits a mere optional memorial on the universal calendar, he has a stunningly poetic collect: *Concede, quaesumus, Ecclesiae tuae, omnipotens Deus, ut beatum Stephanum, quem regnantem in terris propagatorem habuit, propugnatorem habere mereatur gloriosum in caelis*. ICEL’s gray book translation is this: “Grant to your Church, we pray, almighty God, / that she may be worthy to have Saint Stephen of Hungary, / who fostered her growth while a king on earth, / as her glorious champion in heaven. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, etc.” It’s not a bad prayer. Now, you can criticize the formal equivalence in several places here. The word *beatum* is rendered as “Saint”. This has happened throughout the revised translation. The Latin prayers consistently call our saints “blessed”, but this is

continuously translated as “saint” for the sake of clarity. *mereatur* becomes “may be worthy,” which, at first blush, appears to circumvent the obvious cognate “merit”, but probably does a better job at rendering the actual meaning of the word in this context. The words “of Hungary” do not appear anywhere in the Latin text, but they have been inserted again for the sake of clarity, lest the bleary-eyed faithful attending the 6 a.m. mass on August 16<sup>th</sup> think that they have somehow awakened in warped Dickensian fashion to the day after Christmas. A slavishly literal translation of *quem regnantem in terris propagatorem habuit* would refer to the Church’s relationship to Stephen something like this: “whom she had as a king-reigning evangelist on earthly lands.” No one would object to the looser translation “who fostered her growth while a king on earth.” And a slavishly literal translation of *propugnatorem habere mereatur gloriosum in caelis* would be something like “she may have as a glorious champion in heavenly places,” which, again, no one would object to have sorted out as “as her glorious champion in heaven.” But what you don’t get out of ICEL’s translation, and which is nearly impossible to get in English is the play on words between *propagatorem* and *propugnatorem* - evangelist and champion; or, the “pugnacious propagator.” I find it ironic that a guy as driven as Stephen of Hungary ends up with such a delicately poetic prayer. But here is a place where the artistry of the Latin prayer has powers to gentrify the savage beast.

As another example of artistry in translation, take a look at the preface we use for the mass of chrism. It’s the same one in force for ordination masses. It’s a new composition, and one of the components of the chrism mass that dangerously tips the balance of its meaning from initiation to ordination. The renewal of priestly promises is a recent addition to this mass, promoted by Cardinal John Wright as a well-intentioned seizing of the moment when priests had gathered to concelebrate with their bishop. Very early in the records of the mass of chrism we find evidence that the priests of the region gathered with their bishop for this particular event. Although the practice of concelebration has faced objections, the chrism mass possesses a unique pedigree as an occasion for priests and bishop to pray together. Those who administer the sacraments of initiation in their parishes join the bishop for the consecration of their chrism in a celebration of diocesan unity. When they administer those sacraments, they do so in the name of the bishop, who serves as the point of unification for the local church. Even so, the whole point of the exercise is to get the oils ready for the Easter Vigil. The oil of the sick was included as a kind of little brother, too young to make the baseball team, but allowed to serve as batboy for the sake of peace in the family. However, the gathering of so many concelebrants and the renewal of priestly promises have so dominated the liturgy, that you might presume that even the consecration of chrism at the chrism mass is done because that is the oil that you

need to anoint priests. Well, you need that oil to anoint priests, but look at the text of that prayer sometime. It has nothing to do with priesthood. The chrism is consecrated for the sake of baptism. The chrism mass is all about the baptized and anointed priestly people of God. But that gets obscured partly because of the length of the consecration prayer, which people have a hard time following, and the other symbols that so definitively reinterpret the mass as a celebration of priesthood. The preface is a case in point.

Even so, abstracting from the appropriateness of using this particular preface on this particular occasion, it provides a beautiful source of meditation for priests, a real work of art. After all, it is the same preface that they heard on the day of their ordination. Here is ICEL's gray book translation: "It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God; for by the anointing of the Holy Spirit you established your Only-Begotten Son as High Priest of the new and eternal covenant, and by your ineffable plan were pleased to ordain that his one Priesthood should continue in the Church. For Christ not only adorns with royal priesthood the people he makes his own, but with a brother's goodness he also chooses men to become sharers in his sacred ministry through the laying on of hands. He chooses them to renew in his name the sacrifice of human redemption, to set before your children the paschal banquet, to lead your holy people in charity, to nourish them with your word, and strengthen them with the Sacraments as they strive to be conformed to the image of Christ himself, giving up their lives for you and for the salvation of their brothers and sisters, and offering you a constant witness of faith and love. And so, Lord, with all the Angels and Saints, we give you thanks as we acclaim in exultation."

The preface opens as most of them now will: "It is truly right and just." The link between the end of the preface dialogue and the start of the preface was obscured in the present translation. The preface dialogue ends with the phrase *Dignum et iustum est* - "It is right and just." But for decades, in English, we have been saying "It is right to give him thanks and praise," or, for those who don't like the word "him" and take matters into their own hands, "It is right to give God thanks and praise" or even, "It is right to give our thanks and praise." This is one tiny example of an inclusive language issue that is fading away with the revised translation. The Latin word for "him" is nowhere to be found in the original phrase, *Dignum et iustum est*. I cannot tell you how many times in the revised translation the inclusive language difficulties disappear when you simply translate what is there. Instead of fixing it to become more inclusive, the translators went back to the original and discovered in many cases that the problem never existed. I think the first translators expanded this particular phrase for two reasons. First,

if you say, “It is right and just,” people might wonder, “Well, what is right and just?” The answer is in the previous line, giving “thanks to the Lord our God.” The other reason for this line’s expanded first translation is that it served a catechetical purpose for people who were going to hear the Eucharistic Prayer out loud in the vernacular for the first time in their lives. Most of them probably thought it was a prayer of adoration, highlighted by the elevations of the consecrated bread and wine. But as I have noted, it is a prayer of thanksgiving and sanctification. So to help people get ready for it, their words were expanded to “It is right to give him thanks and praise.” The inclusive language issues had not yet come to the fore, so the male personal pronoun raised no alarm at first. Incidentally, a similar decision was made near the beginning of Eucharistic Prayer I, right after the Sanctus. In the present translation, the priest has said, “We come to you, Father, with praise and thanksgiving.” Well, those four words, “with praise and thanksgiving,” are not in the Latin original of the Roman Canon. They never have been. The first translators included them probably as a catechetical device to let people know the purpose of the prayer they were about to hear. So, the simpler response of the people in the revised translation, “It is right and just,” has been freed up to introduce the first line of the preface, “It is truly right and just.” This is only one example of how the artful nature of a preface’s opening lines will come to light.

The preface opens with a reference to the establishment of Christ as high priest by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The word “ineffable” appears here in ICEL’s gray book translation. This has been one of the touchstone words criticizing the vocabulary of the revised translation. Well, OK, but the Latin word is *ineffabili*, and when used in a complete sentence, I think it is a word that people can understand. I see the word “ineffable” in popular journals, and as far as I know, no one has written a letter to the editor or canceled a subscription on its account. But, if you can move past that word, and I concede that some people cannot, you will also see a slight change in the translation from the phrase “this one priesthood” to “his one Priesthood.” The revised preface makes it clearer that not just a single priesthood, but specifically the priesthood of Jesus Christ is continuing in the Church. The preface also says that Christ shares his priesthood with chosen “men” through the laying on of hands. I find it interesting, and this is all I’m going to say about this point is that I find it interesting, that when the postconciliar study group composed in Latin this particular preface about those with whom Christ shared the priesthood, the members chose the word *homines*, not *vires*. Literally, the Latin says that Christ, with a brother’s goodness, also chooses not males, but human beings to become sharers in his sacred ministry. It is one of the few instances when the revised translation agrees with the current



translation and chooses a more dynamically equivalent word than a formally equivalent one. I find that interesting.

Then the preface goes on to list some of the duties of ordained priests, and this is the section I find so poetic: they renew the sacrifice of human redemption, they set the paschal banquet before God's children, they lead God's holy people in charity, they nourish them with God's word, and they strengthen God's people with the sacraments. They do this as they strive to be conformed to the image of Christ himself, giving up their lives for God and for the salvation of their brothers and sisters, and offering God a constant witness of faith and love.

This text is quite rich. Here are some questions it provokes for priests: How do you renew the sacrifice? How do you set the paschal banquet for God's children? How do you lead God's holy people in charity? How do you nourish them with your word? How do you strengthen them with the Sacraments? How do you strive to be conformed to the image of Christ? How do you give up your life for God and for the salvation of others? How are you a constant witness of faith and love? Now, any priest who wants to develop the *ars celebrandi* would do well to reflect on this section of this preface. If Christ is the high priest who has shared his priesthood with them, how should they be living it out? If they can name ways that they perform these responsibilities, then they will bring greater authenticity to their celebration of the eucharist. They will preside with sincerity, preach with authority, and pray with confidence.

These are a few examples of how the texts of the mass can be sources of meditation. It is possible to go quite deeply into them. I really think that the revised translation, by culling out more nuance from the original texts, will be providing us with a more poetic style of public prayer that will sound better if we meditate on the prayers first. The prayer tradition of the church does not carry the same weight as the biblical tradition. These texts are not scriptural and they do not deserve the same reverence the bible does. But they are based on the bible, and they may help school us in prayer. They should even help us reflect more deeply on the scriptures upon which they are based.

In the Christian life, if you want to develop your own *ars celebrandi*, whatever your liturgical role, let me recommend one specific strategy for you: become a patron of the arts. The Catholic Church has a long history of this, but the present record is not so admirable. Perhaps the Renaissance is the most glorious example, and to be fair not every city in every generation can simultaneously produce a Leonardo, a Michelangelo, and a Raffaello as Florence did in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but look at the treasure of art from which the entire human race benefits because the

Catholic Church took an interest in sculpture, painting, architecture, poetry and music.

Things are different now. A lot of so-called religious art is mass-produced, and people are disinclined to pay unknown individual artisans for work that may or may not be popular. Often, the more popular the art form, the less its artistic value. The modern art collection at the Vatican Museums is a good idea but a rather tepid venture. The music being composed for singing at mass is of inconsistent merit. We have quantity, but we often lack quality. Classical and popular music have evolved considerably over the past 40 years, but liturgical music is progressing at about half that pace. Some composers write music that sounds good on a recording, or when they sing it solo, but that fails when assigned to a congregation. Composers can score some complicated rhythms, but very few people are singing sixteenth notes precisely off the beat or triplets evenly distributed. A lot of the music is artful and prayerful, but this idiom can still grow. A piece composed last week usually sounds like a piece composed twenty years ago - except now for the words. Have we really learned nothing more about music?

Good patrons of the arts look forward as well as back. Yes, we need to treasure the fine artistic work of past generations, but we owe it to our contemporary society, and the next generation, to create art that they will appreciate too, and help them to know about us.

Priests, deacons, lectors and anyone with a speaking role will learn by listening and observing professional speakers - actors in live theatre, for example. Many priests never get to hear anyone else deliver a homily; they cannot compare their own style very well with that of another preacher. Musicians improve when they go to concerts and hear live how others execute their art. I sometimes hear people distinguish between performance and prayer as if the two are mutually distinct. Nobody likes church musicians who draw attention to themselves. Well, nobody likes a professional performer who does either. Good musical performance is always about the music, not about the musician, and the same is true of liturgical music. It is really about prayer, not anything else.

All of us are artists in one way or another. We are all called upon to exercise an *ars celebrandi* at the eucharist. We will do this well if we invest some time in the transcendental beauty of the world of art. The liturgy holds a natural place next to the world of art, and it becomes a place where the arts and prayer marry. To develop the arts at church also requires developing the arts at every layer of society - preserving programs in schools, supporting city-wide efforts that promote

the arts, and including them in our life. The arts improve society. The arts improve the liturgy.

A final thought: I realize that for many people, the coming of the revised translation is worrisome. They are comfortable with the prayers we have. They are suspicious about the motives of those who performed this work and imposed its results. They despair that the liturgy of the future will be impoverished compared with the liturgy of the present. It is hard to embrace a new translation with these apprehensions. If the transition does not go well, people will think back on today's liturgy the way someone thinks of a song that used to trigger affection for a person who is now a former lover: "Sometimes I wonder why I spend / The lonely nights dreaming of a song. / The melody haunts my reverie / And I am once again with you / When our love was new, / And each kiss an inspiration. / Ah but that was long ago / Now my consolation is in the stardust of a song. / Beside the garden walls when stars are bright / You are in my arms. / The nightingale tells his fairy tale / Of paradise where roses grew. / Though I dream in vain / in my heart it will remain / My stardust melody / The memory of love's refrain." It's a depressing lyric, but it defines the state of life that many people fear they are going to face when the prayers, the community, and the Church they knew segue into a new relationship. We have to be ready for our own sense of loss, before we can help along those who grieve more. But there is great artistry in the mass, even and especially in a revised translation, if we are willing to invest ourselves in a new relationship. And who knows? It could be a gateway to mystery. It could be - in ways we cannot now imagine - a more satisfying lover than the one we knew before.