

# The Third Edition of **THE ROMAN MISSAL**

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Over the past several years, you have probably been hearing about the revised translation of The Roman Missal and about how the words of our prayers at Mass are changing. In fact, we are praying with this new English translation for the first time on the First Sunday of Advent, 2011, which is the first Sunday in this 2012 edition of At Home with the Word.

These changes do not pertain to the scripture that we hear proclaimed at Mass. The Lectionary for Mass, which contains the scripture, is not changing.

But the prayers we pray at Mass (the framework in which we hear the scripture proclaimed) have changed. One of the results of the changes—which will particularly interest readers of At Home with the Word—is that the words of scripture are more noticeable in our prayers. In the original Latin, our prayers have always incorporated direct quotations from scripture, but this was not always noticeable in the English translation. Now it is.

The red book used by the priest during Mass has been called The Sacramentary. It contains the prayers, chants, and instructions (rubrics) used to celebrate Mass. Most of the prayers we recite or sing at Mass are in this book, and these are the prayers that have been retranslated from the original Latin into English. Now we call this book The Roman Missal.

—The Editor

## **Why Revise?**

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by Kristopher W. Seaman

The prayer texts with which we were familiar were from the English translation of the Missal of Pope Paul VI, published in 1969 at the end of the Second Vatican Council. At that Council, it was decided that liturgical texts could be prayed officially in vernacular languages, and that liturgical books should be reformed. The Bishops then reformed the liturgical books for the sacraments, including the Eucharist,

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or Mass. The result was the 1969 Missal of Paul VI, a fully revised book, though published in Latin. Subsequently, the Missal was translated into vernacular languages around the world.

In 2000, to commemorate the new millennium, Pope John Paul II established a third edition of The Roman Missal. This edition includes more ancient prayers, as well as saints' days that have been established since the publication of the Missal of Pope Paul VI. As with all liturgical books, this edition of The Roman Missal was first published in Latin. Thus, national Bishops' conferences have been working to translate the Missal in the local languages of the people.

One reason for this revised translation is obviously the additions to the Missal. The second is due to new norms for translating liturgical texts. The document Liturgiam Authenticam (Fifth Instruction "For the Right Implementation of the Constitution"), from the Holy See, called for a more literal translation of the Latin. A considerable amount of time

was spent trying to accurately translate the Latin texts into English in a literal manner. This work was done by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL).

Although the Holy See approved some of the texts in 2008, they were not to be used at Mass until Rome had approved the entire translation and provided an implementation date. The wait for the approval of all of the prayers of the Mass allowed time for the composition of music for the Gloria, the Sanctus, and other parts of the Order of Mass, and time for pastoral leaders to begin educating their assemblies.

## The Changes

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by Daniel Merz

(Editor's note: The following article is an edited version of what first appeared in The Catholic Missourian, the diocesan newspaper of the Diocese of Jefferson City, Missouri. This appears here with the permission of Father Merz.)

## A LITERAL TRANSLATION

“And with your spirit.” One of the most discussed revisions of the prayer texts of the Mass is the response “And with your spirit” to “The Lord be with you.” This is a revision in which the Bishops did not have a choice. Liturgiam Authenticam (LA), 57, specifically mentions that the Latin expression Et cum spiritu tuo must be translated as literally as possible. Of the major European languages, English is the only one that did not include the “spirit” in the response in the dialogue with the priest. Also, there is a theological rationale behind the phrase “And with your spirit.” It is only used in response to an ordained minister. In those instances in the liturgy when a non-ordained member leads the assembly in prayer (for example, a Holy Communion service, the Liturgy of the Hours), the minister will not say, “The Lord be with you” because, in part, the minister does not receive the phrase in return “And with your spirit.” The “spirit” that is mentioned here refers to the spirit received in ordination. It is

an affirmation by the assembly that this person has received the proper anointing with the spirit in order to lead him in sacramental ministry. It is less about the person of the priest, than the office of the priesthood, which is supported and guaranteed by the Spirit of God given in ordination.

## PENITENTIAL ACT

“Through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault.” Turning to the Confiteor, we see another change mandated by LA, 57. The actual prayer of the Church has the threefold admission of fault, and the English translation formerly in use simply did not translate it. In the language of Jesus (Aramaic), a threefold repetition of something marks a superlative degree. Thus, for example, “holy, holy, holy, Lord” is the same as saying “most holy Lord,” though it is perhaps more poetic. It also stresses the personal nature of sin and the reality of sin—things which Christians do well never to forget.

An option for the Penitential Act that is not used often has been revised significantly. All four lines from this option are from the Old Testament: the first two from Baruch 3:2, and the next two from Psalm 85:8. Possibly the former translation was designed to simplify the people's parts, but the actual prayer of the Church calls for the dialogue, which is restored in the revised translation.

### GLORIA

“On earth peace to people of good will.” In the revised translation of the Gloria, “on earth peace to people of good will” will replace the phrase “peace to his people on earth.” The phrase that the new translation provides is a closer translation of the Latin. Also, theologically, the Church stresses the importance of the will, both human and divine. When a human will is ordered to the divine will, then it is a “good will,” and then true peace will be experienced.

“We praise you, we bless you . . . .”

The revised translation's “We praise you, / we bless you, / we adore you, / we glorify you, / we give you thanks for your great glory” provides five verbs to the Gloria, whereas before there were three. This was a common practice in the former translation. The Latin was believed to be too florid for contemporary English, and so many of the adjectives were dropped, and phrases were often combined or reduced.

“Only Begotten Son.” That the revised translation adds the phrase “Only Begotten Son” is another example of the way in which the former translation combined terms. In the Latin, Christ is referred to as “Only begotten Son” and later “Son of the Father.” The modifier “begotten” is important since the Father has many children both by creation and by adoption, but only one Son who was begotten from before the world began.

“You take away the sins of the world.” The phrase “you take away the sins of the world” (words of John the Baptist; see John 1:29) occurs in the Latin prayer twice. At each occurrence, a different response follows the phrase: first, “have mercy on us” and then “receive our prayer.” In the former translation, the prayer has been rewritten.

## NICENE CREED

“I believe.” In its original form, the Nicene Creed begins “We believe,” yet the traditions of both the Latin and Greek Christians have traditionally begun with “I believe” when it is used within the liturgy. Saint Thomas Aquinas (Summa Theologiae IIa IIae 1, 9) says that the Church proclaims the Creed as a single person, made one by faith. The Church is calling us to take personal responsibility for our faith by the use of the singular “I.”

“Of all things visible and invisible.” The phrase “of all things visible and invisible” that replaces “of all that is seen and unseen” refers to Colossians 1:16, “for in him all

things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible.” The change from “seen and unseen” was made because the unseen can be, in principle, visible (for example, a remote galaxy), or unseen and invisible (for example, an angel).

“Consubstantial.” The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments recommended the phrase “consubstantial with the Father” replace “one in being with the Father.” The root word “substance” is originally a technical, philosophical term that refers to the most real part of a being. Literally, it refers to that which “stands under” its base, that which is at the heart of someone or something.

The other part of this term, which is very attractive, is the first three letters “con.” This comes from the Latin preposition “cum,” meaning “together with.” Within the Creed, consubstantial means that Christ was of one substance with the Father, but it also implies one substance with our humanity. He is co-substantial, referring therein to the two natures of Christ.

The former translation “one in being” does not have this kind of multivalence. Also, it is believed that the former phrase is not as precise. The English word “being” has a broader meaning than the philosophical term “substance.” Insofar as my being comes from the Father, one could argue that myself and all creation, all that is, shares “being” with the Father, though we do not share the same interior substance.

“And by the Holy spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary.”

In an earlier version of the Creed, it was stated that the Son was “born of the Father before all ages.” Here, in relation to Mary, a different word is used. Christ was not simply “born” of the virgin. He was enfleshed by her; he was “incarnate” by her. Mary’s unique role in our salvation was to provide the humanity, the flesh, for Christ. The new translation makes this more explicit and precise. Also, the new translation changes “by the power of the Holy Spirit” to “by the Holy Spirit.” This is what the Creed of the Church actually professes. One must be precise in a creed.

Christ was not conceived by some emanation of the Holy Spirit, by a removed “power” of the Spirit. Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit. The new translation rectifies this potential confusion.

“He suffered death and was buried.”

The literal wording of the Latin creed states that “he suffered and was buried.” The translators inserted “death” for the sake of clarity, and this was approved by Rome. The end of this sentence “in accordance with the scriptures” adheres more closely to the text as given in Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians 15:3–4.

“I confess.” To confess something means more than acknowledging it. It means to proclaim it and encourage it with others. The Latin original is the same verb used in the Penitential Act, Confiteor.

“And I look forward to.” The Creed does not intend that we simply sit and wait for the resurrection to come to us, but rather that we are straining forward toward it as well. Sometimes subtle changes bring about increased richness in meaning.

## APOSTLES' CREED

“He descended into hell.” (See also the commentary on the Nicene Creed.) Two changes remain to highlight. First, “he descended into hell.” The original Latin word for “hell” here is “inferos,” literally, “the lower ones,” that is, the underworld. In early English, this abode of the dead was called “hell”; thus, the story of Christ in the tomb, descending to the lower regions to free all awaiting redemption, was given the title in medieval times “the harrowing of hell.” Here, “hell” refers to this abode of the dead, and not to a place of eternal damnation.

“From the dead.” The new version has two phrases: Christ descended to “hell” (inferos), and he rose again “from the dead” (a mortuis). The former translation only rendered one of these phrases and left out the other. The new translation pays attention to both. Stating that Christ rose “from the dead” makes clear that he has conquered death and left behind all traces of it. Because of Christ’s Resurrection, there is no death in him at all, and this is the hope for all who follow him.

## PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS

“Holy.” In the prayer that the assembly prays at the close of the preparation of the gifts, just before the priest-celebrant begins the preface dialogue, the new translation restores the adjective “holy” to the Church.

## PREFACE

“Right and just.” The two adjectives “right” and “just” refer both to the goodness (right) as well as the duty (just) to return thanks to God. These two words also act as prelude to the first words of the prayer that follows (the Preface). That prayer begins, “It is truly right and just.”

## SANCTUS

“God of hosts.” The former translation was actually taken from the Anglican Book of Common Prayer. The new version is not only a more accurate account of the original prayer of the Church but embodies a more precise echo of Isaiah 6:3. “God of hosts” is a translation of the Latin “Deus

Sabaoth.” “Sabaoth” is plural and evokes the image of the angelic armies who serve God night and day.

## MYSTERY OF FAITH

Prior to the Second Vatican Council, the phrase “the mystery of faith” was not a separate acclamation, but part of the Eucharistic Prayer prayed by the priest (actually a part of the Institution Narrative, specifically the words over the chalice). With the liturgical reforms following the Council, Pope Paul VI approved making this phrase the introductory line for an acclamation recited by all. The former English translation facilitated that shift by adding the words “Let us proclaim” to “the mystery of faith.” The actual prayer of the Church, however, had never changed. The new translation removes the additions for a couple of reasons: first, to be more accurate to the actual prayer of the Church; second, to relate the shortened phrase to what has gone before in the prayer as well as to what follows. No longer an introductory line, it is

a proclamation in its own right. The priest prays the words of Christ over the bread and wine, genuflects, and says, “The mystery of faith.” This announces to all what is happening on the altar. The assembly responds to the sacrifice of the cross on the altar by proclaiming one of the acclamations that follow.

“Christ has died.” In The Roman Missal, the Church provides three options for Memorial Acclamations. The acclamation “Christ has died . . .” is not in The Roman Missal.

“We proclaim your death.” The first acclamation comes almost entirely from 1 Corinthians 11:26. The new translation returns to this more biblical rendering. The former translation was rhetorically pleasing but portrayed the Church as telling Christ what he is doing: “Dying, you destroyed our death; rising, you restored our life.” Rather, the Church’s prayer is actually a profession of faith in what Christ has done: “We proclaim your Death . . . and profess your Resurrection . . . .” The last line

of this acclamation is not a command to Christ as the former translation would have it, “Lord Jesus, come in glory.” Rather, it is a statement of our resolve to profess our faith and never to cease doing so “until you come again.”

“When we eat this Bread . . . until you come again.” With minor adjustments, the second acclamation more accurately reflects the prayer of the Church. This acclamation, too, is a slightly different edit of the scripture from 1 Corinthians 11:26.

“Save us, Savior of the world.” The third acclamation from the Gospel of John 4:42 (“We know that this is truly the Savior of the world”) is a plea to the Savior, present in the mystery on the altar, to save us by the sacrifice of his cross and Resurrection. The reworking of these three acclamations makes it clearer that we are responding to (and addressing) the mystery present on the altar. The new translation returns to the Church’s intention of drawing the assembly more deeply into the mystery re-presented on the altar.

## LAMB OF GOD

“Behold.” In the dialogue between priest and people prior to Communion, the priest-celebrant begins with the more evocative and poetic “Behold” instead of the prosaic “This is . . . .” The new translation aims through language to create a greater sense of the sacred, thus “blessed” replaces “happy.” The last phrase of the priest’s introduction is a quote from Revelation 19:9: “Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” The new translation brings out more faithfully and clearly the connection between our Eucharist and the heavenly banquet for which we long.

“That you should enter under my roof.” In the original prayer of the Church, the assembly’s response is a quote from Luke 7:6–7. The new translation is more faithful to the scripture that underlies this prayer, calling to mind the faith, humility, and reverence of the centurion who, in Luke’s account of the Gospel, sought the healing power of Jesus

but felt unworthy for Jesus to come under the roof of his house. The Christian who approaches the altar should have the same faith, humility, and reverence in preparing to receive the Eucharist.

### CONCLUSION

It is important for Catholics to realize that the prayers and actions of the Mass are thoroughly scriptural, and indeed all of Catholic liturgy is thoroughly scriptural. The new translation allows the underlying scriptural texts to stand forth more strongly, even at the cost of a slightly odd turn of phrase.

Find additional information on [The Roman Missal](http://www.RevisedRomanMissal.org) at LTP's Web site, [www.RevisedRomanMissal.org](http://www.RevisedRomanMissal.org).