

Number One: Why a New Mass?

The Church's liturgy is constantly adapting to present our faith and spiritual practices more authentically as our culture continues to change. These adaptations reflect the timeless truths of our faith and our liturgical heritage while remaining true to the language, faith and liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church. The current form of the Mass that we celebrate in English has remained unchanged since it was first implemented over 30 years ago. With the lessons we learned since its implementation, and paying attention to the best translation practices available to us today, we have a new opportunity to express what the Church believes. The New Missal uses language which is not only closer to the original prayers (many of which are over 1,000 years old) but also reflects a more 'formal' or dignified way of addressing Almighty God. The New Missal also includes changes made to the Calendar of Saints with the addition of many new saints, including our Canadian St. Brother André! We do not often think of it, but there is indeed a "Roman" Catholic way of praying. With a distinctive liturgical style that is true to our heritage and our way of worshipping God going back close to two thousand years, the New Missal will be an opportunity for all of us to encounter the Roman Catholic Mass again for the first time.

Number Two: Why New Words?

The language in which we pray together at Mass is special, a simple, dignified, formal way of talking to God. The language we use to speak with God should sound different than the everyday speech we use with our friends to help us remember Who we are praying to – God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Some parts of the New Mass will have noticeable changes, such as the Gloria or the Creed, but other parts have not changed, such as the Our Father. Many prayers at Mass will sound a little different than the words we have used for the last 30 years but this will give us a new opportunity to listen carefully to what we are saying when we pray. There is an expression that reminds us that what we pray shows and teaches what we believe: *lex orandi, lex credendi*. It is quite amazing to think that the words we will be using are

close to the way Catholic Christians prayed for many centuries: it is proof of the timeless and enduring faith of the Church that we will hand on to the next generation of Catholic Christians.

Number Three: Why Do We Use Latin for Mass?

In the West, the Mother Tongue of the Church has been Latin since the Church was established in Rome. After the Second Vatican Council, the Church gave permission for the Mass to be translated from the official Latin version into other languages with the approval of the Vatican. Pope John Paul II first announced the New Missal eleven years ago. The English-speaking world is the first language group to translate the New Missal from the official, original Latin text. The Catholic Church continues to produce her official documents in Latin and in this way every language group has a common 'reference text' to use to make sure we are saying and meaning the same things. At the last World Youth Day in Australia, it was a powerful moment when youths from so many different cultures could pray the Our Father together in one voice in Latin. It was a powerful sign of our unity of faith in public prayer in the Mass. Latin will not replace English as the language in which we celebrate Mass on Sunday, but understanding its importance as the 'core' or original language of the Roman Catholic Church is helpful and important.

Number Four: Why Does the New Mass Sound So Different?

When the Church decided to translate the New Latin Missal into English, the most up to date translation methods were used. Experts in Latin, liturgy, English, poetry, music and translation, as well as many other disciplines were all consulted in order to produce the best translation possible. The previous translation tried to keep the sense of the words in English but it was not trying to be as literally accurate as possible. After thirty years of experience with the current translation we saw that we had lost some important content by loosely paraphrasing the Latin prayers into English. We also noticed how we had compromised the Roman-Latin style of the prayers. The New Missal has the most

accurate translation of the Latin prayers and it is closest to what the Church prayed for centuries. Sometimes the translators had to use words or phrases that sound more formal or 'old fashioned' to translate the Latin words and ideas into English because that was the most accurate way to keep the original meaning. But almost all of the translations were able to balance a good, accurate translation with simple and dignified language and a Roman 'style' of prayer that help us to remember that we are speaking to God who is deserving of all of our love and respect.

Number Five: Why “And With Your Spirit?”

“The Lord be with you” and the response, “and with your spirit”, echo St. Paul’s conclusion in his letters to the Galatians and to Timothy (Gal 6:18 and 2 Tim 4:22). This greeting is used 4 times during Mass. The celebrant bishop or priest uses it at the beginning of Mass, during the Preface Dialogue before the Eucharistic Prayer and at the End of Mass. The deacon uses it (or in his absence the priest) before the Gospel. In the New Missal the response matches the original Latin text “And with your spirit”. This revision conforms the Mass in English with the Mass in French and all other languages that refer to the “spirit”. “Spirit” signifies the spirit given to the bishop, priest or deacon at his ordination for service to the Church. St. Paul reminds us “there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.” (1 Cor 12:4-6) The revised greeting and response help us to remember that the Holy Spirit empowers the celebration of the sacraments in which God blesses, heals, forgives, strengthens and nourishes us.

Number Six: Why the Changes to the Penitential Act?

There are several different options for this part of the Mass: we will look at the *Confiteor* (I Confess) this week. When we admit in public together that we have sinned, it emphasizes that we gather as a community where each person has need of God’s mercy. This version is closer to the Latin original text and has strong connections to scripture:

King David admitted to the Lord that he had greatly sinned (1 Chronicles 21:8); and the repetition that we have sinned through “my fault” three times and the striking of our breast with our fist recalls the tax collector who stood at the back of the temple who humbled himself before God (Luke 18:13). By striking our breast with a closed hand we show we want to crush the sin that lies in our heart and humble ourselves before God to receive His mercy. In the Prayer of Absolution the priest asks or petitions God to be merciful to us: “May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life”. But this is not the absolution we receive in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The emphasis in the whole Penitential Act is something very positive and hope-filled because it highlights our need and desire for God’s loving, abundant, mercy.

Number Seven: Why the Changes to the *Gloria*?

If we examine the previous text of the Gloria alongside the new version, we note that although the wording has been expanded, it does not sound very different. There are changes but it does not seem as if we are praying something altogether new. The new version makes it clear at the beginning of Mass that we are gathering to do something utterly different from whatever else we do during the week. We are participating with heaven and earth in the Divine Liturgy, blending our voices with those of angels and saints. The Gloria’s opening words repeat the message of the angels to the shepherds at the birth of Christ: “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to people of good will” (Luke 2:14). Though human, we are privileged to join the angels in praising God and participate in the heavenly liturgy. The Gloria possesses rhetorical devices, such as repeating a word or a phrase, that reflect speech patterns from early Christianity. They highlight the reality that this is no ordinary “thank you” we are expressing to a friend or loved one. Instead, we are joining angelic choirs in adoring the Trinity.

Number Eight: Changes to the Creed

The word “creed” comes from the Latin “credo” which means “I believe”. In the Nicene Creed we notice right away the change from “we believe” to “I believe”. When we

express our faith using the Creed we are expressing not only what the Church as a whole believes but what we as individual Christians with a personal relationship with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit believe. Some of the other changes might seem minor, like the change to “visible and invisible” from “seen and unseen” but even these small changes reflect a deeper meaning. An object is ‘unseen’ when something else blocks our view of it, but invisible realities, like the angels for example, are always ‘unseen’ but that doesn’t make them less real! There are other changes too that more accurately reflect our faith that will need to be explained in more detail such as the words “consubstantial with the Father” and “incarnate of the Virgin Mary”. It might seem like we are being very picky about the words we use, but how we pray reflects and shapes our beliefs and so we ought to use words which convey as accurately possible our strongly held beliefs.

Number Nine: The Preparation of the Gifts:

One of the most noticeable changes is the priest’s injunction during the preparation of the gifts to the people: “Pray brothers and sisters that *my sacrifice and yours* may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father”. The sacrifice that we all offer at Mass is not only the bread and wine that will become the Body and Blood of Christ but also the sacrifice of our daily work, our prayers, and our family life – in short, the sacrifice of every area of our lives - that we all offer to God at every Mass. There is a Catholic traditional prayer that many people pray at the beginning of the day called “The Morning Offering” where we offer to God the whole day and everything in it – our works, our joys, our sufferings and our hopes – which echoes this total sacrifice of our lives to God. That is why everyone who attends Mass participates in the sacrifice of the Mass in offering themselves on the altar with the bread and wine to God and so we reflect that reality in the priest’s words “*my sacrifice and yours* may be acceptable”.

The Morning Offering:

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer you my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day for all the intentions of your Sacred Heart, in union with the holy sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, in thanksgiving for your favors, in reparation

for my sins, for the intentions of all my relatives and friends, and in particular for the intentions of the Holy Father. Amen.

Number Ten: The Prefaces to the Eucharistic Prayer

The Prayer before the Eucharistic Prayer is called the “Preface”. There are many different ones that reflect the special feasts and celebrations during the liturgical year but the first part of all of the Prefaces is the same. It begins with “The Lord be with you” (and the people respond: “And with your spirit”) and it continues with “Lift up your hearts”. The people’s response is: “We lift them up to the Lord” which remains the same in the New Missal as it is now. The final part of the dialogue, however, changes slightly. The priest says: “Let us give thanks to the Lord our God” and the new response is: “It is right and just”. This new response is more formal and it reflects the fact that thanking God is not only the right thing for us to do, but considering everything that God has done for us, it is the just thing to do as well. We owe God our thanks for His goodness and blessings and this new response highlights that reality. We are not always accustomed to thinking that we owe God thanks but when we really think about it, it makes perfect sense. The rest of the Preface varies with each of the individual ones but we will notice that the language in general follows the more formal and dignified way of speaking to God that we are now accustomed to using in the New Missal.

Number Eleven: Introduction to the Eucharistic Prayers

The four principal Eucharistic Prayers that we use are very ancient in terms of their content. The New Missal translation is a more literally accurate translation of the language used in the oldest prayers. It is important to recognize that there is a distinctive “Christian way of speaking” in the Eucharistic prayers. The language and the structure of these prayers sound different because the Eucharistic Prayers are a unique communication between human beings and God. What takes place during the Eucharistic Prayer is a miracle – ordinary bread and wine are transformed into the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ! The different rhythm, formulation and “sound” of the

language we use draws our attention to the fact that what we are participating in at the Divine Liturgy is something completely different than any other dialogue or activity we do anywhere else. The language in the Eucharistic Prayers of the New Missal sounds very humble, for example, which emphasizes our dependence on God's goodness and mercy. Another difference is the increased emphasis on praising God and thanking Him in more effusive and respectful terms. These changes will help us remember that what we participating in together is a miraculous, blessed and most special event.

Number Twelve: Eucharistic Prayers

After the Preface, we typically use one of four Eucharistic Prayers at Mass for the prayers that consecrate the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. The First Eucharistic Prayer (the Roman Canon) is most often used on Sundays and special feasts and it dates back to the 4th century under Pope Damasus I (who also commissioned St. Jerome to produce the Latin Vulgate version of the Bible). The Second Eucharistic Prayer is even older as its origins can be traced back to the third century; we often use this prayer at weekday Masses. The Third Eucharistic Prayer, used as well on Sundays and festive days, was composed after the Second Vatican Council and it resembles the Second Eucharistic Prayer in many ways. The Fourth Eucharistic Prayer is a little different because it is very similar to the ones used in the Eastern Liturgy of the Church (called the *anaphora*). One difference with this fourth prayer is that it has its own proper Preface that must be used with it because the Preface and the Eucharistic Prayer form a seamless whole to present the entire history of salvation. In the New Missal, the English translation will be much closer to the Latin original. Isn't it amazing to know that we will be praying very closely resembles what the Church has celebrated for over almost 1,700 years in both the West and the East?

Number Thirteen: Why "Chalice" and not "Cup"?

In the Eucharistic Prayers during the consecration, where God transforms ordinary bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ His Son, the priest uses the words of Jesus at

the Last Supper. In the New Missal during the consecration of the wine into the Blood of Christ, the priest prays: “Take this all of you and drink from it, for this is the *chalice* of my blood...”. Using the word “*chalice*” instead of “cup” helps us remember the Cross as well as the Last Supper because we only use chalices for Mass, whereas we drink from cups all the time in daily life. The Mass is not only the Last Supper – a sacred meal – it is also the Offering of Christ on the Cross – a sacred Sacrifice. Also “*chalice*” reminds us that we are participating in the Heavenly Banquet when we celebrate Mass and not just a festive meal shared with our friends at home. The special altar vessels we use – the chalice, paten (the plate) and the ciborium (the covered dish) - are made of precious metals to remind us of the most precious substance they contain, the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ in the Eucharistic Species.

Number Fourteen: Why for “the Many” and Not “for All”?

Another change in the Eucharistic Prayers occur when during the consecration of the wine into the Blood of Christ, the priest prays: “...the Blood of the New Covenant, which will be poured out for you and *for many* for the forgiveness of sins”. This is a change for an important theological reason from “for all” that we are accustomed to hearing. Jesus Christ suffered and died on the Cross so that all humanity might be redeemed from the power of sin and death we brought on ourselves through Adam because of original sin. We all are redeemed because of Christ’s suffering and death and not because of our personal worthiness but we do not get a ‘free pass’ into heaven. The choices we make in this life have eternal consequences and when we reject God’s grace and refuse to repent of our sins, we separate ourselves from God. So, Jesus’ suffering and death is not a guarantee that all will automatically be saved regardless of our choices but rather it provides the freedom for us to choose for or against God. This change in the Eucharistic Prayers makes it clear that our freedom to choose for or against God matters and that Christ’s death is not a guaranteed ‘free pass into heaven for all’ because God respects our free will and our choices.

Number Fifteen: The Invitation to the Lord's Prayer

In the current, 2nd edition of the Missal, the priest can choose between different invitations to the *Lord's Prayer* but the New Missal uses has only invitation: "At the Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say". This is a literal translation from the original Latin text that was not translated in the previous English editions of the Missal. At the time of Christ, no one would have dared to address God so personally and intimately as my "Father" but Jesus taught us that God is indeed our heavenly Father and so he revolutionized the way we relate to Him. In the New Missal we see how the language of the prayers emphasizes God's great power, majesty and goodness and with this particular invitation in the New Missal we are reminded that it is only because Jesus commanded us to pray using the words of the "Our Father" that we dare to so intimately address God as Father.

Number Sixteen: "Behold the Lamb of God"

In the New Missal, we will see more clearly the close connection between many of the prayers at Mass and Sacred Scripture. At the "Invitation to Communion," the priest shows the consecrated host to the people and says: "Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those who are called to the supper of the Lamb." These words echo the words of John the Baptist to his disciples when he identified Jesus as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1: 29 and see also John 1:36). These words also remind us of the Book of Revelation where John reports the angel saying to him: "Blessed are those who have been called to the wedding feast of the Lamb" (Rev: 19:9). The people's response repeats, with one change, the words of the Roman centurion in Luke's Gospel when he asked Jesus to cure his servant: "Lord I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my servant [we will say instead "*my soul*"] shall be healed" (cf. Luke 7: 6-7). The Lord, the Lamb of God who takes away our sin, does truly come to us because of His great love.

Number Seventeen: The Dismissal

Mass ends with a Dismissal or a 'commissioning'. Instead of ending with a casual 'good-bye' or 'see you soon', the priest or the assisting deacon send God's people forth into the world with one of four different dismissals. These dismissals recall Christ's commissioning of his disciples before his Ascension to "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt 28:19). They remind us that we are to be witnesses to the Gospel in our daily life outside the walls of the parish church. Two of the options are very simple: "Go forth, the Mass is ended" or "Go in peace". But even these simple dismissals are reminders to us of our duty to spread the Gospel. "Go forth" has a forceful ring to it and "Go in peace" reminds us that we go forth from the church carrying not the world's idea of peace, but rather to share the peace of Christ. The other two options make our commission to witness to the Gospel even more beautifully explicit: "Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord" or "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life". We are sent out into the world to be witnesses to the Gospel and to glorify our good and gracious God by how we live. We respond to all of these great commissions in gratitude and love by responding: "Thanks be to God".