

Why Do We Need a New Missal?
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On the first Sunday of Advent, we will welcome a revised version of the Roman Missal. What is the Roman Missal and why do we need a new one?

The celebration of the liturgy unites Roman Catholics around the world. Although the language varies from country to country, and there are cultural adaptations from one place to another, the basic form of the Roman Catholic Mass, the scripture readings, and the prayer texts are the same world-wide.

To ensure this continuity, the Church provides us with a Roman Missal, a Latin original or “typical edition.” The Roman Missal contains a number of books that include a four-volume lectionary with the Scripture readings for each Sunday and weekday liturgy, the Gospel for each Sunday and Holy Day, and a book with the prayer texts and structure of the Mass. The introductions of these books contain specific directives for how Mass is to be celebrated as well as the duties and responsibilities of those serving in liturgical ministry roles within the Mass.

We can trace the origin of the Roman Missal back to the 6th century, with some of the prayer texts dating back as early as the second century. Under the guidance of the Holy See, the missal has undergone numerous revisions over the centuries. Some of us remember when the Mass was celebrated in Latin. The Latin Roman Missal that was used when I was a child, the Tridentine Missal, was revised at least six times between the Council of Trent in 1545-1563 and the Second Vatican Council in 1962-1965. On the first weekend of Advent, November, 2011, we will begin using the third revision of the missal introduced with Vatican II.

Why does the Church revise and issue a new Roman Missal? The Holy See issues a revision of the Roman Missal for many reasons. There may be additions or changes in the ritual itself, such as the addition of the Prayer of the Faithful or the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. Revisions also occur in order to include prayer texts for memorial Masses of newly canonized saints. In some cases, ancient texts are recovered or newly translated that support a revision or inclusion in the Mass. Over time, it also may become apparent that clarification or correction needs to be made in a particular rite or text.

Catholics over the age of 50 are most familiar with the revisions called for by the Second Vatican Council. The emphasis on the “full, conscious, and active participation of all the people” led to changes in the ritual action with the congregation singing or reciting the actual prayer texts of the Mass as well as engaging in the dialogues of the Mass with the priest. There was a tremendous increase in the amount of Scripture heard at Mass, with three readings instead of two taken from a three year cycle of readings instead of one. For most Catholics, however, the

most profound revision was the permission given for the Roman Missal to be translated into the vernacular, the language of the people. We received the first partial English translation of the Mass in 1970, with the complete English translation in 1974. In 1975 liturgical changes led to publication of the Second Edition of the Latin edition by the Holy See, requiring a new English translation in 1985. This edition of the missal is the one being used today.

In the Jubilee Year 2000 Pope John Paul II called for a third edition of the Vatican II missal. This new Latin edition would include the prayers for the many new saints canonized since the publication of the Second Edition, revisions in ritual action, and further clarification of instructions for the celebration of Mass. In 2002 the Third Edition of the Roman Missal was ready for translation into the vernacular. Nine years later this process is complete, and the new English translation of the 2002 Latin edition is now being prepared by the publishers.

Although there have been many revisions of the Roman Missal over time, most of us do not have the opportunity to experience a new one many times in our lifetime. This event in church history will cause us to be especially mindful of what we have come to take for granted or to gloss over as commonplace. Hearing our faith expressed in a different way and studying the texts and elements of the liturgy in this preparation period can lead to a greater enrichment of our faith and a fuller internal and external participation in the Mass.

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Changes in the Missal
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What are some of the changes we will experience in Advent with the new Third Edition of the Roman Missal?

The most significant change when we begin using the new missal on the First Sunday of Advent will be an English translation that is much closer to the Latin original text. For most of us, our knowledge of Latin is minimal, yet it is the universal language of the Roman Catholic Church.

So why is this important? One of the characteristics of the Roman Catholic Church, included in the Creed we profess each Sunday, is the fact that the Church is “catholic” with a small “c,” meaning universal. The tenets of our faith, the very Scripture and prayer texts that embody church and give our mission, are the same no matter where you are in the world.

With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, this universal expression of praise to God and petition for sanctification has been carried from generation to generation using Latin, the universal language of the Roman Catholic Church. In order to maintain continuity and authenticity, the liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church begins with the Latin original text.

After the Second Vatican Council, the task began of translating the Latin into the language of each country in order to promote the full, conscious, and active participation of the people. The first translations into English used the principle of *dynamic equivalence*. This method attempted to communicate the *meaning* of the Latin text without giving a direct translation. The texts were simplified in an attempt to make them compatible with our common patterns of speech and to ease the transition for the people when they began verbalizing these prayer texts together.

When the need arose for a new missal in 2000, Pope John Paul II, recognizing that a great deal had been lost in translation, issued new guidelines for this process. The new principle called for *formal equivalence*, a more direct *word for word* translation from the Latin. For us this means that in addition to the new prayer texts for recently canonized saints and new rites added to the missal of 1975, the existing prayer texts will be translated into English using a different set of guidelines.

Emphasizing the universal character of the Roman Catholic Church, there will now be just one English translation used in all eleven English-speaking countries. Since the manner of expressing the same language and the meaning of words may vary from one English speaking country to another, this universal translation will sometimes be challenging. The language and vocabulary of this new missal will not always be the language we speak in common conversation.

There are other countries in the world that use the English translation as the basis for translating their own missal into the language of their people. This necessitates a more direct, accurate translation from Latin into English to ensure authenticity for these other translations.

One great benefit to the new translation will be an enriched and expanded vocabulary. For example, in the previous missal the Latin words: *pietas*, *consortio*, *amor*, *caritas*, and *dilectio* were all translated into English with the same word “love.” In the new missal, these Latin words are translated each according to their specific meaning, more accurately expressing the Latin text, “parental affection, sharing, love, charity, and delight.” This expansive vocabulary will enrich our prayer and our ability to express our faith.

As we will see in many of the prayer texts, descriptive phrases have been expanded, helping to communicate the meaning of the prayer more effectively. For example, in one of the Eucharistic Prayers the priest prayed in the previous translation, “. . . so that from east to west a perfect offering may be made to the glory of your name. “ In the new missal, the priest will pray, “. . . so that from the rising of the sun to its setting a pure sacrifice may be offered to your name.” This new translation not only quotes Scripture more directly but also expands the meaning of the text in addition to being more poetic. These are just a few examples of the benefits of the new missal.

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New Missal Characteristics
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In Advent, Catholics in all dioceses across the country will begin using the new English translation of the Third Edition of the Roman Missal. In addition to a more accurate translation of the Latin original, an expanded and more varied vocabulary, and an English translation that will be the same for all eleven English speaking countries, there are other characteristics that are particularly noteworthy.

In all the scholarly assessments of the new missal, one of the characteristics that has been highlighted and consistently praised is the fact that the new missal will include more direct and expanded quotations from Scripture. Although the majority of the prayer texts of the Mass have their origin in Scripture, in the interest of time and the desire for simplicity, many references in the first translations were abbreviated, paraphrased, and even eliminated.

Besides the benefit of hearing more Scripture, these expanded references in the new missal will help us to have a better understanding of the texts we pray. For instance, the very words of the greetings from the letters in the New Testament will connect us to the zeal and mission of the early followers of Christ. The many Scriptural references in the options for the Act of Penitence remind us of examples of God's great mercy throughout all of history. Luke's infancy narrative in the Glory to God and the New Testament references in the Creeds will connect these accounts from Scripture to the action of the celebration of the Mass, bringing greater insight into the prayer we pray today.

One particularly poignant example of this is the invitation to Holy Communion. In the present missal, the priest says, "This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are those who are called to his supper." In the new missal, the priest will say, "Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb." This new wording not only translates the Latin more directly, but it also references the beautiful quote in Revelation describing not just any supper but the "wedding feast of the Lamb."

The new expanded response by the people to this invitation is even more revealing. It recalls the story in Luke's Gospel of the centurion, a Gentile, whose compassion for the Jews and strong faith in Jesus' healing power witnesses the intensity of his faith. In the new missal our response will be his very words, applying them to our lives today, "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed." This entire encounter is now brought to life for us adding a new dimension to our faith response.

Another characteristic of the new missal is the manner in which the prayers address God. They will be more respectful, acknowledging God as Creator, not as a peer. Instead of giving God

commands, we will ask more graciously when we petition God to respond to our needs. For example, instead of “Strengthen in faith and love” or “hear the prayers of the family,” the priest celebrant praying in our name, will say, “Be pleased to confirm in faith and charity” and “Listen graciously to the prayers of this family.”

One change that will challenge both the priest celebrant and our listening skills is an adjusted word order that is true to the authentic text. This shift stresses the salient aspects of the prayer by placing the most important focus of the phrase at the end of the sentence. Bishop Serratelli gives this comparison, “Father, may our communion teach us to love heaven. May its promise and hope guide our way on earth.” In the new missal we will hear, “May the mysteries we have celebrated profit us, we pray, O Lord, for even now, as we journey through the passing world, you teach us by them to love the things of heaven and hold fast to what will endure.”

This is not our customary way of speaking and will require careful preparation by the priest in order to effectively communicate the text of the prayer. This unaccustomed delivery can, however, have the benefit of calling attention to the text in a new way.

We will also note more attention to inclusivity in the language of the missal. This will not satisfy everyone but in many instances the exclusively male pronouns referring to the faithful will now offer the option of the inclusive phrase “brothers and sisters.” The Latin “Deus” translated “Father” in the present missal will now be accurately translated “God.”

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Music and the New Missal
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Music, an extraordinary gift from God, has the ability to communicate in ways that words alone can never express. Music is the vehicle that enables a text to speak exquisitely. In some way that is beyond our comprehension, God is present in the music we make. Not only can music stir the soul, warm the heart, calm a fear, and express great joy, but it can also arouse us to action and stir the conscience. It is the marriage of words and melody that make them memorable, enabling us to recall the texts in our times of need.

Perhaps more the most significant of its qualities is the fact that when we join our voices in song, matching pitch and rhythm, syllable and style, we are drawn together united as one, the Body of Christ celebrating with Christ our Head.

Some of us are old enough to remember the time before the Second Vatican Council when there were two forms for the celebration of the Mass: a low Mass and a high Mass. A low Mass was recited or prayed by the priest in Latin with the servers responding to the dialogues of the Mass. A high Mass, the preferred form even at 6:30 in the morning, was a sung liturgy almost from beginning to end. The sung dialogues of a high Mass were exchanges between the priest celebrant and the choir or a small group of singers, usually in the loft. The rest of the people attending Mass had no part in this exchange or any of the music except to listen.

With the liturgical renewals of Vatican II, the challenge of transition from silent spectator to full, conscious, active participator had a profound effect on a sung liturgy. Up to that time there was little or no repertoire composed for the Mass in English. To ensure accessibility by the untrained assembly, simple hymns or songs were introduced into the Mass—often referred to as the four hymn syndrome— that replaced singing the parts of the Mass itself. Songs were inserted at the opening, the offertory, during the distribution of Communion and at the close of Mass.

Fortunately, we have come a long way since those early days. Singing has become normative for the liturgy. In most parishes on Sunday morning, the acclamations (Gospel Alleluia, the Sanctus or Holy, the Memorial Acclamation, and the Great Amen) are routinely sung by the entire assembly. In addition to these, the Glory to God, the Lamb of God that accompanies the Breaking of the Bread, and the processional chants or songs that accompany the entrance and communion processions are usually sung with or without the support of a choir or ensemble. We don't just sing at Mass, we sing the parts of the Mass.

With the implementation of the new missal, there will be some changes in what is sung. The directives place a renewed emphasis on a sung liturgy. The dialogues of the Mass between the

priest, deacon, cantor, and the people now rank at the top of the list with the acclamations as elements that should be sung. Priests also are encouraged to sing some of the prayer texts of the Mass, applying the principle of progressive solemnity. This judgment is based on the relative importance of the season or feast and the importance of the particular element of the Mass, as well as the ability of the priest celebrant.

The new focus on singing more of the Mass comes at a time in history that makes this practice counter-cultural. Communal singing has almost disappeared from our society. Families rarely gather around the piano to sing. We don't even sing the National Anthem together before sporting events anymore. We have an individual performer sing it in a stylized manner that prohibits people from singing along.

Why does the Church place such a priority on singing the Mass?

Even though full, conscious, active participation in the liturgy is more than singing, the directives in the new missal prevent the regression back to a time where we only listened and prayed privately. It could be so easy to turn our prayer, particularly our sung prayer, over to the professionals as is the model in our world today. In her wisdom, the Church asks more than a listening, attentive ear. The Bishops remind us that the power of engagement in a sung liturgy "strengthens our faith when it grows weak and draws us into the divinely inspired voice of the Church at prayer."

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Welcome to Change
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As we conclude this series of teaching editorials about the new Roman Missal, we thought it would be helpful to acknowledge and reflect upon the process of change. After listening to feedback from pastors and parishioners, it is clear that this upcoming change has produced two clear voices: some anticipate that the changes will be disturbing and some anticipate the change will be positive. At this point, we know what is changing, but we have not yet experienced the change. When the change occurs, there is no question that some parishioners will welcome the new Missal, and others may be surprised or perhaps frustrated by this change.

The backdrop of this liturgical change is important to consider. We live in an age of uncertainty where realities such as a volatile economy, new laws, innovations in technology, and shifts in cultural norms bring constant change, and we do not control many of these changes. We only have to look at developments in health care reform, airport screening, or communications to identify how change is the norm, not the exception.

There are two types of change: self-initiated and imposed. There is an obvious difference between choosing to go on a diet and being directed to do so by your physician. Our response to the dynamics of change is dependent, in part, on which type of change we are facing. However, what is most disturbing about change is that it is a disruption of our routine and even more significantly in this case, a change in the ritual to which we all have become accustomed and in which we find a degree of comfort and stability.

Regardless of the source of the change and the type of change, responses commonly move through four phases: resistance, confusion, testing, and recommitment.

Resistance: All change, even when viewed as positive, involves some resistance. The movement from the familiar to the unknown requires adjustment. Imposed changes to our routines often lead to a sense of loss, anger, or insecurity. Resistance may be expressed in sadness, complaints, resentment, or stubbornness. It is common to feel anxious, cautious, or apathetic. These are normal responses to the change process.

Confusion: Initial resistance often moves into a stage of confusion. The credibility of decision-makers is questioned, and there is fear that hasty or unnecessary changes are taking place. Since what is familiar is gone, what has replaced it feels uncomfortable or confusing. During this period, frustrations are expressed through repeated questioning, lack of cooperation, and poor listening.

Testing: Eventually as the changes are tested, they become more familiar and comfortable. There is a shift towards acceptance and a willingness to take more risks, with less focus on the past and more attention to the future. Anxiety is reduced, and there is new energy for planning and problem-solving.

Recommitment: In the final step of the change process, there is willingness to actively pursue the goals of the change and fully implement whatever is needed. Involvement and support that had been diminished during the resistance phase becomes positive and productive action. There is often a sense of personal satisfaction that the process is complete, the change is in place, and desired comfort and security return. In some cases, a readiness to accept additional change emerges.

We often think that change directly relates to something that occurs at a particular time, like a decision or an event. The focus is on getting to a result or moving from something old to something new. However, when thinking about change, it is more helpful to use the concept of transition. Transition is a process of change that moves through somewhat predictable steps like these four phases. You may have observed some of these stages when a new pastor arrives or a major change occurs in your work environment. Part of the challenge with the Roman Missal is that priests, pastoral leaders, and parishioners may all be at different stages of adjusting to this change.

The keys to successfully dealing with this change are patience and an open mind. Those of you who have taken the time to read these columns have already begun the process of education, but the person sitting next to you at Mass may not understand what is going on. Parish staff members have access to many resources that can help educate you, and we encourage you to take advantage of them.

Eventually we will accept that the liturgy has come to a “new beginning” that can allow us to encounter the words we speak in a new way, think about what we are saying, and deepen our appreciation and understanding of the great treasure that is our Mass.

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