

Understanding the Revised Mass Texts

THE REVISED TRANSLATION

Although the essence of the Mass never changes dramatically, there will soon be a revised translation of some responses and prayers. The Eucharist continues to be God's generous gift of Christ to us, our bread and wine becoming his flesh and blood. Parishes throughout the English-speaking world are preparing for this transition, and our parish is no exception.

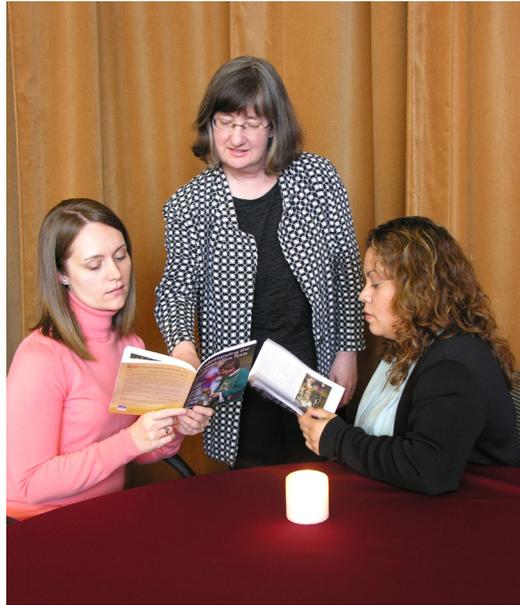
The Sacramentary we have been using dates to 1973, so we have used it for a long time. It helped us to move from the Latin Mass (before the Second Vatican Council) to Mass in vernacular languages (after the Second Vatican Council). Now that scholars have a better idea how to remain faithful to the original meaning of the Latin texts, they have been hard at work revising the English texts of the Mass. The revised translation, recently approved by the Holy See, has many biblical allusions that will be richer for those who know the connections. Some passages will more closely parallel the original Latin. We will be using these texts, beginning with the First Sunday of Advent, November 27, 2011.

AN EXAMPLE OF THE REVISED TEXTS

One difference that recurs several times is the people's response to "The Lord be with you." Now we will answer, "And with your spirit." This change more carefully mirrors passages from scripture (see, for example, Judges 6:12; Ruth 2:4; 2 Chronicles 15:2; and Luke 1:28). It also corresponds to the response in some other languages. It's not the casual exchange that starts with "Hi," or "How are you doing?" Instead, it calls forth the deepest identity of priest and people, beginning a sacred action unlike anything else we do. Our language is elevated because our activity is: it expresses a faith handed down over centuries. Only ritual words are calibrated to fit such dignified circumstances.

OUR PARISH PLAN

Most people who know a change is coming like to prepare for it. Anticipating a birthday party, we buy the gift. Expecting



rain, we bring the laundry in off the line. Soon, we'll be hearing the revised English texts at our liturgies. Let's educate ourselves so we not only know our responses, but also understand why we're saying them. We want to unite our faith community so that we can raise one voice, confidently, together.

A BOOKLET AS YOUR GUIDE

To learn the new wording and to understand the reasons for the changes, we're providing a booklet to all parish families. It's called *Understanding the Revised Mass Texts, Second Edition*, written by Father Paul Turner, a priest from the diocese of Kansas City–St. Joseph.

Please read it—the style is friendly and it won't consume a great deal of your time. The booklet outlines the changes and explains why they've been made. Each member of our community is important—to God and to each other. No one should feel confused or distant when the family gathers at the table. Reading the booklet will assure you that you're knowledgeable, alert, attuned, and informed.

FAITH FORMATION SESSIONS

We've also scheduled sessions in which to learn about and discuss the changes. (See the bulletin for specifics.) At these times, we'll explore the Mass together, get to know each other better, and appreciate our sacramental heritage more. We'll follow a discussion format, and raise interesting questions. We'll try to stimulate your thinking about why you come to Mass and what it means to you.

The parish staff hopes that this will be an opportunity for all of us to strengthen our community and renew the faith that we hold dear. To participate fully in a Eucharistic liturgy is an awesome responsibility. People in other times and places have longed for this privilege. Whether we're attending a wedding Mass, a funeral Mass, or a Sunday Mass, it forms the template for our lives. Let's celebrate it joyfully, intelligently, together.