

New Mass Texts

Week by week we will be publishing explanations of the New Mass Texts in the Parish Bulletin. You can catch up on any segments you might have missed here on the Parish web site as we republish them below. For more information on the new missal you can go to <http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Missal/>

Part 1

The New Translation - what New Translation?

Did you know that the translation of the Mass which we currently use is going to change? The texts we have now have been in use since 1970 and in September we will begin to use a new translation. Over the coming weeks/months there will be short articles in this newsletter which will help us to understand what these changes are and why they have come about. There will also be plenty of opportunities provided to learn more about it and become familiar with the changes. A number of day and evening sessions will be arranged for those who would like to find out more. We will publish some material ourselves and will also provide web links for those who have internet access. This will be a great opportunity for us all to learn more about the Mass and deepen our understanding of the liturgy and its meaning and relevance for us in our lives today. Watch this space!

Part 2

The New Translation - whose idea was it anyway?

Until the early 1960s, Mass was celebrated in Latin throughout the world. Wherever you happened to be on Sunday the Mass would be celebrated in the language you were used to. At the Second Vatican Council, in the early 1960's, it was agreed that Mass could be said in the language of the country in which it was being celebrated. There would be no fundamental change to the Mass itself, just the language being used. This would enable us to understand more fully what was being said and help us to participate more fully. An English translation was made available as quickly as possible, but it was intended to be temporary. A more considered translation would be issued later. Now, some 40 years has since passed! This translation has at last been agreed by Rome and we will begin using it in our parishes this September. If you would like to know more about the liturgy document issued by the Second Vatican Council see:

- http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html

Part 3

The New Translation – when and how will it be introduced?

Although we have already received the official approval from Rome, it will still be some time before the new translation is being used in our parishes. In England and

Wales we will all begin using the new texts at the same time, to avoid any confusion. It is planned we will be able to celebrate Mass in the new translation from September onwards. This gives us plenty of time, over the next few months, to learn something about the changes, about how they will affect us and our liturgy and why they have been made. There will be a lot of resources available to help us to do this, both locally and nationally. As well as the information that will appear in this newsletter, there will be lots of internet resources. There will also be parish or group sessions which will help us to explore the new translation and our understanding of the Mass. Please pray that we will all make the most of this opportunity to learn more about the Mass and to deepen our relationship with Christ.

Part 4

The New Translation – why do we need one?

As we have already seen, until the early 1960s, Mass was celebrated in Latin throughout the world. At the Second Vatican Council it was agreed that the Mass could be celebrated in our own language, and in 1970 Pope Paul VI agreed the official Latin text that would be used. This was then translated into different languages to be used throughout the world. It proved to be a huge task which was completed in a very short time. However, because it was done so quickly, some of the richness of the original Latin prayers was, quite literally, 'lost in translation'. It was seen that a further translation was needed. The new translation would keep the original words, meaning and style of the Latin as far as possible. The new translation also means a new edition of the Missal which will include some additional text such as, prayers for the saints who have been added by the Church to the liturgical calendar.

Part 5

The New Translation - the four presences of Christ

The Second Vatican Council reminded us of our ancient faith: Christ is always present in his church, especially in its liturgical celebrations. So, each time we come to Mass we experience the presence of Christ in four different ways:

1. Christ is present in the congregation – the people gathered together;
2. Christ is present in the person of the priest;
3. Christ is present in the Scriptures that we listen to during Mass;
4. Christ is present in the bread and wine when it becomes Christ's Body and Blood.

The more we are able to understand and join in the Mass, the more we will come to love it. The new translation will help us to do that because the words we will now use will say more clearly what our faith is teaching us.

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Part 6

The New Translation - Biblical influences

As we use the new translation we will perhaps notice more biblical connections than we have been used to. The texts of the Mass are precious to us, partly because they were inspired by the bible. These words have come down to us over the centuries, and most of the words we speak at Mass are rooted in the bible. When we gather for Mass, we are praying with words that have been given to us by our ancestors, who knew the bible well and prayed it well. The revised translation tries to make the connections between the bible and the Mass more clear than it is now. It will also mean that we will have some new music for Mass, to take account of the changes. Over the coming weeks we will be looking at some of the revised words we will be saying and hearing.

Part 7

The New Translation – ‘And with your spirit’

One of the first things we will notice with the new translation is that, when the priest says ‘The Lord be with you’, we now say ‘And with your spirit’. This is much closer to the original Latin. When the Mass was first translated into English we were one of only two languages that did not translate it as ‘your spirit’. It is a very biblical response: Paul concludes four of his letters with a very similar expression. For example, at the end of his Second Letter to Timothy, Paul ends by saying, ‘The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you’. If you think about it, for nearly 2000 years Christians have been greeting each other, ‘The Lord be with you’, ‘and with your spirit.’ So the new translation will bring unity to this response in all the languages of the world - and with all previous Christian generations.

Part 8

The New Translation – ‘The Word of the Lord’

At the end of the readings and the Gospel at Mass, we are used to hearing ‘This is the Word of the Lord’; ‘This is the Gospel of the Lord’. In the new translation, the words ‘This is’ are now left out and we will hear ‘The Word of the Lord’ and ‘The Gospel of the Lord’. One of the reasons is that the Latin does not include ‘This is’. But there is more to it than that. If the priest or deacon lifts the book and says ‘This is’, it can suggest that he is talking about the book itself. In fact, he is talking about the Word of God - which is alive and active. The words at the end of the readings are announcing a great event. They are telling us that God has spoken; that Christ is present. We respond ‘Thanks be to God’, or ‘Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ’ which is our acknowledgement that what we have heard is, indeed, the Word of God. For more about the Word of the Lord, see ‘Verbum Domini’ by Benedict XVI, available to download as a pdf file on

- http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20100930_verbum-domini_en.pdf

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Part 9

The New Translation – The Gloria and the Creed

We will also notice some changes in the Gloria and the Creed. In fact, there is not a great deal of change in the new words that we will pray so we will have to be careful that we don't slip into the old texts! The first lines of the Gloria itself echo the angels' message to the shepherds, announcing the birth of Christ (Luke 2:14). Because of these changes, new music is being written so that we will be able to sing the new translation, too. When it comes to the Creed we will notice the first change immediately - 'I believe', not, 'We believe'. We have become used to praying the Creed all together as a parish. The trouble is, when we say 'we believe' it could suggest that between us all we believe everything being said. It is not clear that we all believe everything that is being said. To say 'I believe' makes it quite clear that each one of us believes everything we are saying.

Part 10

The New Translation – The Mystery of Faith

For Catholics, a 'mystery' is not a puzzle that cannot be solved. It is a truth that is so deep that we know we'll never be able to get to the bottom of it; a truth we'll never completely be able understand. One example of this is our belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. We believe that Christ is truly present but we can't wholly explain it. The priest shows us the host and then the chalice. Then he genuflects and says 'The mystery of faith'. We continue with one of three responses. These are all different from the ones we have been used to and they come directly from the New Testament. So when the priest says 'The mystery of faith' he is inviting us to welcome this Real Presence of Christ. We then make our response, which we address to God.

Part 11

The New Translation – Lord I am not worthy

As the priest invites us to receive Holy Communion, he will say 'Behold', rather than 'This is', 'the Lamb of God'. 'Behold' means 'to look at' and is our invitation to adore Christ who we are about to receive in Holy Communion. We are used to saying 'Lord I am not worthy to receive you' ... This will change to: 'Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed'. This is almost exactly what the Roman Centurion said when he came and begged Jesus to heal his servant. When Jesus says he will come to the Centurion's house, the man knows that Jesus doesn't need to do that, that just his word will be enough. The Centurion says: 'Lord I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word and my servant will be healed'. Our new reply changes only one word of the Centurion's speech - my servant becomes my soul will be healed.

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