

Understanding the Revised Mass Texts

Introduction

- 1. The liturgical renewal authorized by the Second Vatican Council has taken place. It could not have been achieved without the power of the Holy Spirit. The work of the Council continues through us. So too the Spirit continues to bless our efforts.
- 2. We celebrate our friendship with Christ by sharing in the simplest of everyday foods – bread and wine.

- 3. Saint Augustine expressed the way in which Christ draws us to Eucharist to become a part of himself: If you, therefore, are Christ's body and members, it is your own mystery that is placed on the Lord's table! It is your own mystery that you are receiving! You are saying "Amen" to what you are – your response is a personal signature, affirming your faith. When you hear, "The Body of Christ" – you reply, "Amen." Be a member of Christ's body, then, so that your "Amen" may ring true.

Why and How Are the Mass Texts Being Revised?

- The words we say and hear at every Mass are about to change. Mass will remain the same, but the sound will be different.
- The revised translation pertains to the Sacramentary. It will not affect the scripture readings, the Prayer of the Faithful, or your favorite hymns.
- We will now refer to the Sacramentary as the Roman Missal.

New Words...Deeper Meaning, Same Mass

- The revised translations will have more depth. As people say and hear the new words, they should appreciate even more the value of the faith they hold so dear.
- **Biblical Roots** – The new translation will better connect the Missal to the Lectionary.
- Longer sentences will appear, because our current translation breaks these up when they occur in Latin.

- These longer sentences are producing prayers that express more nuances of meaning.
- The text will express more clearly why we pray, why we hope, and how we present ourselves before God.

Faithfulness to the Latin

- The revised translation is trying to achieve a greater adherence to the original Latin than the former did.
- Our English language will be enriched through a reexamination of the original texts in Latin.
- Many of the Latin prayers were crafted with a poetry of vocabulary, rhythm, structure, and sentiment. The beauty of the language proclaimed the beauty of God.

- The new vernacular of the Mass is striving for improvement. After a reassessment of the original, it is trying to make the translation better.
- The translators wanted the Mass prayers to be more faithful to the “book”: the original Latin texts and the scriptures from which they come.

Some changes are smaller than others.

- The Lamb of God is not changing at all.
- But the first part of the Gloria has been completely rewritten. The guiding principle is to achieve a translation that better evokes what the Latin says.
- The flow of the Mass remains the same. Many familiar phrases haven't changed. And the scripture reading will stay the same for now.

- The four parts of the Mass remain the same.
(Introductory Rites, Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of the Eucharist, and Concluding Rites).
- Some of the prayers will sound humbler, a bit more modest in the presence of an awesome God. They acknowledge the majesty of God and the boldness of human beings talking to the God who made us.

Who prepares the Translation?

- International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL)
- Eleven bishops from different countries around the world attended meetings. They relied on teams of experts to propose translations that are faithful to the Latin, constant in style, and consistent in vocabulary. They brought the results to the conferences of bishops whom they represent from around the world.

- The conferences sent their suggestions back to ICEL, which made a further round of improvements. These went back to the conferences for their vote and the submission of the texts to Rome. The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments made some final adjustments to the text before approving them for publication.

The Introductory Rites

- The Introductory Rites include everything that happens from the moment you stand until you sit down for the first time.
- Our gathering begins as alarm clocks ring in homes and apartments, dormitories and trailer courts all over the parish. The Holy Spirit draws people together from different socioeconomic backgrounds, races, and ages groups. They speak many different languages and have many concerns on their minds.

- The Introductory Rites “ensure that the faithful who come together as one establish communion and dispose themselves to listen properly to God’s word and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily” (GIRM, 46).
- These rites prepare us to celebrate the Eucharist and remind us of our identity in Christ, “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own” (1Peter 2:9).
- As all the different people sing and pray together, they become one voice, one people in Christ. All are marked with the Sign of the Cross, signifying that all belong to Christ.

The Greeting and Response

- “The Lord be with you” echoes a long history of Biblical greetings.
- **Judges 6:11-12:** While his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the wine press to save it from the Midianites, the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said, “The Lord is with you, O champion!”
- **2Chronicles 15:1-2:** Upon Azariah, son of Obed, came the spirit of God. He went forth to meet Asa and said to him: “Hear me, Asa and all Judah and Benjamin! The Lord is with you when you are with him, and if you seek him he will be present to you.”

- **Ruth 2:4:** Boaz himself came from Bethlehem and said to the harvesters, “The Lord be with you!” and they replied, “The Lord bless you!”
- **Luke 1:26-28:** In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin’s name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, “Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you.”
- **Matthew 28:20:** “And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

The People's Response also has long Biblical history

- **2 Timothy 4:22:** The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with all of you.
- **Galatians 6:18:** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.
- **Philippians 4:23:** The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.
- **Philemon 25:** The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.
- “the Lord be with you” is a call for a rekindling of the Spirit’s activity in the minds and hearts of God’s people gathered for worship.

Sign of the Cross and Greeting

- The priest chooses from three different formulas to greet the people.
- The best known, “The Lord be with you” are not changing.
- The response however, “And also with you” will be changed to “**And with your spirit.**”
- This response alerts participants that they are entering a sacramental realm and reminds them of their responsibilities during this time spent in prayer.

- The two parts of this greeting express a desire that the Holy Spirit be present to the entire community.
- The priest's line could imply, "The Lord be with your spirit," and the people's line would then reciprocate: "and with *your* spirit."
- The dialogue establishes the interdependence of the priest and the people as they take up their roles to praise God.

Penitential Act

- The Penitential Act brings out different aspects of reconciliation: personal wrongdoing against God and other people, God's forgiveness, and the communal aspects of sin. It begins with an invitation to recognize our place before God. It shows how God spans the wide gap between divine goodness and human beings who sin.
- The Penitential Act during Mass acknowledges that we are sinners, while rejoicing in God's never-ending mercy and love.

- The priest makes three acclamations concluding with “Lord, have mercy,” “Christ, have mercy,” and then “Lord, have mercy” again.
- *The third penitential option* is perhaps the most commonly used. It emphasizes Christ’s power to forgive sins. The litany is directed to Christ, and these verses emphasize our belief in the Christ who is greater than death, than darkness, than sin. It is a litany of praise for the Christ who heals, who comes to save sinners, and who invites many to the heavenly banquet.

- These responses will not change, but there is a new translation of the acclamations that introduce them.
- Ministers have the option of concluding these acclamations with the original Greek texts, “Kyrie, eleison,” “Christe, eleison,” and “Kyrie, eleison.” If they do, you respond with those words too.

Confiteor

Current Translation

I confess to almighty
God and to you, my
brothers and sisters
that I have **sinned**
through my own fault
in my thoughts and in
my words,

New Translation

I confess to almighty
God and to you, my
brothers and sisters
that I have **greatly**
sinned in my thoughts
and in my words,

Current Translation

in what I have done,
and in what I have
failed to do;

New Translation

in what I have done
and in what I have
failed to do, **through my
fault, through my fault,
through my most
grievous fault;**

- At first, saying the phrase “I have greatly sinned,” striking our breast at “through my fault,” repeating those words, and then adding “through my most grievous fault,” all make it look as though we are a lot more sinful now than we used to be.
- **Remember**, the guiding principle of the translation is a closer adherence to the words in Latin – not a sharper critique of our virtue.

- The new translation does have us express more grandly the seriousness of our sin and the sincerity of our contrition. It offers a humbler way to collect ourselves before stepping any further into prayer.
- This option deals with the sinner's offense against God and request for healing.

Salvation comes from the Latin word for the process of healing. Sometimes we seek forgiveness of sin but do not allow ourselves to experience spiritual wholeness.

Current Translation

and I ask blessed Mary,
ever virgin,
all the angels and saints,
and you,
my brothers and sisters
to pray for me to the
Lord, our God

New Translation

therefore I ask blessed Mary
ever-Virgin,
all the Angels and Saints,
and you,
my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the
Lord our God.

- The Confiteor still concludes with the “Lord, have mercy,” and you may still use “Kyrie, eleison” instead.
- Another option for the Penitential Act has not been used very much and it is undergoing a rather complete retranslation.

Current Translation

Priest: Lord, we have sinned
against you: **Lord, have mercy.**

All: **Lord, have mercy.**

Priest: Lord, show us your
mercy and love.

All: And grant us your
salvation.

New Translation

Priest: Have mercy on
us, O Lord.

All: **For we have
sinned against you.**

Priest: Show us, O
Lord, your mercy.

All: And grant us your
salvation.

- The first phrases come from Baruch 3:2, the second comes from Psalm 85:8. These verses are to be followed by the “Lord, have mercy” or “Kyrie, eleison.”
- Before the Penitential Act concludes, the priest proclaims an absolution. The translation of this text is slightly different from what you hear today:

“May almighty God have mercy on us/and lead us, with our sins forgiven,/to eternal life.”

Your response is the same: ***“Amen.”***

Collect or Opening Prayer

- The Introductory Rites conclude with the Collect, or the Opening Prayer of Mass. All the collects are being completely retranslated, and they will sound a little different to you. The sentences will be longer and more complex.
- Currently, opening prayers conclude with a formula that usually begins, “We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

- You may not notice the difference, but it should make the role of the Persons of the Trinity more precise.
- You conclude the Collect with the word “Amen.” It solemnly affirms your belief in God and the unity of the prayers of everyone present.

The Gloria

- The ancient and joyful prayer begins with the words that the angels sang at the birth of Jesus.
- The Gloria in Mass is proclaiming our praise of God
- This prayer praises God in several ways.

We name some of the many wonderful things God has done, such as taking away the sins of the world.

We describe who God is: heavenly king, Lord, Holy One.

We ask God to receive our prayer and to have mercy on us.

- We acknowledge that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- In this hymn we give glory to God and pray for peace to his people here on earth.
- It is very appropriate to begin our celebration by praising him in this way and by reminding ourselves of who our wonderful God is.

Current Translation

Glory to God in the
highest
and **peace to his people
on earth**

New Translation

Glory to God in the
highest,
and **on earth
peace to people of good will.**

- The revised translation changes “his people on earth” to “people of good will.”
- The guiding principle for all translations is to let the English express more literally the sentiments of the Latin original.

- The current text describes to whom the people belong (“his” = “God’s”)
- The new one describes their quality (“of good will”).
- Not only is this faithful to the original Latin prayer, but it better connects with Luke 2:14, *“Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”*
- Those familiar with the Christmas story will hear in the opening line of the Gloria an echo of the angels announcing peace at the birth of Jesus.

Current Translation

New Translation

**We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your
great glory,**

Current Translation

Lord God, heavenly
King.

**Almighty God
and Father,
we worship you,
we give you thanks
we praise you for your glory.**

New Translation

Lord God, heavenly
King.

**O God,
almighty Father.**

- “We praise you,/we bless you,/we adore you,/we glorify you,/we give you thanks for your great glory,/Lord God, heavenly King, /O God, almighty Father.”

Now all the descriptions for God have been restored. We are so overcome with awe in the presence of God that we practically babble and stammer.

Current Translation

Lord Jesus Christ,
only Son of the Father,

New Translation

Lord Jesus Christ,
Only Begotten Son

- Latin uses only one word for “Only Begotten” – so when it is translated into English, both words are capitalized to indicate the sanctity of this title of Jesus.

Lord God, Lamb of God

Lord God, Lamb of
God, **Son of the Father,**

Current Translation

You take away the sin
of the world:
have mercy on us;

New Translation

you take away the **sins**
of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins
of the world,
receive our prayer;

- At the words “you take away the sins of the world,” the phrases appear in a different order in the new translation, to imitate the order of the words in Latin.
- We have been singing “**sin**” in the singular, but the new translation has “**sins**” in the plural. The difference indicates that Jesus takes away not just generic sin from the world, but individual sin. He forgives people their personal sins. In Latin, the word for “sins” is in the plural.

Current Translation

you are seated at the
right hand of the Father
receive our prayer.

For you alone
are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are
the Most High,

New Translation

you are seated at the
right hand of the Father
Have mercy on us.

For you alone
are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are
the Most High

Current Translation

Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of
God the Father.
Amen.

New Translation

Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
In the glory of
God the Father.
Amen.

- The Gloria should root us in the scriptures, give us words to praise God, and be an occasion to reflect on the forgiving power of Jesus Christ.