



We continue this month in looking at the changes that will be coming with the new translation of the Roman Missal.

Will the translation changes to the Mass be noticeable?

In the third edition of the Roman Missal, almost every prayer in the Mass—those spoken by the priest and those spoken by the people—has been retranslated from the Latin to English. Some prayers now recited by memory will need to be relearned, and the familiar language of many prayers recited by the priest will change.

In preparing the new translation, the translators were asked to make the English texts conform more closely to the Latin originals and to retain traditional theological vocabulary that communicates important concepts of the faith. The language that the faithful will hear and pray is more formal and somewhat more complex than the language of ordinary conversation. It conveys rich theological concepts and retains biblical language and images.

What will the new Missal mean in my parish?

In the months before the revised translation is implemented, parishes will have to do many things. The parish will have to replace liturgical books and participation aids. Priests will practice proclaiming the new texts and will prepare homilies helping the faithful to understand the new translation and to deepen their appreciation for the Liturgy. The music ministers and the people will learn new musical settings for the parts of the Mass (such as the Gloria and the Holy Holy). Catechists and teachers will help parishioners learn the new prayers. Parishes may also use this opportunity to undertake a thorough reexamination of their liturgical practices.

What difference will these changes make in my parish?

Some of the differences will be obvious immediately. We will have to learn new musical settings for the various parts of the Mass. We will learn new words for common prayers, such as the Creed. Those of us who began saying the Mass prayers by heart long ago will need to rely on printed texts again, at least for a while. In the early months of the transition, we may find it more challenging to pray with one voice as people adjust to the new texts and gradually commit them to their hearts.

But these surface differences will give way to deeper and more significant changes. If we use the time of preparation well, we will make the changes with a deeper understanding of the Liturgy and a renewed reverence for and appreciation of the Mass. We will hear the prayers with new ears and with new hearts. Our Liturgy will be filled with new life and new spirit as we celebrate the Paschal Mystery of Christ made present for us.