

## 17 February 2011 Preparing for the new Roman Missal

*In the first of a three-part series Fr Patrick Jones previews the new Missal which will be introduced later this year.*

A new edition of the Roman Missal will be used at Mass from the First Sunday of Advent, 27 November 2011. It will replace the book we have used since St Patrick's Day 1975. The Missal is a translation of the Latin *Missale Romanum* and the edition in English used since 1975 is a translation of the Latin edition of 1970. The new edition is a translation of the Latin, which was first issued in 2002 and in an amended reprint in 2008.

As a new edition it will contain the material added in the past thirty five years. This material includes

- a new edition of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal. This is the long 'how' and 'why' introduction that is placed among the opening documents in the Missal. It has been published for Ireland in 2005 after it was made available in the 2002 Latin Missal.
- three more Eucharistic Prayers, two for Reconciliation and a more recent one for Masses for Various Needs. Though these Prayers have been published separately, the new edition is the first opportunity to place them within the Missal. This also means that they will be used more frequently.
- Masses for over twenty feasts added since 1975. These feasts include St Pio of Pietrincina (Padre Pio), Maximillian Kolbe, Our Lady of Guadalupe and St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein).
- the Masses for the saints on the National Calendar for Ireland. Again, though published separately in 2009, the Calendar and the Masses will be placed in the sequence of the General Calendar and the Proper of Saints and not as a supplement at the back of the book.
- additional Mass texts in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary and other additional prayers.

The new edition does not change the Mass. Our Mass isn't changing! However, as well as being a new edition, it is a new translation. This is the part that will be most noticeable, though the changes in the people's prayers and responses are not many. The changes simply translate what is in the Latin and are guided by the Instruction on translation, *Liturgiam authenticam*, issued in 2001.

### **A new translation**

It is well to note as a preliminary that translation is not always easy. Indeed, the Italians have a proverb, *traduttore, traditore*, the translator is a traitor. Translating from Latin, a stable language, capable of many clauses in the one sentence, is very different to English, a universal language with many variants from place to place, and ever-changing. Many of the prayers we have in the Missal are over 1200 years old. English today is much changed from the English which Cranmer used in the *Book of Common Prayer* or that used by Shakespeare.

We must be grateful to those who gave us the Missal we have used since 1975. But they accepted that their work would have to be revisited. Time would show strengths and weaknesses. The translation was, however, done with care, even if time was limited when within four years we moved from the introduction of some vernacular to the Mass totally in English and Irish.

The new translation is also guided by norms issued in 2001 in a Roman instruction, *Liturgiam authenticam*. The new norms call for a more literal approach or ‘formal correspondence’ between the Latin and the translation. This principle of translation replaces what guided the translation in the 1975 Missal where the ‘unit of meaning’ was the whole passage, an approach known as ‘dynamic equivalence.’ To give a little more initial detail, *Liturgiam authenticam* seeks the following:

- “the original text, insofar as possible, must be translated integrally and in the most exact manner, without omissions or additions in terms of their content, and without paraphrases or glosses.”
- the Latin structure is to be followed, maintaining as far as possible the “subordinate and relative clauses, the ordering of words, and various forms of parallelism.”
- specific directives are given, for example, *et cum spiritu tuo* to be translated ‘and with your spirit; masculine language is to be used for God and the persons of the Trinity.
- while the language should be “easily understandable,” it must have “dignity, beauty and doctrinal precision” and show a “sacred style.”

Future columns will explain how these norms have shaped the translation in the new edition of the Missal but the important point is that the new edition of the Missal does not change the Mass.