

3 March 2011 The New Missal - What is changing?

In a continuing series, Fr Patrick Jones examines the text of the new Roman Missal.

The Mass isn't changing but we will say and hear many changes in the words we use. Here we focus on the prayers and responses of the congregation. The number of changes should not be overstated. But they should not be understated as even small changes may cause confusion or difficulty. The response to "Lift up your hearts" is often "We raise them up to the Lord" and yet our Missal and our leaflets have had "We lift them up to the Lord" for thirty-five years.

The most obvious change is "And with your spirit" as the response to "The Lord be with you" at a greeting at the beginning of Mass, before the Gospel at the introduction to the Preface and at the blessing. It is also the response to the other greetings at the beginning of Mass and to the greeting of peace, "The peace of the Lord be with you always." The change brings us into line with how the other major languages translate, *et cum spiritu tuo*. It is how, as some of us remember, it was translated in the old people's missals. "And also with you" captures the meaning of the phrase but leaves out the link with how St Paul greeted his readers, using what became a common greeting among Christians and finding it way into our liturgy. The "spirit" is our guiding light, our attitude, our values, our following the spirit of Christ, a Christian spirit.

The Confiteor has changed as it follows the Latin more closely: "that I have greatly sinned" replaces "that I have sinned through my own fault;" "therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-virgin ..." (replacing "and I ask ..." and "through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault" translating *mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa*. This will sound very familiar to some of us. The Irish version, it might be noted, is "trí mo choir féin, trí mo choir féin, trí mo mhóirchoir féin."

The Gloria is a hymn from early times that became part of the Pope's Christmas Mass in the sixth century and is now sung on Sundays (except in Advent and Lent) and major feasts. The opening line follows the better Greek original text which is the Angels' song over the shepherds' field (Luke 2:14): "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will." Then all five verbs in the Latin are translated: we praise, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks ..." Later in the hymn we address God the Son under five titles: "Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father."

Two Creeds are given in our Missal, the longer Nicene Creed and the Apostles' Creed. In the Nicene Creed several changes are very noticeable: "I believe," the more traditional beginning when the Creed is used the liturgy, instead of "We believe;" "consubstantial" replacing "one in Being," "the only Son of God" becomes "the Only Begotten Son of God," "he was born" is now "was incarnate." The phrase, "For us men and for our salvation, "as in the Missal we have used since 1975, are retained. Words from the traditional doctrinal reflection are used and not surprisingly in a creed that comes from 4th and 5th century Councils.

The Apostles' Creed is not used too often and, indeed, is probably not known by many. The Missal mentions its use especially during Lent and Easter since it is associated with Baptism.

There is one change in the people's response to the invitation to "Pray, brethren (brothers and sisters), ...," that is, the addition of "holy" before "Church in the last words. The word "holy" is in the Latin but was omitted in the translation we have used. The biggest change at this part of the Mass is that it is where we should stand and remain so until after the Sanctus. The first and last responses of the people in the dialogue that begins the Preface are changed to "and with your spirit" and "it is right and just."

In the Sanctus (Holy, Holy), the first line in Latin has a Hebrew word Sabaoth. Latin didn't find another word for it. It is a word that points to the power of God and the words we have used "God of power and might" capture this but not the idea of God in power, commanding the whole army of angels or the heavenly hosts as we used to say. A difficult phrase, the first line of the Sanctus becomes, "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts." The rest is unchanged.

There are changes in the Memorial Acclamations but the most noticeable change is the omission of "Christ has died ..." as it is not a translation or in the style of what is given in the Latin. The greatest change is in the following acclamation: "We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again."

Finally, our response to the invitation to Holy Communion ("Lord, I am not worthy ...") translates fully the Latin, which is the response of the centurion at Capernaum (Mt 8:9), substituting "my soul" for "my servant" and including the phrase "under my roof" which is in the biblical reference and also in our Irish version, "faoi mo dhíon."

A Congregational Card will be available from Veritas and after Easter there will be many opportunities to familiarise ourselves with the changes.

The full text of the Order of Mass is on www.liturgy-ireland.ie