

BACKGROUND TO CHANGES IN THE ROMAN MISSAL & NEW MUSIC

Diocese of Hamilton

Why a New Translation of the Roman Missal?

- The Roman Missal has evolved over the centuries. Following the Second Vatican Council, the Missal which was promulgated by Pope Pius V following the Council of Trent in 1570, was revised in accord with the wishes of the Bishops (articulated in the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, December 1964). Although there had been several revisions made to the “Tridentine” Missal since its promulgation in 1570, the first major revision took place following the Second Vatican Council.
- What is distinctive about the post-Vatican II Missal is both its continuity with the Missal of Pius V and the inclusion of both recently discovered older texts and new texts for new circumstances. Furthermore, permission was given to translate the texts into the vernacular so that all the faithful might participate in the sacred liturgy “fully, consciously and actively” in accord with the great desire of the Bishops gathered for the Second Vatican Council.
- Following the Second Vatican Council, an international commission was established to provide an English translation of the Roman Missal. The International Committee for English in the Liturgy (ICEL) was responsible for the initial translations into English. They were guided in this work by an instruction from the *Consilium*, the group mandated by the Holy See to implement the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. The instruction, entitled, *Comme le prevoit* (1969) instructed the translators to provide faithful and accurate translations of the Latin text which would convey units of meaning, not just word for word translations. The principle for translation, as outlined in *Comme le prevoit*, has often been called “dynamic equivalence”. Several provisional texts were prepared following the council until the final English translation was approved and promulgated in 1975. This is substantially the Missal translation which we have been using until today.

It should be noted, that the Holy See (and ICEL) did not envision that the English translation of 1975 would be the final translation for all time. In *Comme le Prevoit*, the Holy See stated:

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy foresees that many Latin texts of the Roman liturgy must be translated into different languages (art. 36). Although many of them have already been translated, the work of translation is not drawing to a close. New texts have been edited or prepared for the renewal of the liturgy. Above all, after sufficient experiment and passage of time, all translations will need review. (para. 1)

- ICEL began a process of review in 1980 and began initial work on the re-translation of the Roman Missal in English.
- In 2000, during the Great Jubilee, Pope John Paul II issued a new edition of the Roman Missal (in Latin) which included some new texts, especially those for the celebration of newly canonized saints.
- In 2002, the Holy See promulgated a new set of instructions for translating liturgical texts from Latin. This instruction is entitled, *Liturgiam Authenticam*. Like its predecessor, this instruction called for faithful and complete translations of the Latin. However, it placed greater emphasis on observing the Latin sentence structure wherever possible, more careful attention to each word in the text, especially important theologically weighted words, and called for a more elevated (less colloquial) form of the English language. It is interesting to note, that the concerns expressed in the new “rules” for translating

are the same as the concerns that were presented to ICEL in the consultation which they undertook in the early 1980's.

- The work of translation is a long and arduous task involving many parties: Latinists, dogmatic, liturgical and pastoral theologians, poets, musicians and most importantly, the Bishops of the Church. There are literally over three thousand prayers which need to be translated. Many "draft translations" are prepared by ICEL and presented to the Bishops and their advisors in each English-speaking country for consultation and eventually for vote. Before final approval (*recognitio*) is given to any of the texts by the Holy See through the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, another international body of English-speaking Bishops (*Vox Clara*) reviews and offers suggestions on the texts. And so, it is not surprising that the work has taken over ten years to complete!
- We expect that the new Canadian edition of the Roman Missal will be available in our parishes in the fall in time for the implementation date : First Sunday of Advent. In the meantime, we are taking steps to prepare our parish communities for the changes in the language which they will hear and use when the new edition of the Missal is implemented.
- Some of the newly-translated texts will require changes in the music we use during the celebration of the Mass. In particular there are changes to the texts of the Penitential Act, the *Gloria*, the *Sanctus* (Holy, Holy) and the Memorial Acclamations. The *Kyrie*, Great Amen, and the Lamb of God remain unchanged.
- The National Liturgy Office (Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops), upon the recommendation of the National Council for Liturgical Music, commissioned three composers to prepare new musical settings of the "ordinary" parts of the Mass using the new texts. These composers (Fr. Geoffrey Angeles, Mr. John Dawson, and M. Michel Guimont) were asked to prepare settings that could be sung *a capella*, even though they were writing for organ, keyboard, guitar and other instruments. Each of these settings is included, together with the chant setting which will be in the Roman Missal, in *Celebrate in Song*. This resource also includes all the new spoken texts for the assembly, the four principal Eucharistic Prayers, and a collection of forty additional hymns which have been published following *Catholic Book of Worship III*.
- In Hamilton Diocese, upon the recommendation of our Liturgical Music Commission, Bishop Crosby has agreed that we will all learn the setting by Geoffrey Angeles, and that this will be the only setting permitted for use in the liturgy in Hamilton Diocese until January 2013. After that time, other settings may be introduced in parishes and other institutions according to pastoral need.
- The CCCB has indicated to us that any parish, where copies of *Celebrate in Song* are available for the assembly, may begin to SING the new Mass parts immediately. However, pastorally, it might be better to introduce the settings to the parishes in September. The spoken texts may not be used until the new Missal is available or until permission from the local Bishop has been given.
- A final word about *Celebrate in Song* – the new musical resource, designed to assist parishes in the implementation of the new Mass texts. The retail price for this resource is \$10.00 per copy. If purchased through the Liturgy Office, the price per copy is \$6.00 plus shipping and handling (shipped directly from Ottawa). The downloadable CD accompaniment can also be purchased also from the Liturgy Office (retail: \$35.00). Purchasers may print as many copies as needed.