

I. The Need for a Revised Translation

The liturgical restorations and reforms of the Vatican Council II have brought two generations of the Church closer than ever to the Council's stated purpose in the perfection of the Church's worship: *the full and active participation by all the people...*

In 1969 and 1970 Pope Paul VI issued a Roman Missal – the volume that sets out the language and rituals of Catholic worship – that reflected the work of the Vatican Council II. The Church, throughout the world, began to celebrate – as we had in the very beginning – once again in each land the Sacred Liturgy in the language of the people. Immediately, the Mass was restored to its fundamental and essential nature: to be the Prayer of Christ – Head and Members – to the Father and in the Holy Spirit. Two minor revisions to the English edition were made in the 1970's (a sort of polishing of the basic text) and in 2001 Pope John Paul II authorized a 'third' Edition that would benefit from thirty years of use of the vernacular in worship and would strive now for translations that were not only accurate translations but truly works of literary art...doing for our age what Shakespeare and the King James Bible accomplished hundreds of years ago for the English language. The Roman Missal we will begin to use in Advent is the best the English speaking world could achieve...and because English is so dominant a language the world over...a text that influences the way the Church will pray in every land.

The History of the Roman Missal

2. In the Beginning

The earliest evidences we have of setting down the words and rituals of our worship are isolated words and gestures in the Gospels and other New Testament texts. In mid-2nd century records of what was being done begin to surface...the need to explain ourselves to a very un-Christian world. Justin Martyr describes our Sunday assembly: *On the day called after the sun, all...gather. ...the memoirs of the Apostles or the writings of the Prophets are read...the one presiding gives an address...then all stand and pray (intercessions)...bread and wine mixed with water are brought...the president offers up prayers and thanksgiving...the people acclaim "Amen." Then the distribution of the bread and wine, and by the deacons, a portion to the absent sick. Those who can give what they will to the presider for the needs of the orphans and widows.*

Our outline is obvious. The elaborations of the centuries have built upon the foundation of the ancient practice and, once persecution ended standard texts began to emerge.

3. Catholic and Multi-ritual

I want to take a moment to 'put us in our place.' Because we Roman Catholics make up – by far – the bulk of the Catholic population of the European world ('the West') we can think of ourselves as

THE Catholic Church. There is a whole Eastern part of the Catholic Church - (what Pope John Paul II called one of the 'two lungs' by which the Church 'breathes')

Want a quick tour???

There are the **Byzantines** (Greek, Russian, Slovak, Ukrainian and others)

The **Alexandrinians** (from Alexandria, Egypt) ...also called the **Copts**.

The **Syrians** (at Antioch....using a liturgy credited to our St. James)

The **Armenians** (in Turkey...translating St. James into Armenian)

The **Maronites** (in Lebanon....again a translation of the St. James text to Lebanese)

The **Chaldeans** (in Iraq) with a liturgy credited to St. Thomas the Apostle.

The **Malankars** and **Malabars** (in India)...both also tracing back to St. Thomas.

Then...in the West....besides us **Romans**, are

The **Ambrosian** (credited to St. Ambrose of Milan, Italy)

The **Bragan** of Portugal (Archdiocese of Braga)

The **Mozarabic** of Spain (Diocese of Toledo)

The **Sarum** of England (at Salisbury...now extinct)

and three Rites used by religious orders:

The **Dominican, Carmelite and Carthusian** Rites.

It is our **Roman Rite** that is updating its text translations from the Latin normative text into all the languages

4. First Evidence of Latin

Tracing the language we use at worship to its earliest printed sources is both challenging and rewarding. The New Testament itself is pretty much a 'worship' document. Paul's letters, for example, were meant for public reading in the Sunday Assembly and are the source of many of our Greeting and Blessing texts. Past the biblical period, our earliest remnant comes from the church at Rome. The date is around the turn of the 3rd century...190-210. The original source seems to be North Africa, where there was a lot of cross-pollination from the East, mostly through Alexandria in Egypt.

Our oldest surviving Latin text is attributed to a presbyter (what we now call 'priest') at Rome, Hippolytus. He was a controversial figure who even set himself up as our first 'anti-pope' against not one but two rightful successors of Peter. In the end he was reconciled and died as a martyr. His Latin Eucharistic Prayer has come through to us by way of other contemporary language translations, but is the source of our Eucharistic Prayer II. Shorter than the others. Very 'Roman'...direct and to the point. What he leaves behind was not 'authoritative' in the sense of 'official' or mandated by a pope. We were nowhere near such central authority at that time, but it reveals how we prayed and still pray. One interesting part remains in our present prayer: *we thank you for counting us worthy to stand in your presence and serve you.* Ancient congregations stood for the Eucharistic Prayer – the way we stand still for the Gospel and Creed. The American Church has obtained special permission to have us kneel.

5. Local Churches Evolve Their Language

As mentioned last time, it would take centuries before what we would call ‘law and order’ would be imposed on our prayer from the high offices of the Church...whether Rome or some local authority. But in all the early texts we’ve found there was a definite pattern and what would be called an “authority of custom” dominated and expected certain things to happen, and would have wondered about new things suddenly coming on board.

The way churches were designed and furnished (pretty much unfurnished except for altar, pulpit and president’s chair); the division of functions to various ministries; the design of the prayer of thanks – beginning always with a dialogue and closing with the people’s “Amen!” All of these were well established by the 400’s. Evidence in church records indicate visiting bishops fitted in quite easily even though they would travel with their own ‘eucharistic prayer text.’ And long before it was adapted to the vernaculars of our modern age, Hippolytus’s prayer had made it to Egypt and North Africa and even to Ethiopia where the Coptic Church there still uses it as the *Anaphora* (Eucharistic Prayer) *of the Apostles*. The point is...what we are praying today is more ancient than we might expect.

And within that ancient history the texts have evolved with the needs of cultures and vernaculars in every age. Ours is no different. The forthcoming edition of our ancient prayer is an acknowledgment that, unlike the Latin text that was – as a ‘dead’ language, rather stagnant, the vernaculars of the ages constantly evolve and so must the sacred texts that use them.

6. Shaping and Firming the Pattern

Tracing the development of our worship and its accompanying texts, we are around the year 400. One of our ancient documents, called the *Apostolic Constitutions*, was attributed (wrongly) to a disciple of St. Peter, Clement I – who, himself, became Bishop of Rome in the First Century (99-97). The text is much later but takes us to the next step. It is the first text in which we see set down the linking of a *Liturgy of the Word* with a *Liturgy of the Eucharist*. The readings were four in number: one from the *Law*, one from the *Prophets*, one from the *Apostles* and one from the *Gospels*. Psalms were sung between the readings. A homily followed, after which the non-baptized and those penitents not yet reconciled by absolution were dismissed – each with a petition of prayer on their behalf and for their special needs; then were prayed intercessions for the faithful still present; a shared greeting of peace was exchanged (usually a kiss); finally, a ritual washing of hands and the presentation of the gifts set the stage for the Eucharistic Prayer.

We should feel quite comfortable if we were in their number. Perhaps a bit uncomfortable in our own sins when some of our brothers and sisters had to leave with the catechumens because their presence for the holiest part of the prayer was deemed inappropriate. Of that all that remains now is each individual’s understanding that serious sin and the reception of the Eucharist do not co-exist.

7. Early Common Elements

Continuing from last week a continued look at one of our earliest forms of the Mass, found in the *Apostolic Constitutions* (around 400 AD): After the catechumens and penitents were dismissed, the **Liturgy of the Eucharist** began with the preparation of the Gifts and the Eucharistic Prayer that began, as it does now, with a Dialogue...*The Lord be with you....and with your Spirit; Lift up your hearts...we lift them up to the Lord; Let us give thanks and praise...it is*

right and just. The prayer continues: celebrating God's creative action in the world, especially the creation of man. It remembers the sin of Adam and the history of Israel to the Exodus. Then God is acclaimed – *Holy, holy, holy.....* His holiness is seen especially in His Son Jesus Christ, who lived the very holiness of God and banished every sickness and weakness from humanity ...but who was brought to trial before Pilate, judged, condemned to the cross and died. But then rose again and after 40 days ascended to the right hand of his Father. But, on the night of his betrayal he took bread and chalice..... (and the events and words of the Last Supper are recalled) There followed the invocation of the Holy Spirit both upon the Bread and Chalice and upon those present who are offering with Christ his very self and themselves to the Father.

Then came a set of intercessions within the Eucharistic Prayer culminating in the *Great Amen of the Faithful*. *The Lord's Prayer* is not yet part of the Mass and, absent also the "Lamb of God." A litany by the Deacon and a prayer by the Presider accompanies the preparation of the Bread and Wine for distribution. The Deacon cries out: "*Holy Things For the Holy!*" and the communicants come forward singing *Psalm 33*. Everything ends with one last prayer of Thanksgiving and a Blessing. That was us...1600 years ago! Take a moment and imagine yourself in that assembly. Feel at home?

8. In the Dark

What happened to our prayer between the 400 and 700 AD is almost a blank page. Ever hear of the Dark Ages? They weren't kidding. So very much was lost in the collapse of Roman imperial government and the vast movement of barbarian tribes into the empty space that once was Rome. One reality bridged both the old and new: the Church. But absent was the jurisdictional authority.

Rome, Jerusalem, Alexandria, Constantinople all had the prestige that would inspire pilgrims to report back home what they saw in one 'big apple' or another...the way mass was done...the feast days...the local flavor of '*take, bless, break and give*' that was always in place. But, in our investigation of the period, we know more about what was going on in one place or another better than those varied places knew of each other in their own time.

One emphatic adjective applies: we were *catholic*. There was hardly a national or ethnic group that did not find their own way '*to do this in memory of me.*' And one fundamental difference that we haven't seen in 'time-lapse evolution' had occurred. We went into the Dark Ages praying in Greek – we came out praying in Latin! . A new universal language had come to be, one that, like Greek, was a second-tongue to all those barbarian tribes and enabled some sort of communication to cross fluid borders.

The key player of the age, creating elements of our present pattern of prayer, was Rome's bishop at the turn of the 5th century: Gelasius I. By his time, the custom of sending out the catechumens and penitents before the Eucharistic part of the mass began had been abandoned. We know because Pope Gelasius moved a key element of their dismissal – intercessions on their behalf – into the body of the Eucharistic Prayer itself. All that was left were the responses to the intercessions (still in Greek!): *Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison...* We were asking the Lord Christ for his mercy...but no longer saying for whom or what. The obvious filler for the blank space was....**us**, mercy on us...sinners. **The Penitential Act** had been born and came first so that all that would follow would be from repentant souls.

9. Roman Influence

As Rome became more and more dominant as ‘headquarters’ for the Church, what went on there would determine the patterns evolving all over Europe. The surviving documents tell us a lot about what happened when the pope presided at the liturgy, but were not much help on the local scene of villages and parishes. Their primary obstacle would have been spoken Latin. The written text was easily becoming the norm for all the educated (some of whom were even members of the clergy) but the dialects of spoken Latin would sound like totally different things in areas that would become France and Spain and Germany and Britain.

What also was happening was that the mass had become the sole property of the clergy. The people watched. The emphasis was on the power of God, especially in the consecration of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. Mass seems to have been more God’s action than that of the Church. The high point was the reception of communion, not the thanksgiving offering (Eucharist) of priest and people joined in Christ. The Roman Missal was the guidebook and script for services far and wide, even if what was contained in the documents copied in Rome and re-copied in every land throughout the continent was more often than not simply undecipherable.

The glimmer of first dawn that would see the end of the Dark Ages would come, not from Rome, but from Gaul. Charles the Great, *aka* Charlemagne, had brought order out of the chaos of fiefdoms and began to create a new grand political order. He brought together the best and the brightest, most especially in the person of a monk from the British Isles, Alcuin, who would be his chief of staff in all things cultural. The first thing Alcuin did was send for the latest Roman Missal and set about to rewrite it...*a la Charles*.

10. Carolingian Mandates

Charlemagne, the first of the *Holy* Roman Emperors, saw religion as the linchpin of political uniformity. A secondary consequence of a *one-king-one-faith* governance was the promulgation of a form of the mass that would be pretty much the same everywhere. The Frankish mass would be the first in history to come from ‘on high.’ The Carolingians did, however, acknowledge [even if not always acting upon the conclusion] that what the pope did was what God wanted. So the Roman Missal that was adopted came from the papal library of pope Hadrian I [785-6] and was credited to pope Gregory the Great [590-604.]

One feature that needs mention is the fact that ‘Frenchmen’ were doing the transcription and the French were, if nothing else, ‘flowery.’ They borrowed from the East a tendency to employ an abundance of incense and found many occasions to use it. They multiplied and lengthened the prayers working on the principle that more is better vs. the ‘roman’ lean toward ‘less is more.’ Dramatic - if not downright ‘theatrical’ - flair was common. Gospels were proclaimed from on high in pulpits that soared and made the incense resemble the clouds on Sinai from which God himself spoke. The Gospel Procession was born, with accompanying *Alleluias*. Added prayers that are still with us include the “*Pray brothers and sisters...[Orate Fratres]*” that precedes the Prayer Over the Gifts and the Eucharistic Prayer. Also the silent prayers the priest says while washing his fingers and before receiving communion.

Still in Eucharistic Prayer I [‘The Roman Canon’] is the long list – now optional – of the saints of Rome [Linus, Cletus, Clement, Sixtus, Cornelius, (popes) Cyprian, Lawrence,

Crysgonus, John, Paul, Cosmas, Damian (martyrs), Felicity, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucy, Agnes, Cecilia, Anastasia (virgin martyrs)] most of whom the Franks never heard of and for whom they could have cared less....but, they were ‘papal’ and so were given the benefit of the doubt and left in. And one other alteration of note: now, since the Mass was in a scholars’ and lawyers’ language and prayed in silence...all the prayers that used to say “we...” now said “I.”

11. Too Much “Mystery”

The surviving texts that we have from around the turn of the first millennium give us a window to a Church we would hardly recognize today. There was in the very language of the Mass, Latin, a disjunction from participation by the people. Even the clergy, in reading the Latin prayers, seldom had an understanding of their meaning. Everyone knew that something deeply mysterious was happening and the mystery was compounded by an attitude of ‘secrecy’ [the Prayer over the Gifts that comes at the end of our present preparation rite was, itself, nicknamed the ‘*secretum*,’ the secret.] Early in our history, the holy things were kept away from non-believers; the Eucharistic Prayers were rarely written down. They were the memorized private creations of the bishops and would be heard only by the baptized, since catechumens did not remain for the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Now, the *holy things* were kept from the faithful themselves. There grew up almost naturally an exaggerated sense of mystery...and downright ignorance...of what the Mass was all about. There is evidence in the traces of texts from the period that there was no little confusion between Jesus and the Father...who was offering/praying and to whom was the offering/prayer being made?

Church altars were moved to the back wall of the sanctuary, about as far away from the people as possible. The reception of the Eucharist was rare. Showing the Bread in elevations at Mass or in monstrances in processions was far safer; the *holy things* were only for experiencing from afar. The procession with the Gifts of bread and wine falls out of use; the bread for the priest alone is already atop the chalice and already on the altar when the mass begins. Small pre-formed wafers of bread were added and placed no longer on a single plate-like patten but in a chalice-like lidded vessel, the *ciborium* [lit. the *food holder*]. They were no longer placed in the hand but directly in the mouth at communion. Eventually, in another couple hundred years, they would be received kneeling, not standing, and a support railing/fence would be added to the architecture, not only for communicants but as a line of demarcation: come no nearer.

12. Liturgical Theatre

In the circumstance of sacred mystery that shrouded not only the spoken word and its meaning but also the purpose of the various gestures...bows, bells, genuflections, cross signings, movement from one part of the altar to another...began to take on an ascribed meaning...an allegorical interpretation. Everything had a deeper and hidden meaning. The Entrance Antiphon was seen as the voice of the prophets; the *Gloria* the announcement of the nativity by the angels, the Opening Prayer was Jesus teaching in the Temple at the age of twelve; the Readings were the preaching of the Baptist; the Responsorial Psalm was the acceptance of the call of Christ by the apostles; the Alleluia was their joy at his miracles; the Gospel his very teaching;and so on, up to the Breaking of the Bread and Communion being the meal with Jesus the two disciples had on the way to Emmaus. When the priest genuflected, it was Christ falling as he carried the cross; when the priest washed his hands, it was Pilate proclaiming his innocence; when a piece of the

host was placed in the chalice it was the Resurrection...the final blessing and dismissal was the farewell and Ascension of Christ.

They knew the Mass was the action of Jesus, they had lost the meaning when they lost the language of everyday speech. All of this was very French, very Frankish, very Charlemagne. The mass had become a passion play.

And, like most theatrical productions, there were variations in style and interpretation so that not only great confusion and lack of unity reigned, but a great decline in the understanding of what the Mass was all about was the rule. And still....since the mass was a performance....the people were not expected to pray the Mass; but the Mass inspired prayer and they began to pray at mass.

13. Elaborations Not So 'Roman'

The Roman Missal...rewritten by the Franks in Charlemagne's renaissance...came back to Rome with elaborations and flowerings of interpretation that encouraged some of the greatest art the church has ever produced. Not only would church music begin to develop into polyphonic compositions, but there evolved a style of church music, **Gregorian Chant**, that would become a sacred treasure and would require – and still does – depths of spiritual maturity to achieve its effect in the soul as well as in the vaulted gothic expanses of the generation's churches. In the warm climates of the Mediterranean the high art of the *tesserae*, mosaic tiles, spoke of God's throne room with Christ, Mary and the saints in solemn procession and attendance. In the colder regions of the north, where every heart sought as much light in winter's dark as could be had, great spaces of glass filled the walls, and great works of art stained the glass – 'painting with light' the an environment took form in which the drama of Christ would be reenacted week by week, day by day.

Altars received a new invention, the **tabernacle**. The keeping of the consecrated Eucharist, first in sacristies, then in suspended dove-shaped vessels [*columbaria*] that hung over altars, then in precious cabinets of gold and silver the sat upon the altar came to exist. The Eucharist had become, if not something to be taken as food, then something to be enthroned and worshiped. Great sculptures of the apostles, martyrs and saints surrounded the spaces and heightened the sense of each Christian's belonging to the great assembly of the court of heaven, ever adoring the living God and his Christ.

14. The Birth of Congregational Song

The greater the effort that was made to gain deeper understanding of the – now hidden – meaning of the Mass, explained as a dramatic reenactment (like a Passion play), or the reflections of the great Scholastics like Thomas Aquinas or Albertus Magnus who saw allegorical meaning in every gesture and moment [especially of the Passion and Death of the Christ] – the most lasting contribution of the Middle Ages was the marriage of the mass with music.

Ancient Israel sang the psalms with what could only be called orchestral accompaniment ...harps and trumpets and cymbals and drums and flutes, etc., etc. Christians in pagan Rome identified such use of instruments with their use in the worship of the false gods. Music in pagan cults was often cacophonous so as to drive off evil spirits. In the Church of the East, the human voice was seen as the one and only 'instrument' to accompany prayer...and so it remains to this day. One does not look for organs in the Eastern Rite churches.

But, in the West...what a difference! Especially once the words of the mass prayers were taken from the people and they were left with nothing much to do except watch the priest 'read his mass' the earlier [8th c] chanting of the mass texts began an evolution in which sacred music would find its fertile soil. The earliest forms simply sang the text *recto tono* – all on one note.

By the 10th c. elaborations began to happen with several melodic notes being given to a single syllable or word; then long strings of notes in melody attaching to one word or part of a word. *A l e e e e e e l u u u u u I a a a a a !* We still have some in use, especially in Holy Week and Easter.

The antiphons of the people, even though no longer said by them, were favored for such treatment: the *Kyrie* (Lord, have mercy) *Sanctus* (Holy, Holy, Holy), the *Agnus Dei* (Lamb of God). There came about a new creation –first in the Mass, but soon into secular and popular music - breaking away from chant into music with a beat and tempo. Sort of the first use by the Church of the 'rhythm method.' [sorry, I couldn't resist!] These compositions rhymed and were placed in the Liturgy of the Word, not as responsorial psalms but as true musical prayers set to measure. They were called *sequences* because they usually bridged one element of the mass with another –especially non-Gospel texts with the Gospel. Some have endured and are still mandated: *Victimae paschali laudes* at Easter; *Veni Creator Spiritus* at Pentecost. Others are *Lauda Sion* on Corpus Christi [20 stanzas!] and *Stabat Mater* for the feast of the Sorrows of Mary. And, of course the scare-the-sin-out-of-you *Dies Irae* (Day of Wrath) from the Mass for the Dead.

Eventually great choirs would be formed to perform more and more elaborate compositions. If the people were no longer involved in the praying of the Mass, they would certainly not be unmoved by the beauty of song and visual art all around them. The heavenly choirs had come to earth. If mass wasn't the joined prayer of the members of the Church it was certainly the place where the Church would be entertained and, no doubt, inspired to personal prayer.

15. Magic and the Mass

The period just before the Reformation saw a very significant evolution in the Roman Missal: it was, almost in its entirety, put to music....at least any of the parts that were supposed to be for the people and not read silently by the priest. It started in a very well known place, Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. The single line of sung music was gradually added to by other voices - a second, third or fourth, singing in harmonies. And a musical instrument formed the baseline on which they were set.

Some of the voices actually sung texts that were in the vernacular...not translations, but spiritual reflection or meditation on the Missal's text. That was frowned upon and faded out.

At this period, 14th c., the popes were in residence in Avignon and when they returned to Rome in 1377, so did the French style of liturgical music. And from Rome, soon to all of Italy and, from Rome to all parts of Christendom. The effect was positive and negative. The liturgy

became the seed bed of great musical art and spirituality; but, the more complex the compositions became, the farther out of reach they were from the very people who were meant to give them voice...the Assembly of the Faithful.

Naturally, not every mass could command the services of multiple singers or musicians. There came about a division that only with the Vatican II restorations was set aside: *High Mass* and *Low Mass*. Even to think about such a division now is difficult. How can a mass ever be something 'Low'? The real distinction, of course was 'sung' or 'read.'

All manner of superstition and unsound spirituality also crept in: when hearing Mass, one would not grow older; one's food would taste better; one would not die a sudden death; one's relatives and friends in Purgatory would not suffer...for as long as the Mass took. The Church never taught any of this in a formal, doctrinal manner, but popular devotion and preachers with a following attracted many converts to such a way of thinking. Various local bishops did what they could to correct the errors, but there was no such thing as an official website or blog that people might consult. People believed what they wanted to believe rather than what might be solid in the theology or faith.

One very strong practice evolved, especially in the age of the Black Death: masses for the Souls in Purgatory. Since the language of the *Roman Missal* itself – that prays at every Mass for all the living and all the dead – was simply not referenced by the faithful, the custom grew of multiple masses – 3, 7, 10, 30 – being necessary to bring the dead to heaven. Whole religious orders survived – thrived – on mass stipends for the dead and priests would read a dozen or more masses every day just to satisfy the demand for masses.

The Church was in desperate need of spiritual and liturgical reform. Unfortunately it came from those who didn't think the mass had any value at all, since it had long since lost both its nature as the prayer of the whole Church joined in Christ. The new theology of the Reformation would be that his death, once for all time, made mass unnecessary.

16. Reform and Counter-reform

What the Reformers did with the *Roman Missal* was simply to rewrite the elements that fit their own theologies of salvation, translate it into the language of the people, and reduce the bulk of it to a category of piety, decoration and human creation.

The mass would be simply a 'remembrance' of what Christ did, once-upon-a-time and for-all-time. Christians would gather for praise and spiritual uplift, but not because they saw themselves as extensions of Christ and a Church that was bonded to him, as he was to his Father. It was the Council of Trent that would begin the process of rebirth. And it would take 400 years – and counting – to do it.

The Council Fathers started with the abuses. They were the cause, in many ways, for the success of the Reformers. The people wanted 'in,' and the Latin liturgy, silent and belonging only to the clergy, let them know they were not even part of the prayer, let alone central to it.

How profound this issue was and is can be seen in the attitude of the faithful even now, after 40 years of Vatican II restorations: being present for the beginning of the liturgy, remaining until the end and participating in prayer and song during the liturgy are all quite obviously **not** important to about 75% of Catholics. It's not really *their* prayer; they can be there or not and it is of no real consequence.

So numerous and varied were the peculiarities of the celebration of the Mass that, if Trent's working commission on reform were to tackle them one by one they would still be at it. What was done, instead, was the creation of a polished version of the 11th c. Roman Missal in effect at Rome in 1500 ...and making it mandatory everywhere, in every minute perspective by means of **rubrics**. *Rubrics* : the name comes from the red ink used to distinguish these directives on 'how' mass was to be celebrated from the actual prayers that formed the mass itself. Thus was created the *Missal of Pius V*, who placed in the opening text an injunction that it was the one and only text for the mass to be used, and that no one, for any reason, was free to change any part of it. There were some exceptions: churches that could show a 200 year tradition for a variation in celebration were permitted to retain them. These were generally inconsequential and only slight peculiarities. Certain religious orders – Dominicans, Franciscans; certain local churches – Milan, Toledo, Trier, Cologne, Liege, Braga and Lyons were permitted their own special divergences from the Roman norm. It is, of course, this directive of Pius V that those opposed to the Missal of Paul VI cite as a way of saying Trent's mass was meant to be the only orthodox text until the Second Coming. Quite an expectation against any further evolution! Now, if only humanity would stop evolving.....

17. Whose Priesthood Is at Work?

So, the Reformation gave the Western world two very different Christian styles of worship. The Roman Catholic would stand firm on the principle that Christ's ordained priests, sharing in His own Eternal Priesthood by virtue of the Sacrament of Holy Orders were alone the proper celebrants of the sacred mysteries. The Mass remained in a language that was not used at all in everyday life, except in medicine, law, science and university classrooms.

The rites of the Reformation Churches, having abandoned the Sacrament of Holy Orders, saw in each Christian's share of Christ's priestly nature in the very fact of their being baptized, a necessary call to participate in the congregation's worship by prayer and song in their own vernacular tongue. There would be – then and now – very little attempt to set up any sort of standard text. Each congregation would be more or less on their own, but unavoidably greatly influenced by the Roman Missal that had been, for all of them, their experience from birth. There would always be familiar echoes of Rome in the most anti-Roman congregations. It was in their blood.

The Eastern Catholic churches, celebrating in living languages (Greek, Old Slovak, Ukrainian, etc.) and diverging only slightly from the same liturgies celebrated by their Orthodox

neighbors, separated from Rome for 500 years already by schism, left the Roman Catholic church the only Christian sect in which the people did not worship in their everyday tongue, that, even if they did not participate in the action of the Mass, would always be able to join in the vocal and sung aspects of that prayer. We had achieved a standardized ritual blessed with great music...from Gregorian Chant to the 'new' works by Bach and Mozart and Beethoven...ancient and inspired art and architecture and a theological content that surpassed all others in depth and mystery. But it did not yet fulfill the Master's desire that each member of Him share fully in his Offering, heart, mind and soul. We were in a holding pattern until someone noone would have suspected caused the next great development in our history.....Napoleon!

18. Rediscovery

Napoleon saw himself as, at least, a demi-god, but he would never have imagined how his military adventures would effect the worship of the Church he used as a prop for his pomp. When his army went to the Lavant...especially Egypt...troves of spoils were sent home to enrich the imperial treasury. In the mix was a carved inscription that would hold the key to translating the past: **the Rosetta Stone**. After decades of work, the dead language of Egypt yielded its meaning and lit a fuse that witnessed all the great museums and universities of the world pouring their scholars into the Middle East to rediscover not only the antiquity of Egypt and Babylon and Greece, but also what had been just as buried during the Dark Ages.

Among the trove of artifacts were copies of early Christian spiritual and liturgical texts that revealed how we worshiped before the Arians rerouted the development by forcing the Church into a defensive position against any who would deny the divinity of Jesus...and sent our worship into a Limbo where none but the clergy might tread. The texts became the source for study and research ... and, finally, questions ... at the great Benedictine monasteries of Germany and France. How did we ever get from the days when, as the text revealed, everyone celebrated the Mass to the circumstance where only the priest celebrated and the rest watched, prayed, gazed at the great stained glass and mosaics and listened to the heavenly music and, once in a while, dared to receive communion.

They began a task of recovery that would be known as the **Liturgical Movement**...a task now more than 100 years old and still on-going.

The earliest signs of restoration came at the dawn of the 20th century, with St. Pius X's efforts to bring the people in the pews back into the celebration. He started with the central element that effects the union (com-union) with Christ that our worship effects. He urged frequent – even daily – reception of the Eucharist; breaking from a decline in practice that kept the Eucharist, and each Christian's participation in it, at a great distance. He also urged participation in the very language of the Mass: SING! The Faithful were urged to bring their voices to the celebration, not just singing AT Mass, but singing THE Mass. The pews were to be alive with the Sound of Music! We were on the road to reclaiming our share of the prayer.

19. Liturgical Movement Leaps

There came about, in the papacy of Servant of God, Pius XII, such a clear statement of the relationship of the Church to her Master that the term ‘breakthrough’ might be appropriate. In the midst of World War II and the chaos that what Europe, the efforts of the Vatican, and Pius personally, in the rescue of Jews and other victims of the Holocaust (Golda Meir, after the war, said no one had done more than Pius) the Church’s own definition as the agent of Christ in the political as well as spiritual salvation of humanity brought forth a new title and vision: we are the **Mystical Body of Christ**. Pius’ encyclical, *Mystici Corporis*, turned the mirror on ourselves and reminded the Church that we are the presence of Christ, visible and active in the world. When it came to worship, therefore, it is Christ’s own offering of himself to his Father, not only on the day of Good Friday, but in every way, day by day, in his ministry and life on earth that is ‘re-presented’ and prolonged in the action of the Mass.

The Reformers, hundreds of years earlier, and even to this day cannot see the point of the Mass. That Christ died once and for all and that his Death is the final statement about what man is able to do to justify God’s mercy and forgiveness — found no convincing response from the Catholic side at the time. We affirmed that the Mass was valid always....the unbloody repetition of Calvary. The work of theologians and saints would bring us to understand what was taken for granted in the early Church. At Mass we do not ‘do again’ what Christ did once upon a time. Christ’s action, because he is eternal (above time), is itself eternal. **There is only one Mass and it continues until the end of time.** It is entered into, week by week, day by day, by Christians who live their human lives in stages and in time and who are enabled to join the bits and pieces of them with the one, eternal and perfect offering of Christ. Saint Paul would put it so perfectly: “....in my own body I do what I can to make up all that has still to be undergone by Christ for the sake of his body, the Church.” [Col 1:24] What can possibly be missing....what could possibly be left undone by Christ? The concept of the Mystical Body provides the answer: Me. You. All of us. Until **our lives** are offered with Christ, the action of the Mystical Body – Christ and Church – will remain incomplete.

When it came to worship, Pius gave us the definition of ourselves at Mass: we are Christ. The stage was set for what the Spirit would next inspire: a Council that would teach the modern Church, first Who she is; and then what of the Father’s work she needs to be about. In this age, or any age.

OUR PRESENT TEXT - THE THIRD EDITION OF THE ROMAN MISSAL

20. Liturgy First at Vatican II

The first topic and document produced by the Fathers of Vatican II was **The Constitution on the Liturgy**, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (Dec 4, 1963)...almost 50 years ago! The practical reason why the topic was taken up first was because the homework had already been done by the monasteries that had investigated the early liturgy and knew what needed to be done to enable the modern Church to worship according to the principles known to our brothers and sisters in our origins.

Of immediate and delicate need was the necessary break with hundreds of years of evolution away from what the word ‘liturgy’ means in its root: **‘the work of the people.’** The Roman liturgy had become the work only of the clergy, in a language and a multiplicity of rituals that even they little understood.

Once a clear statement of what we are doing when we worship was set forth: the making present of the Paschal Mystery of Christ – his Death, his Resurrection, his Ascension, his Sending of the Holy Spirit and, yet to come, his Return in Glory – the liturgy was to be seen as the exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ....full public worship effected by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and his Members.

The Council would make the point very clear when it came to worship. There were to be restorations from ancient practice and there would be one central principle to guide the work:

“...the faithful should be led to that full, conscious, and active participation....demanded by the very nature of the liturgy, and to which the Christian people, ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people’[1 Pt 2:9,4-5] have a right and obligation by reason of their baptism.” “...in the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy the full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else...” [SC 14]

Bl. John XXIII began the process even before he called the Council. He revised the Roman Missal toward such participation by authorizing – among other things – the Liturgy of the Word to be in the vernacular, restoring the Prayer of the Faithful, and a provision that where an altar was free-standing, the prayer should/could be led by the priest presiding, across the altar, facing the assembly. His edition of the Missal never went to publication. Instead, came Vatican Council II.

21. Implementation

Even before the close of the Council there was established a commission that was charged with the task of revising all the liturgical texts in existence, translating them into the various vernaculars of the Catholic world...which was, literally, the entire globe, and having the translations approved by the Vatican for publication. When one considers how long the current process has taken...the re-translation of a text in service for almost 50 years ... it was a minor

miracle that the Missal of Paul VI came to press in 1969. One of the factors was the homework that had been done by liturgical scholars in anticipation of what the Council would do in restoration of the ancient liturgy, in particular the involvement of the Assembly in the very action of the liturgy...taking their part with Christ in His great eternal prayer to His Father. That translation has served us well. There were a couple of fine-tuning revisions along the way. Remember the lector, or deacon (for the Gospel), or in their absence, the priest saying at the end of proclamation: *This is the Word of the Lord* or *This is the Gospel of the Lord*? And then, looking more clearly at the normative Latin for better accuracy, and a deeper understanding that the text was not meant to be a simple statement: “*That was it...*” But an acclamation: “*Let’s hear it for the Word of the Lord!*” “*Let’s hear it for the Gospel of the Lord!*” To which there was meant to be a rousing “*Thanks be to God!*” “*Praise to you, Lord Jesus!*” So the text in English was modified: *The Word of the Lord; The Gospel of the Lord.!*

Another was the exchange at the reception of communion. The pre-Paul VI Missal had the priest say, in Latin, while giving communion to up to three people: *May the Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ Preserve Your Soul to Life Everlasting*. There was no response. Now the true nature of an acclamation was to be brought out. Not “*This is the Body of the Lord*”...a sort of test that seemed to want a faith response...an “*Amen*” that wasn’t a kind of “*Hooray*” but, instead, an affirmation of faith in the doctrine of transubstantiation. Not just a few people got the message and would respond, “*I believe*” instead of the Amen. So it became the acclamation that was intended: {Let’s hear it for} *The Body of Christ!*...and the ‘*AaaaaMen!* That celebrates the wonder and gift of Christ.

It was Bl. Pope John Paul II who took up the task of tackling things, not piece meal but in an integrated way that sought to achieve the best representation of the Latin base text in each of the world’s vernaculars.

22. Time to Fine Tune

Pope Bl. John Paul used the Jubilee Year/ 2000 to have the liturgical arm of the Church move into high gear to bring forth a revision of the 1969 Missal of Paul VI...to be known as the *Third Edition of the Roman Missal*.

The process would involve biblical scholars, authorities on the Church’s historical documents of worship, linguistic scholars in all the world’s languages and language groups, Latin scholars for the knowledge of the authentic meaning of the Latin texts. There would be a back-and-forth cross-check system in which one set of scholars would comment upon and influence the work of another set of scholars.

Translation, as any who work with languages will affirm, is not merely finding one word to convey the meaning of another word. It is not just words that communicate, but the layers of meaning and inference that words convey. Translating thoughts and ideas and not just vocabulary was the goal.

All the while there remained the goal of unity – even in diverse languages – so that, no matter what language was being used, we would all be praying the same thing. So Latin was retained as the basic and standard text against which all the other translations would lean. We are the Latin/Roman Rite after all!

The simultaneous task was to produce a text that would be truly in the category of *literature*...not simply accurate but stylish. This has been the major criticism of the translation we have been using: that it is often banal and bland, like readingwell, like reading a ‘translation’ rather than a text that comes from the American heart and soul.

So, it’s a balancing act: to say in English what the Latin wants to say, and not to have it sound like a slavish word-for-word reproduction.

Since most language (not Latin) is living, the meaning of words will always be evolving and what we have done in this age will not be forever. There will be periodic fine tuning. Some day, another full translation. But this is ours, for our generation, because the prayer of the Church is ours and longs to express the depths of feeling and truth as we speak with Christ and in Christ, his eternal prayer to the Father.

Thus ends the history lesson. Now to look at the actual changes and the reasons for their revision.

The New Translation Bit by Bit

23. The Return of the Spirit

When the Missal of Paul VI came to press in 1969 there was an obvious deletion from the Latin text. In the Dialogues that happen between the Presider and the Assembly – at the opening of the mass; at the proclamation of the Gospel; as the Eucharistic Prayer begins; and at the Final Blessing and Dismissal– a calling forth of God’s presence and grace is shared: the Presider to the assembly; the Assembly back to the Presider. Even the Latin is understood by almost everyone: *Dominus vobiscum* – The Lord be with you. *Et cum spiritu tuo* – And with your spirit.

When the first English text was in our hands, ‘*your spirit*’ had been replaced with, simply, ‘*you.*’

In the fervor of hope that, with the Council’s new statement of our Faith in the language of the modern age, there would be a rush toward the reunion of Christendom, Catholic and Protestant, non-Catholic representatives were engaged as a sort of ‘other’ voice in what would be the first English text of the Catholic Mass. From Protestant theology, and it’s emphasis on the

redemptive power of Christ alone - without significant contribution from sinful humanity - the acknowledgment that the 'spirit' of the Presider at worship would have any significant part to play in the action of worship led to an 'ecumenical' decision in which the word 'spirit' was simply set aside in favor of a prayer that God would be with 'you,' as God was prayed to be with the assembly. Simply...*and also with you.* Obviously not what the Latin says...nor what Catholic theology says.

In practice, from our earliest texts of the 2nd century, only the ordained – bishops, priests and deacons – addressed the assembly in such a way...*The Lord be with you.* The ordained, by virtue of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, act not only in the name of Christ, but in his 'person' – as if Christ, himself, were speaking.

The response of the Assembly – also part of the Mystical Body of Christ, was not just a 'same to you'... from the beginning the responding prayer had been that God would be with the 'spirit' of the Presider, precisely because he has critical work to do on behalf of the worshipers. [From the Jewish understanding of the makeup of a human being: *body* represented *anything physical* about the person including such things as *talents* or *personality traits*; *soul* represented those invisible but obvious attributes that were incorporeal – *love, devotion, dedication, zeal* and the like; then there was a third thing, the *spirit* – which was the indwelling of grace, the life of God that filled body and soul and gave sacred meaning to even the ordinary activities of life.] To pray that God be with the Presider's spirit expressed the understanding that this individual was about to act in an important way for the sake of all present and that the abiding presence of God in the action to take place was going to achieve what was over and beyond what humans can achieve on their own. We have learned a lot by having left out '*your spirit*'....sometimes you don't appreciate something until it is gone away. We will be restoring the prayer for the spirit, and after an awkward time when half of us will remember and half forget, or all of us forget half the time...we will get used to saying : **AND WITH YOUR SPIRIT**, again, as we used to do from the beginning.

24. **Rite and Act**

A new distinction of no particular importance other than distinguishing parts within a larger whole will find us using the title **Penitential Act** instead of the familiar *Penitential Rite*. The term **Rite** (short for 'ritual') is the larger element within which several events occur...in this case: The **Introductory Rite** includes..

an *Entrance Procession* with accompanying *Chant or Hymn*,
a *reverencing of the altar* (kiss and/or incense) and cross,
a *Greeting*,
a *Penitential Act* (which may be a Blessing and Sprinkling with Water),
the *Glory to God* (when appropriate)

and the *Opening Prayer* (the *Collect* – which gathers all the sentiments of the Rite and sums them up in a single prayer.)

In the Penitential Act, what will appear new – especially to people who have no memory of the former Latin liturgy – is a restored translation of the **General Confession** (*confess...Confiteor*) that is more faithful to the normative Latin text. Most notable will be the inclusion of a three-fold emphasis on sin and an accompanying gesture of repentance, the **striking of the breast...through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault...**

Here we become aware of how **choreographed movement** is present throughout the mass. We stand together, kneel together, genuflect upon entry to the Blessed Sacrament [same action, individual performance], bow our heads together at key words in the Creed, and before receiving the Bread and Chalice at communion, we form processions at the Gospel and at Communion — all of this is a ‘dance’ that uses our bodies as part of the prayer. Not only do our lips pray, but our hearts and minds and bodies...our whole selves.

The **Penitential Act** retains its three formats – two were added after the Vatican Council:

- 1) the General Confession/*Confiteor*;
- 2) a brief dialogue that reduces that Confession to simple terms [*Have mercy on us, O Lord - For we have sinned against you; Show us, O Lord, your mercy - And grant us your salvation*]
- 3) a set of three invocations responded to with *Lord, have mercy - Christ, have mercy - Lord, have mercy.*

All three conclude with a *General Absolution* [slightly reworded] and the *Kyrie/Lord, have mercy* (if not already incorporated as in the third format)

The new translation, while seeking to put our English text more in sync with the Latin, also puts us in sync with the other vernaculars of the Catholic world. To a greater degree we are expressing the same sentiments as our brothers and sisters everywhere, whose translations are also striving to be true to our Latin base.

25. *Glory to God*

An element of the Introductory Rite at Sundays and Feasts outside of Lent and Advent is the *Gloria*, Glory to God. The new translation will require us to learn new musical settings because of its differences from the translation now in use. But the text itself needs little comment. It is more faithful to the Latin original and strives, with the whole effort in creating a revised version that is more literary and stylistic. The *Gloria* is fundamentally a hymn...therefore poetry set to music. It draws upon the emotions and deep sentiments of faith in its being sung; truly a celebration of the God’s action in our salvation - Father, Son and Spirit.

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will. [Lk 2:14]
We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
 have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
 receive our prayer;
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,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

26. I Believe

The Profession of Faith closes that part of the Liturgy of the Word in which God's message to us – in Scripture and commentary in a homily – finds a response in summation of what we have come to believe and hold true.

There are two options for the Profession: the most ancient, and basic traces to the 4th century in Jerusalem and is known as *The Apostles Creed*. The new Roman Missal suggests it be used in Lent and Advent. The more common Profession is the *Nicene Creed* (it has more polysyllabic names that are not important here), and it is the result of the Church's first great theological crisis – the denial of the divinity of Christ by a large portion of the Church, the Arians. The Nicene Creed was meant to set things straight; it calls forth language that is very precise and absolute.

The coming new translation of the Latin does not – could not – wander in favor of style from the honed and nuanced theology of the original. It holds notable variations.

The first is a change in the voice of the one making the profession. The Creed has its origin in the celebration of baptism. Either individual catechumens or the parents of a child have always affirmed what they each and individually hold firm in faith before the waters of baptism give them rebirth as a new member of Christ.

The Missal of Paul VI, alive with new excitement at the presence of Christ in his Church, emphasized the union we have with each other because of our union with Him and translated the first word of the Creed, *credo*, not as it is, but as it would be – all things working according to God’s plan – ‘We believe...’ And repeated it two more times where the Latin used the verb only once. “We” believe in 1) *one God*; 2) *one Lord Jesus*; 3) *the Holy Spirit*; 4) *one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church*. In a sense...a whole series of separate items to which we vow our belief.

With this new Missal we return to the formula of 1600 years usage...*I believe*...and not in a body of truths under separate headings, but in a joined whole...one element of the Creed inseparable from any of the others.

Nothing has changed in the content. No surprise there. We will soon be used to the variation in language...except for one word. The Latin uses *consubstantialis*...we will use **consubstantial**...to express what we have been saying: “one in being” with the Father. It is the only use of this concept in any language and expresses a core element of our faith that ‘one in being’ doesn’t quite accomplish. “Being” is, strictly speaking, *created* existence; consubstantial-ness — having the same eternal essence as the Father, and so, **not** created – was something the Council fathers of Nicea invented a word to express and used it for nothing else.

At the very end, another variant. *We acknowledge*...*one baptism* will now come across as **I confess**...the same word used in the General Confession of the Penitential Act in the Introductory Rite [*confiteor*...I confess to almighty God...]. Here, another use of the word ‘*confess*’ is in play.

A *confessor* in the ancient Church was one of those who, though not martyred for the faith, suffered for it in torture, exile, confiscation of property and such. They ‘*confessed*’ to the law that they were Christians, and so ‘confessing’ became an honorable thing. So, you can ‘come clean’ by *confessing* your sins, and ‘be clean’ by *confessing* your faith.

27. A Dialogue Within the Body

The Eucharistic Prayer texts will be among the most notably modified by the new translation. Remember...the Prayer is the central act of worship in the Church and is prayed by all...but each with their own proper parts. Theologically it is the prayer of Christ, Himself, offered by his full membership – the total Christ - that includes all the baptized.

It begins with a ‘dialogue’ we incorporated in our worship from our Jewish roots. A couple of modifications. First, the reminder that ‘*Also with you*’ is now back to ‘*And with your spirit.*’

The 'Lift up your hearts' and 'We lift them up to the Lord.' is unchanged. It reminds us that what God is looking for in the offering is nothing less than our true and deepest selves...we give Him our hearts!

It is the third exchange that is altered, becoming more faithful to the Latin and bringing to the fore a simple word with important implications. The *Let us give thanks to the Lord our God*' is now answered with 'It is right and just' (the Latin has it *dignum et justum est*). Here is our affirmation that what we are doing is what we **ought** to be doing. It's **right**...not just 'correct' but the perfect thing...nothing else could come close.

It is also just – **justum**. We think of *just* things in terms of *law, justice*. There is a deeper meaning to the Latin root word. *Justum* is not just proper or legal, but the absolute fulfillment of what God intended in creating us and redeeming us in Christ. We were, by His own estimation, 'very good' fresh off the creator's drawing board. What we are to become by the redemptive death and resurrection of Christ, is the perfect and longed-for response of humanity that God has called forth throughout the Old Testament and achieved now in the offering of Christ which we enter in the Eucharistic Prayer. We are **just** when we **are** what we were created **to be**. Our action – the offering that happens within the Eucharistic Prayer - is acknowledged to be **just** fundamentally because it is the action of Christ Himself.

28. Lord of Hosts

Still in the Eucharistic Prayer....after the opening dialogue and the Preface that specifies the particular occasion or circumstance for which the Prayer is offered...the first of the people's acclamations is sung: the *Holy, Holy, Holy (Sanctus)*. It, too, is Jewish in its origins...obvious from the Hosannas and the quotation from *Psalms 118* - a processional hymn for pilgrims coming to the Temple...those who 'come in the name of the Lord'. But one other expression has been restored that was an apparent victim of early political correctness.

God is proclaimed in the ancient Hebrew, and then in the Latin, as *Yahweh Sebaoth* – Lord of Hosts. [The *sebaoth* did not mean the army of angels...that's always in the singular... 'the host of heaven']. It celebrates God as the commander of the armies of Israel who gives them victory over their enemies. It's used that way almost 300 times in the Old Testament. In later texts it came to mean also the heavenly bodies...the sun and moon, the stars...the cosmos.

Two different Latin words come into play here. One, *hostis*, from which we get the English, *hostile*, meant an 'enemy'...or an enemy army. The other, *hostia*, from which we get the English, *host*, meant a victim, a sacrificial offering. The restored translation going back to ...*Lord, God of hosts*...from the 60's translation '*Lord, God of power and might*'...celebrates a God of strength and victory, not the God of the communion breads. The reason for the older translation is apparent, given the age. We did not, in the Vietnam era, want to identify God with the military. It was as simple as that. So 'power and might' became the euphemism that softened 'hosts.'

Obviously, the text does not want to put God at the head of an earthly army, even if that was the Old Testament meaning. The sense is to celebrate *God the Almighty*, and the New Testament uses it in remembering the entry of Jesus to Jerusalem every Palm Sunday. *Yahweh Sebaoth's* antiquity and the Latin *Dominus Deus Sabaoth* comes down to us in the English: *Lord God of hosts*.

29. Taking the Chalice

The Eucharistic Prayer is primarily the prayer of Christ Himself, but offered with Him by His Body the Church. Although the Assembly's voice is heard periodically in the Prayer (The opening *Dialogue*, *Holy, holy, holy, Mystery of Faith* Acclamation, and the *Great Amen*), the presider's voice dominates, and in that, by the Sacrament of Holy Orders, Christ's voice is represented by him.

Most of the text of the Eucharistic Prayer, therefore, is the priest's. Not language you will have to use, but which you will hear and which will sound strange at first.

Two words, in particular, need some comment. Both occur in the narrative of the institution of the Eucharist, with the element of the wine.

Chalice replaces cup

In the gospels of *Matthew, Mark and Luke*, and in Paul's 1st *Letter to the Corinthians*, the Greek word *poterion* (drinking vessel) is used. Jesus uses the same word when speaking of *giving a cup of water in his name*; and, in the Garden, asks his Father that the *cup be taken away*.

When the Greek gospels were translated into Latin by St. Jerome, the Greek *poterion* was replaced with the Latin *calix*, which also means cup, or drinking vessel. It is, of course, from the Latin word that our English word *chalice* derives. However, a chalice is no simple cup. It is ceremonial, ritualistic. The translators are making a point, then.

Even in the context of the Last Supper, much in the same way that Jews today will have special sets of bowls and cups for the Passover meal, the one cup taken at the end of that Upper Room meal, and which was different from the other cups that each had at their place at table, was a **ritual cup** and was the **only cup that was shared by all**. Partaking of that cup represented a shared hope and prayer for Israel's future unity and peace. Even today, a common Passover toast at the end of the meal is '*next year in Jerusalem*' which is not just a dream for a nice place to be on a holy day, like Christmas in Bethlehem. There is a solemnity in the giving of that cup that already had weight before Jesus proclaimed it held his Blood and so it did. And does.

How do you convey the special sacredness of a drinking vessel? One way is never to use it again. People do that with 'special occasion' wine glasses and such used once, and then again only rarely. The Church, who wrote the Gospels and the New Testament in the first place, has never given over control of the text to grammarians or linguistics faculties. The Church says now that we English speakers will upgrade that *cup* to a *chalice* as yet another way to affirm the sacredness of what it contains, at the Last Supper, and at every Eucharist thereafter.

30. One and All

We are still with the language of Jesus at the Last Supper, as he gives the chalice of wine to be the sacrament of his Blood. In the *Gospels of Mark* and *Matthew* he adds a phrase that *Luke* and Paul (in *1st Corinthians*) does not provide. Here it is well to remember that *Mark* and *Matthew* came from the dominantly Jewish circle of Christians; *Luke* and Paul, missionaries to the Roman world, wrote more for a Gentile circle. *Mark* and *Matthew* include it because Jesus no doubt said it and because their Jewish readers would understand perfectly what he meant. *Luke* and Paul may have excluded it for the same reason we are having trouble even now forming the best translation. The difficulty is in translating first what Jesus actually said at the Last Supper - which was either in Hebrew or Aramaic - then translating that into the Greek of the gospels, and then to the Latin of our basic text...and finally into English. At issue is the noticeable and thought provoking translation of the Latin *pro vobis et multis* – **for you and for many** – where we have been saying **for you and for all** for all this time since the Council.

The question is raised: did not Jesus suffer and die – shed his blood – for the whole world? Doesn't the word *many* leave *some* out?

There is first to be said: *of course* He died for the sins of the world...no one is in a separate category of people for whom He did not die. That much is so strong a statement throughout the New Testament and the Church's 2000 year Tradition that it would take forever to demonstrate it with quotes from the Bible or the Catechism.

At the root of the problem is the sometimes impossible task of saying in one language what cannot be expressed in another. **Would you believe that there is no word in Hebrew or Aramaic that translates our English word "all" !** The Hebrew *kol* (Aramaic *kolla*), which would have been what Jesus used, means 'the whole group' but does **not** mean "each individual in the group." For Jews the issue was: are you a member of the group?.....then you are included.

Mark and *Matthew* use the Greek word, *pollon* to translate the Hebrew *kol*, and it was as close as they could get. When it came to the Latin text of the Gospels a word similar to *pollon* was used: *multus* (multitude) to convey the idea of 'the whole group.' We translated that as "all"...*Blood shed for you and for all*, and now strive to be more faithful to the Hebrew and the Greek and the Latin.

But there is another aspect of the translation that is a witness but not a solution to the failure of one language ever to perfectly be expressed by another. Who, really, are the 'saved'? Jesus **did** die to restore all humanity – and each individual member of that group - to His Father's house. Is salvation a 'given'? Does it not require individual acceptance and a corresponding response in the return gift of self to the Father. That, too, is what Jesus does for all humanity, but which each human must take on as one's own action. We do this only 'in Christ' but each of us must still do it as a personal choice. Remember the repeated conclusion to some of Jesus' parables – "*many are called, few are chosen.*"

It is our faith that in the actual partaking of Christ's Body and Blood we become 'the group' – His Body the Church, and - remembering also that He said – *No one comes to the Father except through Me!* – in that find salvation? Paul put it: *We, many though we are, become one in Christ because we share the One Bread and One Cup.*

31. The Mystery of Faith

In the divergent styles of the Eastern and Western branches of the Church there is a wealth of knowledge of things sacred that cannot easily be described and is sometimes better celebrated than parsed. One difference is in the way the West and the East deal with the issue of 'when' does the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ. The West has always been Greek and Roman and rather philosophical or scientific about such things. In the way we treat the Eucharistic Prayer, the words of Christ, when remembered from the New Testament and repeated at Mass, mark the absolute moment when the change takes place. We even ascribe a unique word to the occasion: *Transubstantiation!* Bells are rung; the sacred elements are elevated; breasts are struck; aspirations are whispered. There is no doubt.

In the East, so much more given to living with indescribable mystery (even with profound theological works by the Eastern Fathers and Doctors), the approach is different. How can anyone discern the reality of something so beyond us! Who would dare to pin God down to a microscopic investigation of His Action. Their conclusion is....when?....during the Eucharistic Prayer...but don't be so arrogant as to say NOW! Periodically, in Eastern Liturgy, from behind the Iconostasis (the great icon curtain that shields the sacred from sight) the Deacon will appear to let everyone know how things are going 'back there' and inviting their response in song and acclamation. One of the 'announcements' that made its way into the Western world before the Great Schism (division of the East from West and the birth of the Orthodox branch of Christianity) was "*The Mystery of Faith!*"...to which the people would respond in a sentence of praise to Christ. The Latin for it was simple: *Mysterium Fidei.* ...which first time around, because it was an introduction from the East, not even the ancient West, we dutifully gave a stage direction: *Let us proclaim....* which now, we are savvy enough to do without and go with the simple: **The Mystery of Faith!**

33. The Memorial Acclamations

The Acclamation that comes forth – with or without music - is the Church's variation of a 'cheer'. We are used to doing such things for victors - sports teams, winners of elections, parading armies and such. Beyond a simple 'hooray!' or 'way to go!' acclamations in worship get very specific about who and why we are figuratively popping the cork. It is, of course, Christ himself who prompts the outcry. Who he is! What he has done! What he means to us!

The Acclamation was restored from ancient and lost practice when the Mass first went back to the vernacular. The first English version (from an American inspired motion) took the occasional use of ‘in these or similar words’ directives as an invitation to create one of our own, not in the Latin normative text. “*Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again*” became our first and ‘default’ acclamation. But we were the only church in the universal membership using that text...for which there was no Latin original for other language groups to translate. Also, it was out of step with the addressing of the acclamation to Jesus...it stated a fundamental truth of Faith: Christ has died..risen...will come again... but it wasn’t addressed to Jesus. A kind of “Yeah!” addressed to no one. The decision was made this time to go with only those Acclamations other churches were using the world over. And, to polish the translation:

**We proclaim your death, O Lord,
and profess your Resurrection
until you come again.**

**When we eat this Bread and
drink this Cup
we proclaim your death, O Lord,
until you come again.**

**Save us, Savior of the world,
for by your Cross and Resurrection
you have set us free.**

34. Communion Rite Revisions

The English edition of the *Missal of Paul VI* (1973) – our first vernacular from the 1969 Latin text – added things not found in the vernacular texts of the other language groups. It seems that this *Third Edition of the Missal* seeks to remove those additions that are not common to all Roman Catholics. One set of English originals that will be missing in this Third Edition are the four options for the Presider to use in introducing the Lord’s Prayer: *Let us pray with confidence....Jesus taught us to call God our Father...Let us ask our Father to forgive our sins...Let us pray for the coming of the Kingdom.* Now there will be only one introduction – the only one given in the Latin base text: **At the Savior’s command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say....** This introduction to the Prayer is quite different from the common: *Let us pray...* used everywhere else. It gives the source and authority of the prayer to Christ himself and puts us in a status of awe even to be able to repeat His words....*we dare...*

The doxology (high praise) given at the end of that extension of the biblical prayer prayed by the priest (*Deliver us...from every evil...*) remains the same: *For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever.* The placement of the Lord's Prayer and Doxology date from around 600 a.d. so those other introductions had a relatively short life span, though they did serve us well and we'll probably miss them for a while.

Just before the distribution of communion there is another alteration that will appear quite familiar to the senior generation, because it is pretty much what was being prayed silently in our English brains before the vernacular text was put before us. The language now restores the original setting and the poetic imagery from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. The centurion, asking for a healing of his son/servant protests that he is not worthy that Jesus should actually enter his house; all he needs to do is give the command. We acknowledge how unworthy we also are to have Christ within our bodies...but the centurion's faith and humility are again remembered as the '**under my roof**' replaces the present '*to receive you*'; and it is not just '*I*' being healed, but the depth of me...*my soul*.

35. The Final Words

The Latin basic text is 'Roman' - short, sweet and to the point. The Trinitarian Blessing – *Father, Son and Spirit* called upon to sanctify and abide -'bless' us. Then, almost verbally showing us the door - *Ite, missa est. Go, you are dismissed.* We've taken that *missa* quite far. We call those who bring the gospel to the world **missionaries** – *the ones sent*. We hear of various assignments in religious or pastoral life defined as **missions**. The California coast is dotted with them. The Eastern seaboard also had them until the British took over from the earlier Spanish settlements, like St. Augustine. We have even given the popular name of our celebration the name that defines its purpose, from our point of view: **The Mass - that which equips us to be sent forth**. In Greek, it would be *apo-stolos* - literally '*sent from the long robed.*' An ambassador from a court or temple. An **apostle**.

We are the messengers to the world from the primary 'long robe': God's Christ (who, himself was sent to us.) The depth of what it means to be sent is worthy of prayer and reflection. What does not do the 'trick' in translation is anything that reduces the language to 'that's all there is...that's the Mass.' The *General Instruction on the Roman Missal* (the document that explains it) says "each may go back to doing good works, praise and blessing God." It seems that our sending involves more of a lifestyle beyond mere words. How often do we have an audience to hear us talk about what Christ means for the world? But there is always an audience simply to observe how we live what we believe. St. Paul calls this being '*the living gospel for all to hear.*'

On major feasts and in the various seasons of our Year, Solemn Blessings are provided: threefold elaborations on the simple 'bless you'. We give them our '*Amen!*'

The simple *ite missa est* is translated four ways: (missa is a heavy word!)

*Go forth, the Mass is ended.
Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord
Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.
Go in peace.*

And the People have the last word: ***Thanks be to God.*** What else could we say? And even here a simple ‘thank you, God’ is not even close to the depth of meaning that is present and seldom referenced. Remember that the word in Greek for ‘thanks, thanksgiving’ is *eucharistia*. All that we have done this day is in the nature of ‘payback.’ Eucharist is not just a noun, a thing. It is essentially a verb, an action. Heart, mind and soul.

This *Third Edition* of our Missal is our latest effort to get that action as perfect as we can. Language is always an expression of the heart, mind and soul. Our need to polish and perfect it as we pray will necessarily grow as we grow in faith and understanding of all that God has said to us since first he called Abraham to this very day.