

## Catechesis for the New Roman Missal

[18] At the present, we are beginning the catechesis for the direct implementation of the new English translation of the *Roman Missal*. This work is neither peripheral to our ministry as priests nor in competition with our other pastoral duties. A priest who loves the Liturgy, which is the very work of our redemption, is the priest most suited to care for the pastoral needs of his people. An enthusiastic and intelligible presentation of this third typical edition of the *Roman Missal* is essential for the faithful. It will help them come to the Liturgy and satisfy the "...hunger and thirst for the living God that is experienced by the people of our own time" (*Liturgiam Authenticam*, 25).

[19] Therefore, I am mandating that every pastor or administrator, in collaboration with his pastoral staff, develop a specific plan to implement the new Missal in his parish. In order to assure that we are prepared as an entire diocese for the implementation of the new Missal, I direct every pastor to submit to his dean, by May 2, 2011, a brief but concrete summation of the plan for implementation of the new Missal in his parish. I will then consult with the deans by May 10, 2011, to learn of the ongoing plans for implementation in their respective deaneries. If you require further assistance in implementing the new Missal, you may always contact your dean, our Worship Office, or the bishop directly. This is an important work that we carry out as brothers who support and encourage one another.

[20] Through the deans, every parish will be given *The Parish Guide to Implementing the Roman Missal, Third Edition*. This resource carefully provides a variety of possible plans to use in your parish. On our diocesan website ([www.patersondiocese.org](http://www.patersondiocese.org)), there are listed other very useful materials available to assist you in implementing the new Missal.

[21] There will also be two workshops on the new *Roman Missal* that I will give. They will take place at Saint Paul Inside the Walls, Madison, on Thursday, March 10, 2011 and Tuesday, April 5, 2011. Both workshops will begin at 7:00 PM. The workshops are open to all. I invite you to send members of your pastoral staff to one of the workshops. Registration details will follow in the days ahead.

[22] I encourage parishes to work together in their deaneries in offering a catechesis for the new Missal. This is the time to provide the faithful with an understanding about the *Roman Missal* and the richness of the new texts. It is also the time to deepen their understanding of the Liturgy itself as the Church's sharing even now in the Liturgy of heaven.

[23] The workshop and the materials provided can help in preparing for the new Missal. The first step, however, must be our own appropriation of the new texts through careful study and prayerful meditation on these texts. As the celebrants of the Liturgy, it is incumbent upon us to familiarize ourselves with the texts before we use them in Liturgy.

[24] The texts that we have been using for the celebration of the Eucharist in the present Missal were developed from 1969-1973. These texts have served the Church well, in part because of their enthusiastic reception by priests. These texts are comfortable and familiar. They are woven into the fabric of our priesthood. In time, the new texts will also become familiar. But, we need to be prepared in order to serve our people as they deserve to be cared for in the name of the Lord. The implementation of the new *Roman Missal* is meant to be an opportunity to recommit ourselves to prayerful, faithful and vibrant celebrations of the Liturgy.

[25] In *Sacramentum Caritatis*, Pope Benedict XVI calls our attention as priests to the *ars celebrandi*, the art of proper celebration. He reminds us that "the primary way to foster the participation of the People of God in the sacred rite is the proper celebration of the rite itself. The *ars celebrandi* is the fruit of faithful adherence to the liturgical norms in all their richness; indeed, for two thousand years this way of celebrating has sustained the faith life of all believers, called to take part in the celebration as the People of God, a royal priesthood, a holy nation (cf. 1 Pet 2:4-5, 9)" (*Sacramentum Caritatis*, 38).

[26] No doubt, all the Christian faithful have a primary obligation to "preserve their communion with the Church" (*Code of Canon Law*, c. 209 §1). Yet, this duty is even more imperative for priests. We are to preserve the communion of the Church by virtue of our ordination. We are consecrated by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of unity, to lead the People of God in worship as one Body, undivided and at peace.

[27] The well-known axiom *lex orandi, lex credendi*, reminds us that what and how we pray are not only the expressions of our own personal beliefs, but are the expressions of the faith of the entire Church. As servants of the one Lord and as ministers of His Church, we are called to communicating the faith of the Church through our public prayer, especially through the celebration of the Eucharist.

[28] With gratitude for your faithful ministry at the service of the Church, I commend each of you to the Lord's care. I pray for you in the words of Saint Paul: "May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to think in harmony with one another, in keeping with Christ Jesus, that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ" (*Rm* 15:5-6).

**Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Immaculate Mother of God, may the Lord fill you with joy in your service of his people.**

**Given at the Pastoral Center, this eighth day of December in the year of Our Lord, two-thousand and ten.**

+ *Arthur J. Serratelli*

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# PASTORAL LETTER

## THE NEW MISSAL: LITURGICAL RENEWAL AND CATECHESIS

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# THE NEW MISSAL: LITURGICAL RENEWAL AND CATECHESIS

*To my brother priests who are “servants of Christ and stewards of the Mysteries of God” (1 Cor 4:1): “Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Cor 1:2).*

## A New Roman Missal

[1] During the Jubilee Year of 2000, Pope John Paul II announced a revised version of the *Missale Romanum*. This new edition contains prayers for the observances of recently canonized saints. It also provides new Vigil Masses for Epiphany and Ascension, several Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary taken from elsewhere, additional Masses for Various Needs and Intentions, more prefaces for the Eucharistic Prayers, Prayers over the People for each day of Lent, additional Solemn Blessings and some updated rubrics.

[2] The work of translating the third edition of the *Roman Missal* was done with much collaboration among bishops, priests, scholars, poets, musicians and the faithful. Rich in biblical and patristic allusions, the translation gives us new texts in a language that is both intelligible and dignified, a way of praying that honors God and lifts us up as well.

[3] In a letter dated March 25, 2010, from Cardinal Antonio Cañizares Llovera, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (Protocol Number 269/10L), the text of the English translation of the *Roman Missal*, third edition, was granted the required *recognitio*. After more than ten years of work, the English-language translation of the third edition of the *Roman Missal*, which is to be used in all English speaking countries, is going to press.

[4] On August 20, 2010, Cardinal Francis George issued a decree of proclamation stating that “The third edition of the *Roman Missal* enters into use in the dioceses of the United States of America as of the First Sunday of Advent, November 27, 2011. From that date forward, no other edition of the *Roman Missal* may be used in the dioceses of the United States of America.”

[5] The translation of the new *Roman Missal* has not been “so much a work of creative innovation as it is of rendering the original texts faithfully and accurately into

the vernacular language” (*Liturgiam Authenticam*, 20). Through a faithful, but not slavish translation of the Latin, the new texts pass on the rich patrimony of the Church’s public prayer. I am happy that, after years of preparation, we now have a text that, when introduced in Advent of 2011, will reflect the Church’s ongoing renewal of the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy.

[6] As a diocese, we began a remote preparation for the new liturgical texts in September, 2009, with a workshop provided by Monsignor Anthony Sherman, Executive Director of the Office for Divine Worship of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. We are now entering into the period of proximate preparation for the implementation of the new Missal. This is a moment of grace. It is a unique opportunity to open ourselves more fully to the great mystery that we celebrate at the altar.

[7] In discharging my apostolic duty to promote and safeguard the treasure given us in the Liturgy, I turn to you, my brothers. I am profoundly grateful for the priestly office that you steadfastly exercise with your bishop in the name of Christ and his Church. I now ask for your prayer and cooperation as we prepare for the new Missal. When we are open to the power of the Holy Spirit, this moment of liturgical renewal will be a source of grace for the Church of Paterson, as for the Universal Church.

## The New Roman Missal and the Liturgical Renewal of the Church

[8] The present moment of welcoming new liturgical texts is a flowering of a long liturgical renewal that preceded the Second Vatican Council. Within three months of his election to the Chair of Peter in 1903, Pius X (1903-1914) began the process of liturgical renewal. Because of his ministry as parish priest in Salzano for twelve years, Giuseppe Sarto well understood the vital importance of liturgical life for the faithful. He was the first pope of the modern era to speak about the importance of “active participation” by the faithful in the Liturgy (*Motu proprio, Tra le sollecitudini*, 36).

[9] It is no coincidence that an experienced pastor who became pope led the vanguard of liturgical renewal. Almost one hundred and ten years later, we continue the work which he began. We are committed to help our people participate fully in the Liturgy so that with joy, they “will draw water from the wellsprings of salvation” (*Is* 12:3).

[10] Liturgical renewal continued throughout the twentieth century. Pope Pius XII (1939-1958) reformed the rites for Holy Week in 1955. Pope John XXIII (1958-1963), of course, convoked the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council which then issued, as the first of its documents in 1963, the landmark constitution on the sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.

[11] The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council wrote in bold letters of the need for “fully conscious and active participation” in the Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 14). As a result, in 1969, Paul VI (1963-1978) promulgated a new *Roman Missal*. The first English translation followed in 1970. It was almost immediately supplanted with new English editions in 1973 and 1975.

[12] On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Council’s constitution on the Liturgy, John Paul II (1978-2005) encouraged us “to renew that spirit which inspired in the Church at the moment the Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* was promulgated” (*Vicesimus Quintus Annus*, 23). Thus, the new edition of the *Roman Missal* takes its place in the long history of liturgical renewal in the modern era.

[13] Each stage of liturgical renewal has sought, through the prompting of the Holy Spirit, to draw the ordained and the laity more deeply into the Paschal Mystery celebrated and made present in the Liturgy. At every turn, liturgical renewal has been both encouraged and assisted by the pastors of souls, who, open to the wisdom of the Church, zealously care for the faithful each day.

## The Liturgy and the Role of the Priests

[14] The Liturgy is the very source and the summit of the Church’s life in aspects: doctrinal, moral, missionary and pastoral (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 11). The Liturgy is, first and foremost, *opus Dei*. It is God accomplishing the work of our redemption in Christ. In the Liturgy the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, is present (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1324).

[15] When we enter into the Liturgy, we are joining with Christ in the offering of himself in total obedience to the Father; and, we ourselves are transformed by the Holy Spirit. The love of God that we experience in Liturgy overflows into the love of our neighbors in life. Therefore, I encourage you to use this graced moment of welcoming the new texts as a time to renew your own love for the Liturgy, to strengthen the faith of those entrusted to your pastoral care and to invite back those who no longer celebrate God’s love poured out on us in the Liturgy. In the Preface to Franz Bried’s *Die heilige Liturgie*, our Holy Father Pope Benedict reminds us, “the Church [herself] stands and falls with the Liturgy.”

[16] Priests are the bishop’s chief co-workers. They engage in the Church’s ministry along with deacons, religious and pastoral ministers. As leaders of the parish community, priests are the key to the successful implementation of the new Missal.

[17] In his apostolic exhortation, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, Pope Benedict XVI emphasized the centrality of the priest’s liturgical ministry. He noted that “[the priest] alone, and no other, as the tradition of the Church attests, presides over the entire Eucharistic celebration, from the initial greeting to the final blessing. In virtue of his reception of Holy Orders, he represents Jesus Christ, the head of the Church, and, in a specific way, also the Church herself” (53). As priests, we stand in a long line of pastors who have made the work of liturgical renewal their own by their own faithful *sentire cum ecclesia*. Our positive attitude toward the new liturgical texts will be a blessing to our people.

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