



Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time October 16, 2011 A

Introducing and Explaining Two of the Changes in the Revised Mass Texts

Beginning November 27, the first Sunday of Advent, the English-speaking world will notice several changes in the prayers and people's responses in the Mass. Prior to that date, some parishes have undertaken to introduce these changes piecemeal to make it a little easier for their people. This Sunday, we introduce two of the changes: (1) the response "*and with your spirit*" and (2) the new translation of the Nicene Creed.

The reason for the revision of the English text is to have a translation that is *closer* to the Latin text. The revised texts give a more accurate version of the Latin text than our current text.

"And with your spirit"

In the revised text, every time the priest says: "*The Lord be with you,*" the assembly's response will be: "*and with your spirit*" (in lieu of "and also with you"). Why this change?

As noted above, Rome wanted an English translation that is closer to the Latin. The response in Latin is "*et cum spiritu tuo*"—literally translated "and with your spirit." Such phrase is more biblical and inspired by passages that conclude several of Paul's letters, e.g., 2Timothy 4:22, Galatians 6:18, Philippians 4:23. This initial exchange between priest and people expresses the petition that the Holy Spirit be present to the entire community as they begin to enter into the Eucharistic celebration. Rather than opening with the usual worldly or secular "Good Morning," priest and people greet each other in a way that signifies the sacred nature of the celebration that they are about to enter into.

Nicene Creed

As we contrast the current and new translation of the Creed, we will notice several changes in the revised text. In her book "*What's New About the Mass for Teens,*" catechist Maureen Kelly writes:

"The Creed Americans usually proclaim on Sunday is the Nicene Creed. Sometimes it may be replaced with the Apostles' Creed. The Nicene Creed was formulated at the council of Nicaea in 325 AD. The Council was

called by the Emperor Constantine who elevated Christianity to favored status in the Roman empire. 'One God, one Lord, one faith, one church, one empire, one emperor' became his motto. When he discovered that 'one faith and one church' were being fractured by theological disputes, especially conflicting understandings of the nature of Christ, he convened the Council of Nicaea which began to develop clear articles of faith. As a result of prayer and discussion by the bishops and theologians at both the Council of Nicaea and the council of Constantinople which occurred in 381 AD the Nicene Creed was developed." (p.25)

Now for a look at the changes in the Creed.

In the new translation of the Mass text, the Creed begins with the words "*I believe*" in lieu of "We believe." Throughout the Creed where presently we profess our faith as a whole community, that is, in the first person plural ("**we** believe," "**we** confess," "**we** look forward"), we will now say "*I believe,*" "*I confess*" and "*I look forward.*" Why this change? Firstly, it is a more accurate translation of the Latin word *credo* which means "I believe." The Latin for "we believe" is *credimus*. Secondly, while it is true that we do profess our faith with other believers, the singular "I believe" emphasizes the personal dimension of our faith.

"Of all things visible and invisible" (in lieu of "of all that is seen and unseen") expresses more precisely the intended meaning of the Latin text. God is maker not only of "unseen things" (such as our relatives who live elsewhere) but also of invisible things (such as angels and our immortal souls).

"Only begotten" (in lieu of "the only son") expresses more accurately the belief that Jesus always existed. His existence did not just begin when Mary conceived him in her womb.

"Born of the Father before ages" (in lieu of "eternally begotten of the Father") underlines our belief that Jesus lived with the Father before time began. John 1:1 reads: "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.*"

"Consubstantial" (*with the Father*) replaces "one in being" (with the Father). One of the main reasons for the creation of the Nicene Creed was to respond to the

widespread heresy of Arianism which claimed that Jesus was not of the same substance as the Father, but only of a *similar* substance and therefore not equal to the Father. The Church Fathers worked very hard to express the inexpressible mystery of the divine and human nature of Christ. The term “consubstantial” seeks to affirm that the core substance of Jesus is the same core substance of God the Father. Scripture scholar Daniel Merz writes:

“Consubstantial professes specifically that the divinity of Jesus and the divinity of the Father is one and the same, without saying that Jesus is the Father or vice versa (kind of like how ice and steam are both H₂O without being the same thing). Consubstantial is an important word.”

“Incarnate” of the Virgin Mary (in lieu of “born” of the Virgin Mary) seeks to protect the true nature of Christ. As Christians, we believe that Jesus was not just “born of the Virgin Mary” but was “born of the Father before all ages.” He is forever God, but at the moment of Mary’s “Fiat” (her ‘yes’ to the angel), the Word of God took on human form.

“Suffered death” replaces the verbs “suffered, died.” In his booklet, Fr. Paul Turner writes:

“The Latin is ambiguous. Literally, it says, ‘he suffered and was buried,’ and the word ‘suffered’ implies his dying. Because the verb ‘died’ is not there in Latin, ‘suffered death’ seems a better way to express what happened to Jesus. The point is that he really died, and that is what gives his Resurrection its full meaning.” (p.36)

“I look forward” to the resurrection (in lieu of “we look forward” to the resurrection) resounds with confidence. We are expressing our profound hope to be reunited with God forever.

Mary Birmingham wrote the following piece on music in the revised text of the Mass.

Role of Music in the New Roman Missal

The prayers we pray and sing at Mass have evolved over the centuries. This is not the first time this has happened and it will not be the last. All of these changes are meant to provide us with a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Sacred Liturgy and its importance in our lives. So keep in mind—what may sound awkward at first will in time enrich our sung and spoken prayers.

CHANT: The new Roman Missal calls for a renewal of chant in the liturgy. In response, the priest will chant more of the spoken texts, such as the Kyrie in the Penitential Act. We will also chant the Agnus Dei more frequently and will begin to chant the Lord’s Prayer.

TEXTS THAT ARE NOT CHANGING: Some sung texts are not impacted by the changes, such as the people’s responses for Kyrie (Lord, have mercy), Gospel Acclamation, Great Amen and Lamb of God. The Roman Missal does not presently affect Responsorial Psalms and hymns and songs.

TEXTS THAT ARE CHANGING: There are slight changes in the revised translation for the Greeting, Preface dialogue and Holy, Holy, Holy. Significant changes have been made to Glory to God, the Creed and Memorial Acclamation.

Thus, we will continue to use the hymns and psalms that our parish loves. But we have been instructed to choose a new setting for the primary parts of the Mass such as Glory to God, Holy, Holy, Holy and Memorial Acclamation. We are no longer allowed to use the same musical setting for those pieces as the words have changed, thus rendering the old music incompatible with the new words.

In deciding on a Mass setting, the musicians of the parish have determined that we need one that respects the style of music in our parish and the fact that there are diverse groups we serve. Our desire was to choose a setting that would be appropriate for children, youth and adults—thus appeal to a wide variety of tastes.

We are very excited about the setting we have chosen. First, it is briefer and more succinct than other settings. For example, Glory to God has two options. The congregation can repeat Glory to God as a refrain and have the choir or cantor take the verses which naturally makes the song longer, or we could choose a setting that does not repeat a refrain but simply sings the song through to the end. Since our parish has a wonderful tradition of singing the entire Glory to God, we want to maintain that tradition. Thus we have chosen a setting in which there is no repeat of the refrain and it is sung through to the end. Even though it will take us a while to learn the new pieces and make them part of our worship experience, such setting is very sing-able and has a beautiful melody.

It is our fervent hope that the inauguration of the new Roman Missal will give us the opportunity to be renewed in faith and have a new appreciation for the sung prayer of the liturgy.

Have a blessed week,

