

Homily for the 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Introduction of the Roman Missal

What You Will Hear.

Whether you go to Mass here at Immaculate Conception or at a parish in North Providence...whether you go to Mass in Rhode Island, in Florida, in Canada or in India, in Rome or in South Africa...the thread that holds these celebrations together is this book, (hold up) the Roman Missal. And it is this new edition of the Roman Missal that we will begin to use on November 27th.

There are two ways of looking at this book...what you will hear or what you will say. This weekend I want to briefly explore what you will hear. Obviously, I am not going to read you this entire book.

It is important to remember that the priest is the person most affected by these changes. This book contains all the prayers and proclamations that he is expected to pray. Today I am going to try to highlight some of these changes.

To begin with, I have found this translation to be very beautiful. It is filled with a great deal of sensitivity. Listen to one of the prayers at a funeral of a child.

Sanctify these offerings we bring you,

O Lord,
that the parents, who now entrust to you
the child you gave to them,
may come to embrace him with joy in your
Kingdom.

This is a beautiful and sensitive prayer.

Listen again as I read the opening section of one of the
Eucharistic Prayers:

You are indeed Holy, O Lord,
and all you have created
rightly gives you praise,
for through your Son our Lord Jesus Christ,
by the power and working of the Holy Spirit,
you give life to all things and make them holy,
and you never cease to gather a people
to yourself,
so that from the rising of the sun to its setting
a pure sacrifice may be offered to your name.

Along with many beautiful passages there is a use of words that is markedly different. Again, while not exhausting every one of these, allow me to point out just a few.

At the words of consecration, presently the priest says “this is the cup of my blood.” The new translation says “this is the chalice of my blood.” Here is a good example of trying to raise the quality of the language we use at Mass. When we say the word “cup” what comes to your mind...a paper cup, a tea cup, a coffee cup, a styrofoam cup? What comes to your mind when we say “chalice”? I think the change more adequately reflects what we are given in the Latin text.

In the second Eucharistic prayer we presently say “let your Spirit come upon these gifts to make them holy.” The new translation says: “Make holy these gifts...by sending down your Spirit upon them like the dewfall.” Some might say “dewfall”? What is that? In the Old Testament the dewfall, the morning dew, is a symbol of God’s blessing descending upon us.

One of the changes that might be jarring is the reference in the words of consecration. Presently we say “which will be shed for you and for all.” The new translation says: “which will be poured out for you and for many...” We should be clear that there is ample evidence that Jesus died for all, but in Matthew’s and Mark’s accounts of the Last supper,

Jesus speaks of “the many.” Christ was alluding to the prophet Isaiah which says God’s servant will take away the sins of many. The text has to do with Jesus’ fulfillment of that prophecy and not about restrictions on those who are saved. It is a literal translation.

Finally, the new translation seeks to raise the level of the language. Presently when the priest holds up the Body and Blood of the Lord before communion he says “This is the Lamb of God.” The New Translation says “**Behold** the Lamb of God.” “Behold” because this is no ordinary gift but the Son of God coming to us in the gift of the Eucharist.

These are only highlights of the changes that we will all experience on the First Sunday of Advent. Some have been critical of these changes. Personally I do not find these changes to be difficult but rather reflective of the care and the concern that our Church has for the importance of the words we use when we celebrate the gift of the Eucharist.

And I would end again by asking for your openness to this new and, I propose, very beautiful translation of the Roman Missal.