

The Roman Missal Changes: The Words We Use at Mass

by Joe Paprocki, D. Todd Williamson

Thinking about the background for Roman Missal changes that are coming in Advent 2011, led me (Joe Paprocki) to recall the following story. When my wife's grandmother ("Busia" in Polish) was in her 90s, we decided it was time to write down her recipe for baking bread so that we could preserve this family tradition for generations to come. Now, some 30 years later, members of her family all over the country continue to bake Busia's Bread, faithfully following the same recipe used by Busia herself.

Since the earliest days of the Church, disciples of Jesus have similarly followed a "recipe" - the celebration of the "Lord's Supper" (see Acts of the Apostles 2:42). In his First Letter to the Corinthians (11:23), St. Paul hands on a "recipe" of words that was previously handed on to him: "the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread. . ."As time went on, the Church sought to gather the words used to faithfully celebrate the Eucharist and collect them into a book that today we call The Roman Missal. To fully understand the new Roman Missal changes, we need a little history.

The New Roman Missal Changes - How We Got to this Point

- 1570 - Pope Pius V issued the first Roman Missal - a complete collection of all the texts (prayers, rubrics, readings, antiphons) that were used in the celebration of the Eucharist. Aside from a few minor revisions over the centuries, this single book remained largely unchanged for almost 400 years.
- 1963 - The Second Vatican Council called for a renewal of the Church's liturgical life - including a reform and renewal of the Mass.
- 1969 - The Latin texts of the renewed Mass were issued in the first edition of the Roman Missal. Almost immediately, work began on translating the Latin into the vernacular languages of the world. The English translation was given the title "The Sacramentary," the name we have used until now for the red book which contains the prayers and antiphons that are used at Mass.
- 1975 - A second edition of the Roman Missal was issued in Latin by the Church. It was largely the same as the first edition, but contained some modifications that were the result of further decisions of the Second Vatican Council made since the first edition was published.
- 2000 - Pope John Paul II issued a third edition of the Roman Missal in Latin. He did so to mark the Millennium and to include new prayers to be used at Mass for the celebration of Saints who had been canonized since the second edition was issued.
- 2001 - Work began on translating into English the Latin text of the new Roman Missal.

- 2010 - In August of that year, Rome approved the English translation that was submitted by the English speaking countries of the world. Preparation for implementing the Roman Missal changes began.

Beginning with Advent 2011, we will begin celebrating the Mass following this English translation of the new Roman Missal. It is important to note that the Mass itself is not changing. The English translation of the words we use in the Mass will be changing. In upcoming articles, we will explore the new Roman Missal changes in more detail, beginning with why the translation of the Third Edition of the Roman Missal is so different from the previous translation.

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