

Welcoming the

English Translation of the

Roman Missal
THIRD EDITION

Part 11: Invitation to Communion

Immediately following the fraction or breaking of the bread during which the Lamb of God litany is sung, the celebrant invites all to come to the Lord's table to receive the Body and Blood of Christ. In the new English translation of the Roman Missal,

he invites the baptized to partake in the Eucharistic meal with the words, "Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb." All respond to this invitation in the new translation with, "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed," different from our old translation, "Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed."

This dialogical invitation or prayer is one of the most profoundly eschatological texts in the whole Roman liturgy (eschatological means looking towards the end of the world when Christ will come again). The Church fathers wrote about how at this very moment in the liturgy, a little window between heaven and earth opens (an "oculus" as they called it) and all time and all space as we know it ceases to exist. "Blessed are those called to the supper of the lamb." At this moment we are one with the heavenly banquet and with every person from every time and every place who ever has or who ever will come to eat from God's holy altar. What an extremely humbling moment! In the new English translation of the Roman Missal, we respond to this humbling invitation with the words of the centurion, who was humbled himself when Jesus entered his house to heal his servant, "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed."

John Gaffney,

Director of Liturgy and Music

