

Welcoming the

English Translation of the

Roman Missal
THIRD EDITION

Part 2: The Work of Remembering

In last week's column, we looked at how Jesus' command to "do this in memory of me" began the living tradition of the liturgy: a tradition which grows, matures and evolves as we grow mature and evolve, a tradition which will continue to be reshaped and reformed until Christ comes again. This week,

we will look at how words and translations are an important part of this living liturgy, but first we must have a common understanding of what we are here to do when we gather for the Eucharistic liturgy (Mass). The celebration of Eucharist is understood as "the work of the Church," but what work are we doing? The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* reminds us that through the celebration of Eucharist, "the work of our salvation is accomplished." This is a hard statement to fully grasp. As Christians, we do believe that the events of our salvation: the life, death, resurrection and promise of Jesus Christ to come again (the Paschal Mystery) happened once and for all. So how do we participate in the work of our salvation, the work of the Paschal Mystery, each week when we gather to celebrate Eucharist if we have already been saved once and for all by Jesus? When we celebrate Eucharist, we do not repeat the events of the Paschal Mystery, nor do we literally reenact the events of the Paschal Mystery, but rather we remember the events of the Paschal Mystery. As a sacramental church, we remember through signs and symbols, a very natural process for human beings. Everyone has participated in remembering a deceased family member or friend. Perhaps we remember that person with photographs, or maybe an heirloom we can wear, such as a piece of jewelry or clothing, or maybe a smell, such as a recipe cooking or a perfume or cologne. Most often though, we remember with words, telling stories or reminiscing about the person we are remembering. When we tell those stories, see those photographs, put on those heirlooms or smell that recipe cooking, our deceased loved ones become present and alive again; in a sense they never die. In the same way in the liturgy, we remember the Paschal Mystery, the work of our salvation, through signs, symbols, smells, vesture, words and stories. When we remember the Paschal Mystery (the life, death, resurrection and promise of Jesus to come again), we make these events, which happened over two thousand years ago, present and alive in our world today: in this time and place, in the here and the now. We participate in the "work of our salvation" by remembering. If we do not do this work of remembering, the Paschal Mystery becomes less known and present in our modern-day world. Words become essential in remembering the Paschal Mystery through the proclamation of scripture, the singing of psalms, hymns and canticles, the exchange of dialogues and the recitation of prayers. To authentically remember the events of the Paschal Mystery, we must use accurate words. The Church has gone to great lengths to codify the words used in the liturgy into official liturgical books and translate these books faithfully into various languages in order that all the baptized can participate in the work of remembering the Paschal Mystery: the work of our salvation. In next week's column, we will look at the Missal, the book which contains most of the words we use in the liturgy and the new translation process used to translate the most recent edition of the Missal into English.

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