

## From the Office of Liturgy and Music

*Welcoming the*

*English Translation of the*

# Roman Missal

THIRD EDITION

### Part 3: The Roman Missal

Over the last two weeks we explored how the liturgy (Mass) is a living tradition which grows, evolves and matures as we grow, evolve and mature in our understanding of Jesus' command to "do this in memory of me." In this living liturgy we participate in the "work of our salvation," the Paschal Mystery (the life, death, resurrection and promise of Christ to come again) by remembering these events through signs and symbols

(including words!) making the Paschal Mystery more present and active in this time and place, in the here and the now. The Church codifies the words of the liturgy into a book called the Roman Missal. The Roman Missal contains most of the words we sing or speak in the Mass. First, it contains the General Instruction: the "instruction manual" on how to celebrate Mass. It describes the order of prayers, the role of the various liturgical ministers, the liturgical colors to be used, the type of music to be used and what should be sung, the layout of the worship space, etc., everything one needs to know to celebrate Mass properly. The Roman Missal also contains the Ordinary or Order of Mass. These texts are the parts of the Mass that do not change from week to week, such as the Kyrie, Gloria (Glory to God), Credo (Creed), Sanctus (Holy), Agnus Dei (Lamb of God). Next, the Roman Missal contains the Propers: the prayers of the Mass that do change each week, such as the opening prayer, the prayer over the gifts, the prayer after Communion, the antiphons to be sung during the entrance and Communion processions and the solemn blessing at the end of Mass. Finally, the Roman Missal contains the Eucharistic Prayers, the ultimate prayers of praise and thanksgiving, the climax of the Mass which begins with the preface dialogue ("The Lord be with you....It is right to give him thanks and praise) ends with the great Amen after the doxology ("Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit...") and includes what we often call the "consecration" or Words of Institution (Take this all of you and eat it...). There are thirteen Eucharistic prayers in the United States edition of the Missal. The only words which we use in the Mass that are not contained in the Missal are the scripture passages proclaimed during the Liturgy of the Word which are found in another liturgical book called the Lectionary. The first edition of the Roman Missal containing the reformed Mass developed during the Second Vatican Council was published by the Holy See in 1970 in Latin (as all liturgical books are) and translated into English in 1973. The second edition of the Missal was published by the Holy See (again in Latin) in 1975 and translated into English in 1985. This second edition is the current edition of the Missal which we use at Mass in the United States. In the year 2000, John Paul II announced that a third edition of the Roman Missal (in Latin) was in the works, and it received the *recognitio* (official approval) by the Holy See in 2002. In 2011, we finally received the full English translation of the Third Edition of the Roman Missal, and we will begin using it on the First Sunday of Advent (November 27). After a Missal is published by the Holy See, a lengthy translation process takes place to translate the Latin text into the vernacular or languages of the various bishop conferences throughout the world. Our English translation is produced by the International Committee on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) which contains a representative from each of the eleven English speaking bishop conferences as well as many advisors, such as musicians, Latinists, liturgists, theologians, scripture scholars and poets. The translation goes through roughly seventeen revisions during which time ICEL gets input from all 1100 English speaking bishops in the world and their advisors. Once ICEL has completed the final revision, the translation goes to the English speaking Bishop's conferences for approval (for us this would be the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops). In order for a translation to be approved, two-thirds of all English speaking bishops in the Latin-rite Church must vote in favor for it. As you can imagine, getting two-thirds of approximately 1100 bishops to agree on 1800 pages of text, including 400 pages of chant and hundreds of pages of adaptations for each conference is no easy feat and could only happen with the help of the Spirit. After the conferences of bishops approve the English translation of the Missal, it is sent to Rome where the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments examines and refines the text and seeks the *recognitio* or official approval granted by the Holy Father. This Third Edition of the Roman Missal was translated using a translation method called *formal equivalency*, which is quite different from the method used in the 1970s to translate our current second edition of the Missal called *dynamic equivalency*. In next week's column we will look at the difference between dynamic and formal equivalency and see how the change in translation method has greatly changed many of the words we sing and speak at Mass to better express what we believe.

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