



Saint John the Baptist Church Harrison, Ohio

IN OTHER WORDS: PRAYING THE NEW MASS TEXTS

Our Prayer Reflects Our Beliefs, Our Way of Living

Dear brothers and sisters in the Lord,

As I mentioned in last week's bulletin, some of the words of the prayers of the Mass have been revised. The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments has approved revisions in the Roman Missal, the book that the priest uses to pray the words of the Mass. This third typical edition of the Roman Missal was issued by Pope John Paul II in 2000. After it was published in 2002, the work of translation began. During this translation a different model was used than after the Second Vatican Council, so some of the words that we proclaim at Mass have been changed. The United States is not the only country making these changes. The words prayed in the Mass are being revised around the world, no matter what language is spoken. By the nature of the language in some parts of the world, though, the revisions are less extensive.

Words affect our lives. How we say and hear words affects how we react to life: the way we live, pray, and believe. The revised translation of the Roman Missal can convey images that can help us express our feelings of praise and thanks to God for all he does for us in new ways.

What differences will we hear in this translation? This version will be more formal in language and scripturally richer in images. Some of the words in the Gloria, Creed, Holy, Holy, Holy and Memorial Acclamations will be different. A few of the acclamation changes will be in the responses for "The Lord be with you" and the "Lord, I am not worthy." The Mass parts will be assigned new musical settings.

This revised translation will give a fuller meaning to the words expressed in the document from the Second Vatican Council, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, "full, conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations called for by the very nature of the liturgy" (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy [CSL], 14).

Change, as we all know, is a part of life. Nothing stays the same, locally or globally. Just think how our world has changed in the United States since September 11. We also are not the same Catholic people we were only a few years ago. I am sure that both you and I have grown in our holiness and in our faith and understanding of God.

After praying the same words of the Mass for so many years, both the priest and the people will have the opportunity once again to be more conscious of the words we pray. Richer meanings of the words may be spiritually heard in a new way, transforming our

hearts. They will not be words said by rote, but words with a fuller scriptural understanding.

As a parish, we can grow spiritually from this experience. Earlier this year, we had a series of homilies on the meaning of the Mass. This letter will begin a more proximate catechesis on the revised translation to better understand the reasons for these changes and how they can help us grow closer to God.

As with all changes, it will take time and patience to adapt. But we will adapt to the changes easier if we understand them.

Just as we do anything new in life, it takes time to adjust. Just think of the other changes we have made in our parish over the years and how we now see them as “always having been done that way.”

Let us pray that we are open to the Holy Spirit in exploring these revisions in the prayers of the Mass. May we understand that these words will assist us in lifting our minds and hearts to grow deeper in our faith by praying the Mass more consciously, fully and actively, together giving praise and thanks to God.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Jeff", written in a cursive style.

Reverend Jeffrey M. Kemper
Pastor