

Dear Friends,

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body & Blood of Christ, as well as the feast day of our Diocese, whose name is derived from this celebration. Since it is at the Mass that the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ is conformed, I thought I would use this letter to talk about the implementation of the new Roman Missal which will mark updates in the Mass texts. This implementation should take place sometime in late 2011.

During the Jubilee Year 2000, Pope John Paul II announced a revised version of the *Missale Romanum* (Roman Missal). For those who are unfamiliar with this term, the Roman Missal is essentially the official text containing all prayers, rubrics (instructions), and guidelines for the celebration of the Mass. This is the book which the priest uses at the altar. The revised Roman Missal will incorporate prayers for the observances of more recently canonized saints, additional prefaces for the Eucharistic Prayers, new Votive Masses and Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Intentions. Additionally, there will be updated rubrics for the celebration of the Mass and changes in translations of acclamations and responses.

Most notable will be changes that will take some getting used to. For example, when the priest says the greeting "The Lord be with you", everyone will reply with the response "And ***with your spirit.***" This translation more closely resembles the original Latin and has been the response in Spanish for years. Another example is the change in the "Holy, Holy." Instead of saying "Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of ***power and might***" we will say or sing "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of ***hosts.***"

As you can see, this will require some adaptation on our part, since most of us have been so accustomed to our current responses for many years now. That is why we are already beginning to catechize the faithful. My hope is that we will be sufficiently prepared when these changes take place.

Why make changes at all? What is the purpose of these revisions? Essentially, there are many good reasons for these changes. There is a theological principle that is invoked to highlight the importance of faithful and accurate translations and prayers that are doctrinally correct. The principle is "Lex orandi lex credendi" (Loosely translated - "The law of prayer is the law of belief"). Perhaps a more understandable way of translating this principle is - "As we pray, so we believe." Our belief is articulated by our prayer. If we were to repeatedly say a prayer that is doctrinally vague, we could begin to interiorize that vagueness into our belief. The same would be true if we were to pray something that is doctrinally incorrect. If we prayed something erroneous, the error would be perpetuated in our belief. Now, I am certainly not saying that there is anything erroneous about the prayers that we currently use at Mass. Nevertheless, the new translations will hopefully add greater depth to our understanding.

Throughout the centuries, revisions in the Missal have taken place to address the needs of each age. The upcoming revisions will, I am sure, bear great fruit in the needs of our contemporary age, which is heavily influenced by competing, and often confusing information. In the future, we will be including some inserts into our bulletin detailing many of the revisions that we will see in the revised Roman Missal. God bless!

Fr. Paul