

#6 CHANGE IS A COMIN'

In the last several articles we have been discussing some basic liturgical theology as a way to renew our spirit of worship. Beginning with this week's article we will begin to explore the New Roman Missal and eventually delve into each part of our Eucharistic liturgy.

Throughout the centuries, the liturgy has changed many times. Once again, change is coming. In 2000, Pope John Paul II promulgated the third edition of the Roman Missal, which was published in Latin in 2002. In 2002 we also received the *New General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (or GIRM), which sought to clarify some of the rules for celebrating Eucharist. Now we are waiting for the official English translation to be approved by the Vatican.

What is a Missal?

The Missal is the book that includes all the prayers (e.g. Opening Prayer and Eucharistic Prayers) and rubrics (directions) for Sundays, feasts, and ritual Masses (like Confirmation). Many of the prayers come from the earliest centuries in our Church, so this book of prayers is a treasure of our rich tradition.

Why are we getting a new Missal?

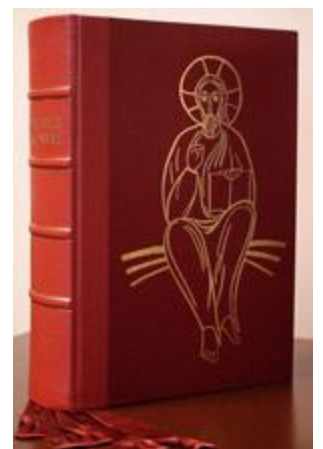
Since the major revisions at the Second Vatican Council, there have been smaller revisions to the liturgy and additions to our liturgical calendar (especially the addition of new saints), which need to be included in the Church's official liturgical books. Another reason is that in 2001 the Vatican issued *Liturgiam Authenticam*. This document outlined new rules for translating the Latin into the vernacular. One of its goals was to adhere to the Latin more closely. We'll talk more about translation in the next article.

How will this affect me in the pew?

You may notice a more formal structure and sound to many prayers, and some of the things the assembly says are changing. For example, when the presider greets the community with, "*The Lord be with you,*" the assembly will respond, "*And with your Spirit.*" Some other places in the liturgy you will notice a change are the Gloria and the Creed.

When will we start using the new Missal?

Right now we aren't sure. After the Vatican approves the English translation, the US Bishops' Conference will set a date of implementation. We will have some time for catechesis and to practice while publishing houses prepare the new book and composers finish preparing new Mass settings. And yes, the Mass of Creation and other popular Mass settings are already being rewritten for the new texts.



As we all know, change can be difficult. But the new missal can be a chance to grow in our appreciation for the liturgy, and to listen more carefully for God's word in our midst.

Resources for Study

Here are some resources for further study:

1. The Southwest Liturgical Conference Study Week 2011 www.swlclsc.org
2. The Bishops' Conference has a great website for study at <http://www.usccb.org/romanmissal/>
3. Diocesan Hearing Sessions, which will be coming to a parish near you soon.