

Historical NOTE on the third edition of the Roman Missal 2011

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1 – For many centuries the Catholic Church had many different Missals in many Rites and languages, and different ways of celebrating the Eucharist and the proclamation of the Word of God. After the shock of the Reformation in 1517, there was felt the need among all the Latin Rite bishops of Western Christendom to have a unified Sacramentary, using the Sacramentary or Missal of the diocese of Rome, chosen to be the common missal in the ancient language of the Roman Church (Latin) for the Latin Rite of the Roman Catholic Church, according to the Council of Trent (1545-1563) canons approved on September 17, 1562 in the 22nd Session. This missal was printed and mandated then to the entire Latin Rite Church by Pope Pius V in 1570. A new edition was mandated by Pope Clemens VIII in 1604. A third edition was mandated by Pope Urban VIII in 1634. In 1960 Pope John XXIII authorized a new edition (*Missale Romanum Quarta Editio iuxta Typicam*) to be used from 1962, the same year of the opening of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1963). This is the last edition of the pre-Vatican Council II *Missale Romanum* according to the Council of Trent, and must be used whenever the Holy Mass is celebrated in the Latin Tridentine Rite. Pope Benedict expanded greatly its use in the universal Church everywhere and even every day.

2 – The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) promulgated the Constitution “*Sacrosanctum Concilium*” (December 4, 1963), and Pope Paul VI followed it with the *Motu Proprio* “*Sacram Liturgiam*” on January 25, 1964, with the practical guidelines of the reform of the Roman Missal, simplifying some ceremonies, separating the readings from the Missal, creating anew traditional liturgical books: The Sacramentary for the celebration of the Eucharist, the Evangelarium for the proclamation of the Gospels, the Lectionary for the Readings and, sometimes, even a Opening and Closing Prayers’ Book for the Presider’s chair. The new Vatican II Missal (Sacramentary) instituted what is now called *NOVUS ORDO* Rite, and the Tridentine Mass then became the *Vetus Ordo*, although commonly was called the Tridentine Rite Mass, which was forbidden to be used in the parishes and oratories; an exception was allowed for the private celebration of the *Vetus Ordo* by elderly priests. The preparation of the new Vatican II Roman Missal was completed and promulgated on April 3, 1969. All national translations were to use this *Missale Romanum*, because such *Missale* is the “typical edition”. An “*editio typica altera*” (second edition) followed in 1975 and a “*editio typica tertia*” (third edition) followed in 2000. This is Missal for our new English Missal to be used from November 27, 2011 in all the Latin Rite churches of USA, except for those churches authorized to use the Tridentine Rite. The need for new edition is found in the revisions and authorization for new Votive or Special Masses, especially the inclusion of Masses for newly proclaimed saints. For example, the most famous Italian Saint of the past century is Padre Pio, who has been elevated to the honor of the altars recently, many years after the 1969 edition. His new mass is found now in this new Missal (*Editio typical 2000*). But there is also a more compelling reason to create a new edition owed to the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council.

3 - The documents voted by the bishops attending Vatican II, and all the Decrees, Instructions, 1983 Canon Law, and various other Vatican documents which followed the Council, introduced some important changes from the Tridentine Missal to the Vatican II Missal:

- a) Expansion of the Tridentine missal, this one was reduced in 1570 to a practical but minimalist book with few readings and prayers, by enlarging it with more extensive and richer ancient liturgical formularies of the pre-Trent traditions of the Catholic Church.
- b) The concession to celebrate the Holy Mass in modern languages.
- c) To have the Presider face the people again, according to the ancient liturgies.
- d) To include in the Lectionary the bulk of the Holy Bible in three years for the Sundays and two years for the daily celebration.
- e) To expand the concelebration of the Sacrifice from the rite of ordination to every time two or more priests are celebrating the Mass, eliminating the need for side altars.
- f) To give freedom to the priests to make his own certain sentences with the suggestion: “the priest may use these or similar words”.
- g) To administer holy communion under both species, and to offer it to the faithful either kneeling or standing and either on the tongue or in the hands.
- h) To put the tabernacle in a chapel distinct from the middle of the church above all in those churches where marriages and funerals take place frequently.
- i) To give due prominence to the deacon’s function, eliminating the subdeacon.

These concessions were restricted in the beginning years after the Council but then, upon request of the national hierarchies, were expanded greatly. For example, I remember that when I was preparing to achieve entrance into the Pontifical Academy of Liturgy under Annibale Bugnini in the years 1958-1961 just during the crucial preparation for the Schemata of the Council, the Roman Canon was supposed to remain exclusively in Latin but then in later years it was translated with the rest of the Mass into national languages.

4 – Then a deplorable disobedience on the part of some clerics, led by archbishop Marcel Levebvre, induced a small band of faithful to split from the pope. This schism was sadly reminiscent of the year 220 when a freeman, Callistus, archdeacon of Rome, succeeded pope Zefirinus having been chosen by the clergy and people of Rome. Pope Callistus ordered the liturgical books of the Church of Rome to be translated in Latin, the official language of the Roman Empire and of the populace of Rome and of the Western Roman Empire in general, being the Greek language used mainly by the elite and by the merchants. Hippolitus, a very popular Roman priest,

writer and eloquent preacher, rebelled against such change. To win the Roman Faithful to depose pope Callistus, this priest wrote books accusing Callistus to be of lax morals, having given permission to a noble lady to marry her slave, and even of Patripassian Heresis. Hippolitus, made himself bishop of Rome, and vainly tried to be recognized as a legitimate pope on the death of Callistus (222) and at the lection of his successors Urbanus (230). Mercifully both the new pope Pontianus and Hippolitus himself were martyred, condemned “Ad Metalla” in 235, but for fifteen years the Church had a pope and the first antipope, and the first schism. The feast of the holy martyrs Pontianus and Hippolitus is celebrated on August 13. Unfortunately archbishop Levebvre, notwithstanding the efforts of Blessed Pope John Paul II, who re-established again the Tridentine Rite in churches, died excommunicated and unrepentant. Our present pope Benedict XVI extended even further such permission, and we pray that eventually this schism will come to an end.

5 – Historically, as we have seen, missals were changed and promulgated again, to include celebrations for new Saints and new Mass formularies. But the great change from Latin into national languages will require that from Vatican II on new missal editions will be published every generation or so. The reason is that Latin is a dead language, and unchangeable, but the modern languages change with times, which force a re-adjustment of translation. I’ll give you a personal example again. When almost fifty years ago I was introduced as the new associate pastor in East Harlem, the pastor introduced me as “The young, smiling, gay priest” but I doubt a pastor nowadays would introduce an associate in these terms! Newly created Saints and Mass formularies, plus new changes in a modern language, as I’ve said, will create the need of new missal editions from now on. Naturally any translation must be approved by the pope, and given the enormous number of us Catholics, and the variety of idioms used in the Church of today, such process slows down the presentation of new national Roman Missals. That is why it took eleven years to start using the English translation of the third “editio typica”. Let us all keep in mind that any new translation MUST be rooted in the original language, and not in the previous translation, otherwise we run the risk of getting away from the true meaning of the sacred text generation after generation. Another personal example: when I was teaching for two years the seventh graders, we had a lot of fun playing the telephone game. It was always hilarious to hear the butchered sentence at the end of the line! Mamma mia! One capital rule of translation is to use as much as possible the same words and syntax which have the same root AND meaning in Latin and English. We are lucky that many English words have Latin roots. The Latin syntax presents though a difficult challenge, because we are accustomed to the English orderly and logical syntax: subject-verb-object. For example “Mary loves dogs” in Latin is “Canes Maria amat” with also that maddening Latin penchant for long subordinate sentences with the key verb at the end of the last sentence. Another rule is to give the best meaning strictly according to the sense of the language itself: It will be impossible to translate literally: “It rains cats and dogs” into the Italian language, as it is impossible to use the Italian “burro” (butter) into Spanish, where burro means “donkey” not an animal we like to see or smell in a restaurant!

6 – And here we come to the translation made by the USA bishops, incredibly appearing only 11 months (NOT eleven YEARS) after the Latin Editio typica 1969 appeared. In the foreword of the English Missal of 1970 it is written: “The translation of Latin texts is faithful but not literal” and it was apparent that to achieve such speed, different translators were employed, with uneven results. Some translations were quite good using modern American-English idiom, some have a lapidary structure (Christ is died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again!), other translations are very poetic (Let us grow in love ... Deliver us from all anxieties), others, definitely done in haste, left entire sentences out altogether, like the Angelic Hymn “Glory to God”, others could have used the English word similar to Latin instead of a colloquial one (Chalice instead of cup ... ”with your spirit” instead of “with you”, “consubstantial” instead of “one in being”). An example of faithful translation is in the New Testament itself. At the last supper, Jesus spoke in Aramaic but the gospels were written in Greek. The Hebrew/Aramaic word sounding as “d@abim” = “Many” used by Jesus in the consecration of the wine “on behalf of many” was translated by the evangelists as “d@abim=Polloi=Many” because the Aramaic language doesn’t have the word “All”. But although the Greek has “All” (Pantes) the evangelists translated literally as “Many”. The Vulgata Latin Translation also follow the same pattern “D@abim= Pro Multis” NOT “Pro Omnibus”. Naturally note also that in the classic Greek language, many times the word “Polloi” with or without article is inclusive, which means that it indicates “Pantes”; for example see in 4 Esdra 8:3 “Multi creati, pauci salvabuntur” = “Many are created, few will be saved”, obviously we ALL are created, not just many, right? Does it mean that Jesus did not die for all human beings? Definitely NOT! It is a Catholic dogma that Jesus died for all human beings (Councils of Ephesus 431, Quiersy 853, Valence 853, Trent 1546). There is then not a theological reason behind such changes in the English Missal 2011, but just a question of faithful and literal translation which in the haste and in the plurality of translators (and also in principle) the USA bishops decided not to follow in 1970, and now it has been rectified in 2011. Please note again that using the simplified English translation in 1970, instead of the literal one, the faithful did miss the theological truths that the original text exposes. The catechesis we are doing now, with this third edition, should have taken place 40 years ago! Besides, let us not forget that the USA is the leading nation in the world since World War II, and all nations who have English as the, or one of their, national language (India, England, Australia, Canada, South Africa, etc.) followed the U.S. Bishops’ translation with, in many cases, the same uneven results. That is why Blessed Pope John Paul II insisted to have such inadequate translation be redone.

I hope this note will clarify any question you may have about the reasons for the changes in the new Missal 2011. It has been a joyful task for me, dear parishioners, to start and present this NOTE for your consideration in understanding of the new missal.

Smile, God loves you and so does Fr. Fausto. November 27, 2011.