

In an undertaking as extensive and detailed as the translation of the entire Roman Missal into English you may be sure that there is something for everyone to dislike. However, we bishops, priests, religious, deacons, and lay ministers are called to a broader vision of what is happening and of the task before us, a vision that sees beyond this or that particular phrasing or wording. Such a vision will see the opportunity for a catechesis about Eucharist and worship that will recall all of us to a deeper understanding of what Eucharist is and of what our full, active and conscious Eucharistic participation means for us and for the entire Church. Forty years ago such a catechesis was spotty at best, but now we have a chance to get it right.

As we begin this consideration, I want to share with you a story that is a variation on the theme of not seeing the forest for the trees. In the seventeenth century, when the British architect, Sir Christopher Wren, was directing the building of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, he walked around the construction site dressed as an ordinary worker. Sir Christopher stopped beside one workman and asked him what he was doing. The man replied, "What does it look like? I am putting one stone on top of another." The architect walked on and stopped by a second workman. He asked the man what he was doing, and the response was: "I'm earning a shilling a day." Sir Christopher then walked up to a very industrious third workman, again asking, "What are you doing here?" The man looked up, cheerfully and proudly, and said, "I'm helping Sir Christopher Wren build St. Paul's Cathedral!"

Having a vision of the project, keeping it in mind, and not centering on himself, no doubt helped motivate that third workman in the use of his skills. Let's keep him in mind as we consider our priceless call to minister Word and Sacrament to the people of God. There are ministry-related and liturgy-related versions of merely putting one stone on top of another, or worse, of just earning a shilling a day. We want to avoid such versions as we cooperate with the action of the Holy Spirit in the building up of the Body of Christ, his Church.

As shepherd of Catholics in the Archdiocese of San Francisco I am convinced that I must issue a call to leadership to pastors and parish ministers, to those in Catholic schools and in other Catholic communities in this local Church, to work together conscientiously, cooperatively and responsibly to implement the new translation of the Roman Missal throughout the Archdiocese. I acknowledge that among us are fine Catholic leaders with sincere doubts and critical concerns about the translation.

Nevertheless, I believe that we can work together honestly and with integrity as we implement the new Roman Missal. In order to do that let us first consider the catholicity – the universality – of our Church. We cannot leave it up to each celebrant or each congregation to fashion their own texts. If it's every presider for himself and every parish for itself, then each personnel change can mean a change in Mass texts for the congregation. As Msgr. Phil Murnion liked to say, "Ordination is not a license for private practice." We are called and sent to do what the Church does in the way the Church calls us to do it. That does not make us robots or automatons, but ministers responsive to Christ, who is leading us together in the Spirit.

I admit that we have work to do as we implement the new Missal, but I believe it is largely a work of catechesis. We should not overestimate the changes themselves: there are no changes of gesture, posture, or movement. The textual changes are not wholesale departures from familiar texts, and we will get used to them.

The catechetical opportunity this year is enormous. The changes in the 1970's were introduced incrementally, even piecemeal, and often enough a priest could be heard to say something like, "You're not going to like this. I don't like it myself, but we have to do it!"

We can get it right this time. We can introduce changes in the greater context of teaching that in Eucharist God makes us Catholics who we are, by making us one with Christ and one with one another in Christ. How God does this, and the difference it makes, and how we are called to respond can be front and center in our consciousness this year.

The Catholic Churches of the English-speaking world have arrived at this new text by way of a lengthy consultative process. I know that because I was part of it. During my first eight years as a bishop I did not submit a single amendment to a draft of a document submitted to us members of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. I am not particularly proud of that "clean" record, but I usually read the documents on the plane, on my way from Salt Lake City to Washington, D.C., too late to mail in an amendment.

Then, about seven years ago, I received the preliminary drafts of the Missal text we are now implementing. Before the next meeting I submitted 45 amendments! Accompanying those amendments were my explanation for each, as well as the alternate reading I was suggesting for the passage. Many other American bishops submitted amendments, and a few of them submitted more amendments than I did.

In this process of multiple drafts and consultations there was much give and take. Some of the bishops' amendments were incorporated in subsequent drafts of the Missal text and others were not. The principle that guided the process was this: Be as faithful as possible in English to the meaning of the Latin Missal text that is the model for translations into all languages. Following that principle, the translators sometimes departed from the English translation of the Missal that we have been using since 1970.

One reason the universal Church is giving special care to the English translation of the Missal is that English is the dominant international language at present. The Vatican understands that many of those who translate the new Missal into other languages and dialects are likely to be much more familiar with English than with Latin. Consequently, as they translate they are likely to look to the English translation as a standard and a guide. With popularity and near-universality goes a sense of responsibility to be as accurate and faithful as possible in translating the original Latin.

I consider it wrong to believe that the universal Church is imposing this translation on the English-speaking Churches in an insensitive and unsympathetic manner, with no concern for our own pastoral situations. On April 28, 2010, Pope Benedict addressed the Vox Clara group on the subject of the implementation of the new English translation of the Roman Missal, in words that sound sensitive and caring to me. Listen to what our Holy Father said:

A new task will then present itself...which in one way or another will involve all of you – the task of preparing for the reception of the new translation by clergy and lay faithful. Many will find it hard to adjust to unfamiliar texts after nearly forty years of continuous use of the previous translation. The change will need to be introduced with due sensitivity, and the opportunity for catechesis that it presents will need to be firmly grasped. I pray that in this way any risk of confusion or bewilderment will be averted, and the change will

serve instead as a springboard for a renewal and a deepening of Eucharistic devotion all over the English-speaking world.

Certainly there is no infallibility attached to the choices made by the translators in the text of this new Missal. On the other hand, I strongly assert that the translators have not perversely set out to choose obscure, quaint, unfamiliar, or awkward readings, as some critics have contended.

Let us take a look at some of the translations from the Ordinary of the Mass that have drawn the most vigorous criticism. With a closer look I believe you will find that, in each instance, there is a rationale for choosing the wording. You may not agree with that rationale. However, in each case there is a longstanding tradition behind the change, not an impulsive switch to something new and unheard of before.

In the present Sacramentary, the priest is called upon to greet the congregation at the beginning of Mass by saying "The Lord be with you." The people's response is: "And also with you." In the new Missal the people's response will be, "And with your spirit." This is a literal translation of the Latin text, "*Et cum spiritu tuo.*" In several of St. Paul's epistles we hear the Apostle greet his fellow Christians by wishing that the Lord will be with their spirit. In French, German, Italian and Spanish the response all along has been the equivalent of "And with your spirit." For nearly 2000 years that was the translation in all those language and in English as well. By joining Roman Catholics from throughout the world with this new greeting we will also join the longstanding practice of Eastern Catholics and many within the Anglican communion who have echoed St. Paul's greeting for generations.

Another change is from "We believe" to "I believe" at the beginning of the Nicene Creed, as we recite it together. "I believe" is the exact translation of "Credo" in the Latin. One objection is that, inasmuch as we are all part of group praying the Creed together, the formula should continue to begin "We believe." However, even now we are familiar with a singular verb beginning a communal prayer: when we recite the Confiteor together we begin by saying, "I confess."

Many objections have been raised against the change in the formula for the consecration of the Blood of Christ, moving from saying that his Blood was shed "for all" to saying it was shed "for many." First of all, this is not an exclusionary formula; the word "many" can indicate "all," while the word "some" cannot. Also, "many" is the meaning indicated by Jesus in the Gospel's narrative of the Last Supper. "For many" has been used in the Roman Rite in Latin from the earliest centuries, and it is the meaning in the *anaphoras* of the various Oriental Rites as well.

Finally in the prayer of the Communion Rite, "O Lord, I am not worthy," the phrasing is altered so that I say that I am not worthy that the Lord "should enter under my roof." In the "*Domine, non sum dignus,*" or "Lord, I am not worthy," the Church consciously quotes the anonymous Roman officer in the Gospel who asked Jesus to cure his very sick servant. As you will recall, Jesus offered to go to the officer's home to heal the servant, and then the officer made a beautiful act of faith: "Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof; only say the word and my servant will be healed." We are told further that, "When Jesus heard this he was amazed and said to those following him, 'Amen, I say to you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith. I say to you, many will come from the east and the west, and will recline with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the banquet in the kingdom of heaven,..." As we stand around the altar of the banquet of Eucharist, we many who have come from east and west do well to remember and speak this prayer of the faith-filled centurion, even using his very words, "under my roof."

Early in our process of implementation and catechesis we need to remind ourselves of the meaning and importance of what we are doing. The Catholic Church is constituted as Church by the gift of Eucharist: common belief, shared history, and a code of law would not suffice by themselves. In 1992 the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a letter on some aspects of the Church understood as Communion, which stated, "Eucharist is the creative force and source of communion among the members of Christ precisely because it unites each one of them with Christ."

The fathers of the 1985 Synod of Bishops observed that the most visible fruit of the whole conciliar effort in those first twenty years since 1965 had been the liturgical renewal, which had been received prayerfully and fruitfully by the faithful, even though there had been some difficulties. They went on to say that the active participation that so happily increased after the Council had not consisted only in external activity, but above all in interior and spiritual participation, in living a fruitful participation in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ. At its best the liturgical renewal has deepened the people's appreciation of the meaning of Eucharist and their own participation in it. Herein lies a reliable source of hope and direction for us as we approach a catechesis in preparation for the new edition of the Missal, a catechesis that must move beyond information and training to a more prayerful appreciation of Eucharist in the life of the Church and in the life of the individual Catholic.

Ecclesial communion is rooted in Eucharist because each Eucharistic Sacrifice, while always performed in a particular community, is never a celebration of that community alone. Unity or communion between particular churches and the universal Church, is rooted not only in the same faith and in common Baptism but above all in the Eucharist and in the Episcopate. The local community celebrates a Eucharist that includes all, while the Bishop represents both the oneness of the community and its interconnectedness with all other Eucharistic communities. The Eucharist and the Episcopacy both function as essential structures that bring unity to the local church and forge connections with all the other local churches. In reflecting on this ancient sense of the unity of the Church in Eucharist and Episcopacy, it seems appropriate in our own time to consider one possible expression of that unity to be the efforts of the Catholic bishops of one language group to produce a single translation of the Roman Missal for all their congregations.

In his work, *The Splendour of the Church*, the theologian, Henri De Lubac beautifully described the Bishop's Eucharistic role in the unity of the Church:

Though only one cell of the whole body is actually present, the whole body is there virtually. The Church is in many places, yet there are not several Churches; The Church is entire in each one of its parts . . . . Each bishop constitutes the unity of his flock . . . . But each bishop is himself "in peace and in communion" with all his brother bishops who offer the same and unique sacrifice in other places, and make mention of him in their prayers as he makes mention of all of them in his. He and they form one episcopate only, and are all alike "at peace and in communion" with the Bishop of Rome, who is Peter's successor and the visible bond of unity; and through them all the faithful are united.

The priest's fundamental relationship, as Bishop John D'Arcy has said, "is to Jesus Christ, Head and Shepherd." Thus the priest is a man for others, collaborating with others. Cardinal Ratzinger in *Called to Communion*, expressed the point clearly:

. . . ordination is not about the development of one's own powers and gifts. It is not the appointment of a man as a functionary because he is particularly good at it, or because it suits him,

or simply because it strikes him as a good way to earn his bread; it is not a question of a job in which someone secures his own livelihood by his own abilities, perhaps in order to rise later to something better.

We can be hopeful because we know that Jesus Christ the High Priest unites us bishops and priests in himself for the life and the service of the Church. Individualism and isolation in ministry weaken unity while fraternal cooperation and collaboration strengthen it. Because Eucharist is the very source of our presbyteral unity in Christ, this year will present us with a number of opportunities for strengthening that unity. We all will be introducing the new Roman Missal in different contexts to different groups. If we can plan and carry out those introductory moments so that we move beyond providing merely information and training, and beyond wrestling with this particular response or that particular phrasing, we can engage in a catechesis that shows how Eucharist unites everyone at Mass in the church, all the parishes in the diocese, all the dioceses in the country, and all the local churches in the universal Church.

If we approach our task in the spirit described by our Holy Father, it is more likely that a deepened sense of *communio* in Word and Sacrament will unite not only priests and bishops in ordained ministry but all God's people in the Body of Christ. Then we will not be limiting ourselves to an ecclesial or liturgical equivalent of "putting one stone on top of another" or of "earning a shilling a day," but we will be helping the Holy Spirit nourish and build up the People of God, the Body of Christ.