

# For All English Speaking Countries

## Roman Missal Frequently Asked Questions & Answers

### 1. Why was there a need for a new translation?

The *Missale Romanum* (Roman Missal), the ritual text for the celebration of the Mass, was promulgated by Pope Paul VI in 1970 as the definitive text of the reformed liturgy of the Second Vatican Council. That Latin text, the *editio typica* (typical edition), was translated into various languages for use around the world; the English edition was published in the United States in 1973. The Holy See issued a revised text, the *editio typica altera*, in 1975. Pope John Paul II promulgated the third edition (*editio typica tertia*) of the *Missale Romanum* during the Jubilee Year in 2000. Among other things, the third edition contains prayers for the celebration of recently canonized saints, additional prefaces for the Eucharistic Prayers, additional Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Intentions, and some updated and revised rubrics (instructions) for the celebration of the Mass. To aid the process of translation of the *Missale Romanum*, *editio typica tertia*, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments issued *Liturgiam Authenticam*, in 2001, an Instruction on the vernacular translation of the Roman Liturgy which outlines the principles and rules for translation. In 2007, the Congregation for Divine Worship issued the *Ratio Translationis for the English Language*, which outlined the specific rules for translation in English.

### 2. Who completed the work of translation?

The process of translation was a highly consultative work of several groups. The International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) is chartered to prepare English translations of liturgical texts on behalf of the conferences of bishops of English-speaking countries. The USCCB and the other member Conferences of Bishops received draft translations of each text from ICEL (called "Green Books") and had the opportunity to offer comments and suggestions to ICEL. A second draft (called the "Gray Book") was then prepared by ICEL, which each Conference of Bishops approved (a Conference reserves the right to amend or modify a particular text) and submitted to the Vatican for final approval. At the level of the Vatican (the Holy See), the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments examined texts and offered authoritative approval (*recognitio*) of texts, granting permission for their use. The Congregation was aided by the recommendations of *Vox Clara*, a special committee of bishops and consultants from English-speaking countries convened to assist with the English translation of the *Missale Romanum*.

### 3. What's new or particularly different about the revised translation?

From the *Ratio Translationis* comes this explanation:

The unique style of the Roman Rite should be maintained in translation. By "style" is meant here the distinctive way in which the prayers of the Roman Rite are expressed. The principal elements of such a style include a certain conciseness in addressing, praising and entreating God, as well as distinctive syntactical patterns, a noble tone, a variety of less complex rhetorical devices, concreteness of images, repetition, parallelism and rhythm as measured through the *cursus*, or ancient standards for stressing syllables of Latin words in prose or poetry. (no. 112) The texts of the revised translation of the *Roman Missal* are marked by a heightened style of English speech and a grammatical structure that closely follows the Latin text. In addition, many biblical and poetic images, such as "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof..." (Communion Rite) and "...from the rising of the sun to its setting" (Eucharistic Prayer III) have been restored.

### 4. Now that the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has received the text of the Roman Missal, what are the next steps?

The USCCB website now contains the official text of the Order of Mass for catechetical purposes only. Several changes have been made to the text of the *Ordo Missae* which had been approved by the Congregation for Divine Worship in 2008, and the entire Missal reflects changes made by the Congregation upon the recommendations of the *Vox Clara* Committee, many in response to concerns expressed by our Conference of Bishops (as well as by other English-language Conference of Bishops) during deliberations and votes over the past several years. The Secretariat of Divine Worship is working with the text now to begin the process of assembling an electronic text for