

Office of the Bishop

*Diocese of Erie
P. O. Box 10397
Erie, Pennsylvania 16514-0397*

January 14, 2011

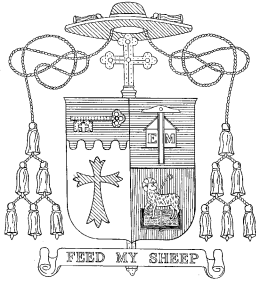
Dear Brothers in the Lord,

On November 27th 2011, less than one year from now, the 3rd Edition of the Roman Missal will become effective. At that time only the new edition of the Roman Missal may be used at Mass. While all Catholic parishes of the United States will make this transition together on the first the Sunday of Advent 2011, we must strive to make it a time of prayer and reflection and not a time of confusion. Formation of the faithful should be completed well in advance. The attached schedule suggests a step-by-step process to prepare our people during the coming year and thereby minimize the surprise and upset that often accompanies change. This schedule may be tailored to meet the needs of your particular parish, but please keep in mind that the intention is that we walk together as a united diocesan community in this process.

This Missal represents more than a new translation of the words for Mass. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM 2003), which introduces the 3rd edition of the Roman Missal, and the new translation itself are an attempt to improve the liturgical prayer life of all of our communities. Consequently, all are asked to learn more about what we pray, how we pray and why we pray. The presider, as always, is key to the success of this effort. Your efforts to update and renew your understanding of the liturgy will serve as a model for your people. Using a variety of communications channels, including homilies, flyers, bulletin inserts and ritual experiences will improve the likelihood of your assembly learning how to pray the liturgy well with the new Missal. Please see the attached schedule of implementation for details.

While the new GIRM is already in effect, by re-introducing it now we have a great opportunity to heighten our communities' appreciation of periods of silence/reflection, unified postures/gestures and the integral role of music in the liturgy <http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/current/revmissalisromanien.shtml>. This will lead our assemblies deeper into an internal and external liturgical participation that is full, conscious and active. My hope is that by focusing on these elements we may help our assemblies to integrate their hearts, minds and bodies at prayer and encourage them to live lives that more fully model the life of Jesus Christ.

With the start of this new year, the focus of our diocesan implementation of the new Missal now shifts from the formation of clergy and leadership, to that of the parish. The attached schedule is meant to facilitate that process. Start early, move slowly; introduce material a bit at a time with an explanation. Our implementation will be most effective if we:



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- Use multiple communication channels: homily, bulletin, group sessions, ritual practica, etc.
- Offer catechesis on liturgy and why we do what we do; the GIRM offers explanations of the purpose of each liturgical rite in the Mass.
- Review the revised common prayers, responses as well as the role of posture, silence and music with the people.
- Allow ample time and opportunity for people to respond to the changes and to ask questions.

Finally, please note that in the Spring of 2011 there will be two additional opportunities for us and our parishioners to continue own personal preparation for the Missal. On April 7th Sr. Joyce Ann Zimmerman will speak at Mercyhurst College in Erie. On May 17th Msgr. James Moroney will speak at St. Catherine's in DuBois. In each case an afternoon session will address those in leadership while a more general presentation will be offered in the evening for the public. Details will be announced soon.

There is no doubt that this is a challenging and seemingly overwhelming task. As a pilgrim Church we always must seek to worship more fully and grow in our spirituality. If we are able to pursue this effort diligently and faithfully, the benefits for the Body of Christ may well be enormous. Enhancing our liturgical life, together with the efforts of *Catholics Come Home*, may make this challenging year a time of grace for us and our people. May the Holy Spirit guide us through this time of transition in our Church. Know my gratitude for the good work you continue to do for the people of our diocese. Be assured of my prayers and support.

Fraternally yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Donald W. Trautman, S.T.D., S.S.L.
Bishop of Erie

Original with signature is on file in the Chancery.