



The history of liturgical books: Part II

Vatican II to the present

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on Dec. 4, 1963 – “*Sacrosanctum Consilium*, the Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy.” In this magnificent treatise on the theology of worship and the central role of liturgy in the life of the church, the bishops wrote:

>> In order that the Christian people may more surely derive an abundance of graces from the liturgy, the Church desires to undertake with great care a general reform of the liturgy itself ... In this reform both texts and rites should be drawn up so that they may express more clearly the holy things they signify and that the Christian people, as far as possible, are able to understand them with ease and to take part in the rites fully and actively, as befits a community. (SC 21)

After the Council of Trent (1548-1563), our liturgical books remained relatively unchanged for 400 years. Some papal initiatives, including the reform of Holy Week in the 1950s, created some modest changes to texts and the liturgical calendar. But when Pope John XXIII called for the 21st ecumenical council, he wanted an *aggiornamento* (“a re-awakening,” “fresh air”) so that the church would continue to be an instrument of grace in the midst of a modern world.

One of the hallmarks of the Second Vatican Council was scholarship. Experts in liturgical and church history called *periti* advised the bishops of the world

before, during and after their four sessions. In all, 16 documents were promulgated by the council. The very first document of those was passed

The council decreed that several key principles would guide the reform of our official books. The primary goal would be the full, conscious and active participation of the people – their right and duty by

The hope for the new *Roman Missal* is that we will not just change words but find a deeper spirituality in our prayer together at Mass. So what needs to change for that happen? Ideally the greatest change will be in us.

The guidelines and rubrics of the new missal will help. They became effective in 2002 when the General Instruction of the *Roman Missal*, the introduction to the new missal, was published. When reviewed and enacted, these guidelines will make our liturgies more consistent from parish to parish. Wherever you worship within the diocese and beyond, you will know what to expect.

What will this change look like?

1) Due to the new translation, the priest will proclaim the prayers in a more formal style. 2) Some of our responses will be different, such as, "And with your Spirit" in response to "The Lord be with you." This is a more literal translation of the Latin and more closely mirrors what Catholics around the world say in many other languages. 3) We will begin to relate gestures to our words, such as striking the breast during the penitential act and bowing during the Creed when referring to the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. 4) We will participate in our hearts during

reason of their baptism. The rites would be "marked by noble simplicity; ... short, clear and unencumbered by useless repetitions; ... written within the people's powers of comprehension and as a rule not require much explanation" (SC 34). Toward that end, while Latin was to be preserved, the Mass and sacraments, once again, would be celebrated in the language of the people and acclamations and dialogues would increase the speaking role of the assembly. The use of Sacred Scripture would be greatly expanded and the Word would be integral to all liturgical celebrations.

While "bearing witness to unbroken tradition" and preserving ancient texts, the rites would provide richer options to address a variety of pastoral needs and circumstances. For example, the council called for the restoration of the ancient catechumenate process – what you now experience as the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). The Order of Mass would be streamlined by eliminating various devotional practices that had crept into our liturgy over the centuries. Now it more closely resembles the practices of the early church and

allows us to focus on the paschal mystery of Christ.

In the reform of the liturgical year, the church restored greater prominence to the sacred Triduum and to Sunday as the primordial feast. Saints from every era and continent were recognized in the reformed calendar.

All of this required new books. The texts were created by a committee of experts (*Consilium*) and were released in Latin. Then, each conference of bishops had authority to translate them into their own language groups.

The *Roman Ritual* (our book of rites) was published in separate volumes containing the reformed texts for the *Rite of Baptism for Children*, *Rite of Penance*, *Rite of Marriage*, the *Book of Blessings*, etc.

The *Roman Missal* (our book for the celebration of Mass) was, once again, printed as separate books for very practical reasons – a *Sacramentary* which contained the prayers; the *Lectionary* which contained the readings, the *Book of Gospels*, etc. The first edition came out in 1969 and was fully translated into English by 1974.

[More than words,] It's about changing hearts

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moments of silence. For instance, when the priest says, "Let us pray," we will have a moment of silence in which to do so. 5) We will learn to sing new music for the parts of Mass that have changed, such as, the Glory to God, the Holy, Holy, Holy and the Memorial Acclamation. 6) Over time we will learn to raise up the dialogues between the priest and the people — "Let us give thanks ..." or "it is right and just," — in song.

The new missal is intended to bring about more than a change in words but a deepening of our interior participation and spirituality, a change of heart. Let us pray that we may grow spiritually and change gracefully.

Photo Caption: Clergy and lay leaders have been meeting around the diocese to learn about the new Roman Missal and to discuss the logistics of integrating it into our liturgies beginning with Advent 2011.

A "second edition" (with its slight modifications) was promulgated in 1975 and the English translation of it appeared in 1985 (this is our current text). In 2000, Pope John Paul II issued a "third typical edition" – not much changed, but many more saints had been canonized. This edition needed to be translated into English and our bishops have been carefully working on that for more than 10 years. It will be used in the dioceses of the U.S. on the First Sunday of Advent 2011.

The *Roman Pontifical* (which contains the rites a bishop uses) and the *Liturgy of the Hours* (or *Divine Office*) also underwent reform with careful fidelity to ancient texts and practices.

In 2,000 years of development, our liturgy has always been a "living" liturgy. Early extemporaneous texts differed from place to place, from presider to presider. Modern liturgical books – based upon some of those same ancient texts – are shared with a universal church. But from ancient scrolls to hardbound texts our goal has been the same – to give glory to God and to express our thanks for the great gift of our redemption! ☩

