

A LECTURE
BY THE MOST REV. DONALD W. TRAUTMAN, STD, SSL
BISHOP OF ERIE

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*The Language of the New Missal
in Light of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*

I would like to preface this lecture with a personal tribute to a gifted and graced scholar, Msgr. Fred McManus, for whom this lecture series is named. Msgr. McManus was an apostle of the liturgical renewal. As a priest of the Archdiocese of Boston and a member of the Canon Law Faculty of Catholic University, he distinguished himself as an early promoter of church renewal in its liturgical life. For Fred McManus, Vatican II was a Pentecostal Event, a unique gift of the Holy Spirit that brought the restoration of the liturgy and new life to the Church.

Msgr. McManus championed that new life as a consultor of the Liturgical Preparatory Commission that planned and prepared the liturgical schema for the opening session of Vatican II. He served as a peritus or appointed expert to the Council Fathers. He witnessed firsthand the conciliar discussions and debates. Through his personal meetings with Bishops he persuaded many to embrace the proposed liturgical reforms. From the very beginning of liturgical reawakening in the United States, he had been a proponent of the vernacular, active participation of the laity, and liturgical inculturation long before these precedent setting reforms were approved by the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy.

It is a singular privilege to be part of the Msgr. Fred McManus Lecture Series since I worked closely with him for six years during my chairmanship of the Bishops Committee on Liturgy. I named Fred a consultant to that committee and he participated in our deliberations with his characteristic gentleness and modesty, with his wit and wisdom, and profound insights. He regaled the committee with background information and details and memories of the stories behind the stories of the drafting of the Constitution on the Liturgy.

Msgr. McManus has left a rich legacy of liturgical accomplishments. He was a founding member of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL), a founding member of the Consultation on Common Texts, the North American Academy

of Liturgy, and the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions. (I will always cherish the Msgr. Fred McManus Award bestowed on me by that organization.)

I understand that some of Fred's friends and confreres are present this afternoon. Be proud of your association with this great man who played a key role in the liturgical revival of our Church. He loved the Church and used his canonical expertise and liturgical vision to bring the sacramental rites closer to God's people. Fred had a pastoral heart and wanted all in the Eucharistic Assembly to have full and active participation. His own personal study and research convinced him to support the early liturgical movement, and he spent his entire priesthood promoting the pillars of that movement: deeper participation and increased understanding for the faithful.

This brief sketch of Fred's influence on the liturgy leads us into our topic this afternoon: *The Language of the New Missal in Light of the Translation Principles of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*. What would have been Msgr. McManus' position on these new texts? While no one can answer that question, we do know from all he said and wrote that a pastoral perspective would be his first consideration. And so I ask: Are these new texts accessible? Are they proclaimable and intelligible? Do they reflect correct English syntax and sentence structure? Are they pastorally sensitive to the liturgical assembly? Do they lead to full, conscious and active participation? Is the New Missal faithful to the translation principles of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, in particular paragraphs 21 and 34?

The translated texts of the Third Edition of the Missale Romanum must be more than accurate and faithful to the Latin original; they must communicate --- they must be intelligible, proclaimable, reflective of a sentence structure, vocabulary and idiom of contemporary American English. The primary purpose of the Missal is to provide spoken and sung prayer texts for the liturgical assembly. If those texts employ lengthy sentences with clauses and dangling participial phrases, comprehension by the assembly will be nearly impossible. If those texts use esoteric words, archaic expressions, technical theological vocabulary, incomplete sentences and Latin syntax in place of English syntax, then we have a translation that is not pastoral --- a text that does not promote full, conscious and active participation in the liturgy. The New Missal is intended for public prayer, worship, lifting up the heart and mind to God. People in the pews must own the prayer text, its vocabulary, its style, its idiom, its cadence. The people in the assembly must be able to make the proclaimed prayer their own, and so raise their hearts and minds to God.

If a translated text --- no matter how exact and faithful to the original Latin --- does not communicate in the living language of the worshipping assembly, it fails pastorally; it fails to dispose God's people to participate fully, consciously and actively in the Eucharist. This is the thesis of this lecture --- a thesis now to be demonstrated.

The English translation of the New Missal has intentionally employed a “sacred language” which tends to be elitist and remote from everyday speech and frequently not understandable. For example, the Preface of the Assumption reads: “She brought forth ineffably your Incarnate Son.” There is repeated use of the word “ineffable” throughout the New Translation of the Missal. In the Nicene Creed we will pray “consubstantial with the Father” which replaces the present wording “one in being with the Father”. Also in the Creed the new wording “by the Holy Spirit he was incarnate of the Virgin Mary” replaces “he was born of the Virgin Mary”. The vast majority of God’s people in the assembly are not familiar with words of the New Missal like “ineffable”, “consubstantial”, “incarnate”, “Inviolable”, “oblation”, “ignominy”, “precursor”, “suffused”, and “unvanquished”. This vocabulary is not readily understandable by the average Catholic.

What is the origin of this concept of “sacred language”? When St. Jerome translated the Scriptures from the biblical languages into Latin, the vernacular of his day, he did not focus on producing a sacred language. Jerome rendered the inspired word into clear, accurate, intelligible texts. When the Council Fathers of Vatican II made the historic decision that the liturgy of the Church should be in the vernacular, there was no emphasis on a sacred language. The Council Fathers’ intent was pastoral --- to have the liturgy of the Church prayed in vernacular or living languages. There was no mention of any sacred language or sacred vocabulary. Such concepts flow from the 2001 Instruction on Vernacular Translations, a Roman Congregational document (*Liturgiam Authenticam*). Certainly translated liturgical texts should be reverent, noble, inspiring, uplifting, but that does not mean archaic, remote, incomprehensible. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy stipulated vernacular language, not sacred language.

Did Jesus ever speak to the people of his day in words beyond their comprehension? Did Jesus ever use terms or expressions beyond his hearer’s understanding? ¹

In the New Missal there are also certain phrases and expressions that are awkward, obscure, not reflective of the idiom of contemporary American Catholics, e.g.:
 “Be pleased to look upon (these gifts) with serene and kindly countenance”, ²
 “Send down the lasting dew of your mercy”, ³
 “Let the venerable discipline of holy devotion shape the hearts of your faithful”, ⁴
 “Refresh us abundantly with the sweetness of perfect charity”, ⁵
 “Give ear to our prayers”.⁶

¹ Jesus did explain the parable of the sower privately to his disciples, cf. Mark 4:10-12 and Luke 8:9-10. In John 6 many of Jesus’ disciples found his Bread of Life discourse hard to accept. In these instances it is the content, the message, not the vocabulary that requires further explanation.

² Eucharistic Prayer I

³ Collect, the Anniversary of Death, B, Outside the Easter Season

⁴ Collect, Tuesday, 4th Week of Lent

⁵ Prayer after Communion, Mass for Various Intentions, for Charity

⁶ Prayer after Communion, Wednesday after 3rd Sunday of Easter

How pastorally helpful are these expressions in making the Eucharist accessible? Will the worshipping community take ownership of these prayers?

In addition to these questionable phrases and expressions, there are whole prayers that are extremely problematical for understanding. For example: In the Votive Mass of the Holy Spirit, the prayer after Communion reads:

Let the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, O Lord, cleanse our hearts
and make them fruitful within by the sprinkling of his dew.

What will people understand by the words “the sprinkling of the Holy Spirit’s dew”? In Eucharistic Prayer II the celebrant will pray at the Epiclesis:

Make holy, therefore, these gifts, we pray,
by sending down your Spirit upon them like the dewfall.

The words “the sprinkling of his dew” and “dewfall” are pregnant with poetry and scriptural meaning, but if they fail to communicate, if they fail to be understood by the average worshipper, they fail pastorally.

Consider the Collect on the Monday of the 5th Week of Lent: “May we bring before you as the fruit of bodily penance a cheerful purity of mind.” What do these words mean?

A major defect of the translated Missal is the number of lengthy, cumbersome sentences with complex syntax. For example, the Collect after the Third Reading at the Paschal Vigil (#26) has one sentence of 65 words in 10 lines:

O God, the splendor of your ancient wonders
remains undimmed before our eyes today,
since what you bestowed on a single people,
freeing them from Pharaoh’s persecution
by the power of your right hand,
you now perform for the salvation of the nations
through the waters of rebirth:
grant that all the world may become children of Abraham
and pass over into the dignity of Israel.
Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

This is too long for a proclaimed text. Translated liturgical texts involve public proclamation and must be intelligible to the assembly on first hearing. The clause “since what” in the third line blocks the hearer from connecting with what precedes or follows. A 10-line sentence with 65 words and an unnatural word order cannot be

proclaimed effectively by the speaker nor fully comprehended by the listener. Compare the text just read to the 1998 translation of the same text:

God of our ancestors,
 even in these present days
 the wonders of your ancient deeds shine forth:
 your right hand parted the waters
 and delivered a single people from the slavery of Pharaoh;
 now through the waters of rebirth
 you extend to every nation
 deliverance from the bondage of sin.
 Grant that all the peoples of the world
 may become children of Abraham
 and enter the inheritance promised to Israel.
 We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Which text is more proclaimable and understandable?

Many of the Prefaces in the New Missal have lengthy sentences that hinder their proclaimability and comprehension. For example, in the Preface of Christ the King there are 13 lines and 88 words in one sentence. How will this promote intelligible and meaningful prayer? How can the assembly remember what is being prayed for? Eucharistic Prayer III begins with 70 words in one sentence. In almost all instances the Collects or opening prayers, prayers over the gifts, and prayers after Communion follow a single sentence format with one or more clauses. Again proclaimability and comprehension are sacrificed for the sake of maintaining the Latin single sentence structure. Latin word order is not English word order. The translators have adhered slavishly to the literal Latin syntax, so that the English translation results in a jumbled English syntax, a lengthy sentence with clauses or participial phrases with an unnatural rhythm of speaking in English.

In view of the examples already presented, I would contend that the translated Missal does not have a pastoral style. What the New Missal presents is a slavishly literal translation with Latin syntax and word order, infused with esoteric words and phrases.

Consider another text from the New Missal, a Collect from the Paschal Vigil (#27) occurring after the fourth reading:

Almighty everlasting God,
 for the honor of your name,
 surpass what you pledged to the faith of the Patriarchs,
 and by sacred adoption increase the children of promise
 so that your Church may now see abundantly fulfilled

what the holy ones of old never doubted would come to pass.

There is inspiring theological thought in this prayer, but it is unintelligible for the hearer in a proclaimed text which is one sentence of 50 words.

Listen to this same prayer in our present Sacramentary which divides it into two sentences:

Almighty and eternal God,
 for the glory of your name
 fulfill the promise you made long ago
 to men and women of faith,
 to bless them with descendents forever.
 Increase your adopted children throughout the world,
 that your Church may see accomplished
 the salvation which those saints of old so firmly expected.

American Catholics have every right to expect the translation of the New Missal to follow the rules for English grammar. The Prefaces of the New Missal, however, violate English syntax in a most egregious way. In the translated Prefaces, there is repeated use of beginning a declarative sentence with “who”, “in whom”, or “whose”. This is not acceptable English grammar. The translators have slavishly transposed a Latin Qui clause into English without respecting English sentence word order. For example, the Preface of the 2nd Sunday of Lent begins: “Who, after he told the disciples of his coming death, manifested his glory to them on the holy mountain to show, as the Law and Prophets also bear witness, that the path of suffering leads to the glory of the resurrection.” This is a lengthy subordinate clause ending with a period. While represented as a sentence, it is not a sentence. This is incorrect English grammar.

Another example is found in Preface II of Advent where we read: “Whom all the Prophets’ oracles foretold, whom the Virgin Mother awaited.” There is no main sentence to introduce these subordinate clauses. The New Missal renders these supposed “sentences” as complete grammatical constructions when they are in reality subordinate clauses. These texts were approved by the United States Bishops with the assurance of the Bishops Committee on Liturgy that this concern would be forwarded to the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments.

Also in the new Prefaces there is regular use of the particle “for” to introduce a sentence when in reality it is a clause. I cite one example - the Preface of St. Michael, Gabriel and Raphael Archangels which states: “For the honor we pay the angelic creatures in whom your delight redounds to your own surpassing glory, etc.” with a period at the end. This is a clause and not a sentence. This concern will also be passed on to the Congregation in Rome but it is presently part of the text officially approved by the American Bishops.

The new translation of the Nicene Creed is a good illustration of flawed English syntax. Presently the Creed is divided into four parts, each headed by the phrase “we believe”. In the New Missal the words “we believe” have been changed to “I believe” even though the original and official Nicene Creed promulgated by the first Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325 said “we believe” in both the Greek and Latin versions. Since this is a creedal prayer recited by the entire assembly in unison, the use of “we” emphasized the unity of the assembly in praying this together as one body. Changing the plural form of “we” to “I” in the Nicene Creed goes against all ecumenical agreements regarding common prayer texts. In the new translation there is only one introductory phrase of belief (“I believe”). This results in incomplete non-grammatical sentences for the different articles of faith. For example, the newly translated Creed reads: “He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.” This sentence ends with a period, but the very next article of faith simply begins: “And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, etc.” This is not a sentence since it lacks a subject and predicate. Without repeating “I believe”, those reciting the Creed must mentally go back 26 lines to the opening sentence to make sense of these words.

Another article of faith begins in the same fashion: “And one holy Catholic and apostolic Church, etc.” These words, lacking a subject and predicate, are 32 lines distant from “I believe”. Such formulations hurt clarity and intelligibility.

Why have the translators done this? In the Latin there is only one “I believe” and so we have a slavishly literal translation without consideration of the intelligibility and syntax and rhythm of the receptor language. The American Bishops in 2006 approved and sent to Rome the text of the Creed that repeated “I believe” for each article of faith since that repetition clarified the prayer and provided proper sentence structure. Rome eliminated this recommendation of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Should we pray a text that is grammatically flawed? Should we teach our people to pray with incorrect English?

Our present texts for the Creed are accurate, orthodox formulations of our faith, approved by Pope Paul VI and prayed by our people for the past 40 years. Using technical theological words like “consubstantial” and “incarnate” is not pastorally sensitive to the assembly. I observe that the official Roman document on translation (*Liturgiam Authenticam*) foresees the difficulty of translating a technical theological term like “consubstantial” and allows for the continued use of our present English translation. I quote paragraph 53:

Whenever a particular Latin term has a rich meaning that is difficult to render into a modern language (such as *consubstantial*), various solutions may be employed in the translations, whether the term be translated by a single vernacular word or by several, or by the coining of a new

word, or perhaps by the adaptation, transcription, or transliteration of the same term into a language which is different from that of the original text, or the use of an already existing word which may bear various meanings.

So it is clear that our existing translation “one in being with the Father” is actually in conformity with the Roman instruction on translation. Why then change these words?

Having examined flawed words and expressions, whole prayers, length of sentences and ungrammatical usages in the new translation of the Missal, we sense the lack of a pastoral approach to translation. The Council Fathers of Vatican II specify a pastoral approach in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. Paragraph 21 of that document states:

Both texts and rites should be drawn up so that they express more clearly the holy things which they signify. The Christian people, as far as possible, should be able to understand them easily.

This is the pastoral dimension lacking in the New Missal. In paragraph 34 of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, we have even a stronger statement that rites and texts:

...should radiate a noble simplicity. They should be short, clear, free from useless repetition. They should be within the people’s powers of comprehension, and normally should not require much explanation.

These statements of the Council Fathers constitute a pastoral principle --- a pastoral perspective --- for judging the translation of the New Missal.

How do the words “ineffable”, “consubstantial”, “inviolable”, “ignominy”, “precursor”, “suffuse” fulfill the words of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy that texts be “within the people’s powers of comprehension” and “not require much explanation”? How does the Preface of Christ the King with its one sentence in 13 lines and 88 words fulfill the directives of the Council Fathers for texts to be understood “easily”? How do the new words of Eucharistic Prayer I (at the anamnesis), “Be pleased to look upon these gifts with serene and kindly countenance,” reflect the directive that liturgical language “radiate a noble simplicity” as specified in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (paragraph 34)? Why are these conciliar directives not implemented in the New Missal? Are not these two conciliar statements unambiguous, authoritative? As texts of a conciliar Constitution, they trump all instructions on translation and should be the guiding norm and influence for the translation of the New Missal. Why then do the translated texts of the Missal fail to meet the criteria established by the Ecumenical Council?

Even *Liturgicam Authenticam*, the Roman document on translations, in its own general principles, states that the content of the original texts should “be evident and comprehensible even to the faithful, who lack any specialized intellectual formation” (LA, No. 25). This is especially true when liturgical texts are to be proclaimed and heard, sung and prayed, by the people of the third millennium --- children, teenagers, adults, those with varying degrees of education, and those with English as a second language.

It is argued that obscure words and expressions present a catechetical moment for the priest celebrant or deacon to explain them in the homily, but the homily cannot become a regular occasion for unraveling technical, archaic and unusual words and phrases in the liturgy. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy declares that the homily is rooted in the biblical readings of the day (No. 24). The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy insists that a kerygmatic character permeates the homily; in other words, the homily should be a proclamation of God’s magnificent works in the history of salvation (No. 35, 52). Explaining the word “ineffably” and the expression “the sprinkling of his dew” is a distraction and obstacle to the overall kerygmatic theme. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy showed pastoral wisdom when it specified that liturgical texts should “be within the people’s powers of comprehension, and normally not require much explanation” (No. 34).

This paper has maintained that a pastoral style is missing in the new English translation of the Missal. This is especially evident when one compares our present Eucharistic Prayer III with the proposed. Presently in Eucharistic Prayer III we pray:

Welcome into your kingdom our departed brothers and sisters
and all who have left this world in your friendship.

This is a clear, straightforward, hope-filled, understandable prayer. However, this prayer in the New Missal now reads:

To our departed brothers and sisters and to all who are
pleasing to you at their passing from this life, give kind
admittance to your kingdom.

Contrast the phrasing: “welcome into your kingdom” versus “give kind admittance”. The first is inspiring, hope-filled, consoling, memorable. It conveys the thought, “Lord, welcome, open your arms”; but the new translation says “give kind admittance”. This is a dull lackluster expression which reminds one of a ticket-taker at the door. This prayer is a good example of a different style and tone in the new Missal. At the funeral of your loved one, do you want to pray, Lord, welcome into your kingdom my loved one, or do you want to pray, Lord, give kind admittance to my loved one? The first text reflects a pleading, passionate heart and the latter text a formality --- cold and insipid.

There are numerous prayers in the new Missal that employ awkward, non-idiomatic phrases. On the 50th Anniversary of Marriage, the prayer after Communion reads: “Keep this couple safe and holy in their later years until you welcome them both, full of days, to your heavenly banquet.” Is it contemporary idiom to speak of elderly people having “full of days”?

How many people will relate to the words of the opening prayer of Tuesday of the 4th Week of Lent: “Let the venerable discipline of holy devotion shape the hearts of your faithful”? Will the words “the venerable discipline of holy devotion” ever resonate with the assembly?

Romano Guardini notes that, “Prayer must be simple...Its construction must be clear and obvious to the simple person, stimulating and refreshing to the person of culture.”⁷

The language of the liturgy should resonate with God’s people, be theologically accurate, inspiring, understandable and reflect the pastoral perspective advocated by the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy.

The prayer of the Church is always the prayer of an actual assembly in a given time and place. It is not sufficient that a liturgical text handed down from another culture and in another language be translated verbatim even if accurately. The translated liturgical text must become the authentic prayer of the assembly in its own words, syntax and idiom.

Latin prayers are Latin prayers, not English, and yet they are intended to become the people’s prayers expressed in their contemporary culture with English words and idioms. In 1993 the Pontifical Biblical Commission observed that “a translation is always more than a simple transcription of the original text. The passage from one language to another necessarily involves the change of cultural context.”⁸ The new Missal gives little evidence of this cultural concept.

If the Roman Missal does not speak to our culture, the Church in the United States will suffer. Mega-churches today speak contemporary English in their scriptures and worship services. Intelligibility is a high priority. Why must our liturgical texts be awkward and foreign to our culture with slavishly verbatim literal translations, lengthy sentences, incomprehensible words and phrases, and ungrammatical sentences? How pastoral is the new translation of the Missal?

⁷ Heinz R. Kuehn, *The Essential Guardini: An Anthology of his Writings*, Liturgy Training Publications, 1997, p. 145.

⁸ *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, Pontifical Biblical Commission, *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*, 1993, IV-B.

The New Missal insists on using a Sacred Language to achieve greater transcendence and an elevated tone. Exaggerated emphasis on a Sacred Language can lessen intelligibility. Its vocabulary and phraseology often do not fit the cultural context of the people. The problem becomes acute when literalism in translation dominates. What prompted the Holy See to introduce a Sacred Vocabulary?

There are those who disagree with the way the liturgical reform of Vatican II was interpreted and implemented. They blame a diminishing religiosity, declining Mass attendance and priestly and religious vocations on less transcendence, less awe, less mystery in the New Order of Mass. In reaction to this perception they advocate a reform of the reform. They believe ordinary language weakens the sense of the transcendent. In 2001 the Congregation of Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments decreed a shift to a more sacred vocabulary in vernacular worship with a more literal translation of the Latin original texts.

The Latin text is not inspired. It is a human text, reflecting a certain mind-set, theology, and world view. There are good Latin texts --- balanced, carefully crafted --- and there are bad Latin texts --- convoluted, lengthy, complicated, abstract --- that become a translator's herculean task. Because of literal translation in the New Missal, complicated Latin wording has become complicated English wording.

In the New Missal all prayers, originally composed in English, are banned. This gives the impression that original vernacular prayers are less holy, less pleasing to God, than Latin. We need to remember that the original liturgical language of the Church was not Latin, but the vernacular.

The use of a new sacred vocabulary is especially evident in the Eucharistic Prayers in the Institution narrative (or in the words of Consecration). The new Order of Mass uses the word "chalice" where we had previously said "cup". For example, Eucharistic Prayer I says: "When supper was done he took this precious chalice in his holy and venerable hands." Did Jesus at the Last Supper use a "precious chalice" or "a cup"? The Gospels clearly say "cup". The Greek uses the word *poterion* which is a *drinking vessel or cup*. What did Jerome intend by using the Latin word *calix*? The Latin dictionaries, Harpers' Revised by Lewis & Short and Cassell's, define *calix* as *cup, goblet, drinking vessel*. However, the Lectionary from Rome has imposed the word "chalice" on the inspired text to carry out this "sacred language". "Chalice" is not the translation of the New American Bible nor the New Revised Standard Bible nor the Oxford Annotated Bible nor the Jerusalem Bible nor any current or older translation. To say not just "chalice" but "precious chalice" in Eucharistic Prayer I is clearly not a reflection of the biblical texts. In the texts approved by the United States Bishops and forwarded to Rome, the word "cup" was retained. The Congregation in Rome changed it. All of this is being done in the name of restoring transcendence.

Let me stress that an exaggerated attention to the sacred distorts the balance between transcendence and immanence. We must never forget that Sacred Scripture presents God under a two-fold image: king and neighbor, transcendence and immanence. At times God shows himself as an awesome and powerful presence. God is the mighty monarch controlling the universe. Revealed as king, God prompts reverence and respect, awe and fear in his people. This is the transcendent image of God. We see an example of this in the Old Testament when God appears to Moses at the burning bush. Moses takes off his sandals because he is on holy ground, he bows his head. In the prophets, God emerges as the transcendent one. The foundation of the temple shakes before God's presence. God presides with might and splendor.

In the New Testament, Christ is transfigured before his apostles; he appears radiant; his divinity shines through his humanity. In the Pauline Epistles, Jesus is the transcendent Lord, exalted on high, who knocks Paul to the ground on the road to Damascus. For Paul, Jesus is the risen Lord, the glorified Lord. Paul never knew the Jesus who travelled with the apostles. Paul knew only the risen Jesus he met on the road to Damascus, and so Paul stresses that triumphant risen God --- the transcendent Lord.

However, at other times the Scriptures reveal God appearing like a neighbor --- friendly, close to his people, personal, human in appearance. Revealed in this fashion, God inspires love, intimacy, fervor. This is the immanent image of God. Consider, for example, the first five books of Genesis. Here God is revealed as immanent: God strolls with Adam and Eve in the garden; God chats with them as a friend; God eats in the tent of Abraham. He is close to his people and visibly involved in their struggles.

In the New Testament we meet the same parallel. The Jesus of the Gospels is the revelation of God's immanence; he eats and drinks with his disciples; he dines with sinners; he fishes with his apostles; he suffers disappointments; he lets people embrace him; he falls asleep in the boat.

We must always keep in mind that the inspired Scriptures reveal God to us in a two-fold way --- both through transcendence and immanence. Both are necessary for a proper understanding of the revealed God. Balance is needed. The delicate balance between transcendence and immanence must be maintained in the language of our liturgy. The new translation of the Order of Mass overemphasizes the transcendence of the Lord and fails to recognize properly his immanence.

A major pastoral, catechetical problem erupts in the New Missal with the change in rendering the words of Institution (the words of Consecration). The new literal translation says the Blood of Christ "will be poured out for you and for many" instead of "for all", which is our present text. This is a major and radical change. Jesus died for all people. However, the New Order of Mass says Jesus died "for many". This is not only a difficult catechetical challenge but a needless confusion of the faithful. For whom did

Jesus not die? In preaching at the ambo we will hear that Jesus died for all people, but at the altar we will hear that Jesus died “for many”. Where is the consistency and pastoral sensitivity? In 1974 the Holy See itself had approved our present words of Institution as an accurate, orthodox translation of the Latin phrase “pro multis”. It is a doctrine of our Catholic faith that Jesus died on the cross for all people.

Those who defend the change from “for all” to “for many” argue that “for many” is a precise translation of the Latin “pro multis”, whereas “for all” is an explanation that belongs to catechesis.

Those in favor of “for many” maintain that “salvation is not brought about in some mechanistic way, without one’s own willing or participation”.⁹ I respond that Jesus died even for those who reject his grace. He died for all.

Our liturgy is a celebration of the Paschal Mystery and a commemoration of Christ’s universal salvific will. God desires the salvation of all people despite their sins. The divine will of salvation embraces all people. Do we not pray in the Creed: “For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven”? We read in 1Timothy 2:4: “God our Savior...wills everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” In 1John 2:2 we read: “He [Christ] is expiation for our sins and not for our sins only but for those of the whole world.” St. Clement of Rome writes: “Let us behold the blood of Christ and let us realize how precious that blood is to God his Father because it, shed for our salvation, has brought grace of repentance to the whole world.” Christ atoned for all people without exception. It will be a major pastoral problem and catechetical challenge to reconcile the differences between the two formulations: for all and for many. I ask: For whom did he not die?

I do not want to become too technical, but permit me to strengthen my argument for retaining the words “for all”. In January 1970 the Congregation for Divine Worship gave an official explanation why it authorized the English translation of *pro multis* to be *for all*. The Congregation asked Fr. Max Zerwick, a Jesuit biblical scholar from the Pontifical Biblical Institute, to study this matter. He wrote a learned article, showing that the Aramaic word which in Latin is translated *pro multis* (for many) actually means *pro omnibus* (for all), the multitude for whom Jesus died. This phrase reflects an allusion to the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53: 11-12, as well as a reference to Mark 10:45 (“The Son of Many did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many”) and Matthew 20:28.

Father Zerwick explained that “for all” was preferable to “for many” since the original “for many” in its Aramaic context includes “all”. He argues that contemporary hearers of the phrase “for many” will falsely interpret this as exclusive and that was not the intent of the original Aramaic.

⁹ Letter of Cardinal Francis Arinze to Catholic Bishops, Oct. 17, 2006, Prot. No. 467/05/L.

In May 1970 the Congregation for Divine Worship published this scholarly biblical interpretation in its official organ, *Notitiae*. Pope Paul VI approved the phrase of “for all” for the words of Consecration. So we have the Congregation of Divine Worship carefully studying the translation of *pro multis*, conferring with the Pope, publishing its final judgment in its official publication and authorizing it for the Eucharist.

Why do we now have a reversal? The Aramaic and Latin texts have not changed. The scriptural arguments have not changed, but the insistence on literal translation has changed.

There are four texts in the New Testament with the words of Institution (Mark 14:24; Matthew 26:28; Luke 22:20; 1Corinthians 11:25). Only Mark and Matthew use the Greek word “many”. Father Toan Joseph Do in a learned article points out that “none of the Eucharistic Prayers in the early apostolic tradition used the literal translation of the four aforementioned texts”.¹⁰ In a direct response to Cardinal Arinze’s letter to the Bishops on the need for the strict faithfulness to the Latin phrase “pro multis”, Father Do notes:

No text from the early apostolic tradition, in Latin or any other language, was a literal translation of the Greek New Testament texts. Nor do the New Testament texts regarding the words of Institution at the Last Supper all use the same words. Finally, the early Christians used their own vernacular languages for evangelization and worship.

No matter how extensive is the catechesis to explain the true meaning of “for many”, the phrase stands for most in the assembly as restrictive and marginalizing. It clashes with the words of St. Paul: “We have come to the conviction that one died for all.” (hyper panton)¹¹

Some years ago Father Benoit, OP, a renowned international biblical scholar, observed, “The word which we translate as ‘many’ stresses the sense of a great number and does not exclude anyone...It is the whole of mankind to the end of space and time that Jesus includes in this ‘many’ for whom he was going to give his life as ‘a ransom’”.¹² An accurate translation must convey the meaning of the original text in the receptor language. If the translation fails to do this as in the case of “for many”, it is not a truly accurate translation.

¹⁰ “All in: Salvation and the Language of Liturgy,” *Commonweal*, December 19, 2008.

¹¹ 2Corinthians 5:14.

¹² The Eucharist in the New Testament, Helicon Press, Baltimore, 1965, p. 80.

When the Holy Father gives the recognition to the complete text of the New Missal, the real task begins. It will then be incumbent on Bishops and Pastors of the Church, along with others in liturgical and educational ministries, to catechize and convince the people that the New Missal is an improvement. Is that completely true?

On what grounds can we take this pastorally flawed text to parishioners and persuade them that it leads to full, conscious and active participation? Is there a rationale to justify the use of unproclaimable, unintelligible words and expressions and even whole prayers? Is it not unconscionable to insist on praying with ungrammatical sentences? Are we about to face a pastoral disaster as evidenced by the reaction of people in South Africa who received the text prematurely and responded so negatively to the New Missal?

For Bishops and Pastors to mandate with a heavy hand changes without a convincing rationale will be the least effective way to assure acceptance. The ordained must be the first to be convinced that the New Missal is, in fact, superior to what we have.

For the past eight years, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has been engaged in reviewing and amending the ICEL translation of the Roman Missal. It has been a long and intense process. There is much good in the new translation but there is much more that still needs improvement to make the text grammatical and accessible to the people. No translation will ever be perfect, but the present text still contains improper syntax, incomplete sentences, archaic and obscure words and idioms, lengthy and incomprehensible sentences and fails to respect the natural rhythm and cadences of the English language. As a text for public proclamation, in many instances it borders on failure. Intelligibility is the issue. As it stands, the New Missal is not pastorally sensitive to our people. It fails to follow the principles of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, paragraphs 21 and 34. Our liturgy needs not a "sacred language" but a pastoral language that will fulfill the mandate of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy for full, conscious and active participation. The noble simplicity recommended by the Council Fathers needs to be emphasized.

With the amendments of the American Bishops, the ICEL text is vastly improved but not mature at this point for the worship life of the Church.

What can be done? Go back to the drafting tables with input from the priests and people of the Church. Emphasize the translation principles of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, the highest authority of all documents on translation. And finally, and most pragmatically, the Bishops of the United States today need to learn a lesson from their Brother Bishops of a former time. In 1951 the United States Catholic Bishops commissioned the translation of the church's Latin Ritual Book (*Collectio Rituum*). The Bishops wanted this English edition of the Ritual to be an instrument for catechizing the people in the liturgical truths of their faith. The Bishops rejected the first draft since it

relied too heavily on a British translation and sounded too British. The Bishops decided they needed a text that would be more reflective of the English language in the United States. They appointed a new translating committee.

The committee finished its work in 1953 and presented the following rationale for its translation:

A good translator must, while preserving the sense of the truths which he is translating, adapt his style to the genius of the language in which he is expressing himself...We have tried to make sure that it [our translation] would not be slavishly exact or loosely free; that it would not sound either archaic or foreign, but American; that it would not be difficult to read aloud...that it would not be lacking in the simple dignity characteristic of the prayer of the Church. ¹³

In 1953 the American Bishops approved unanimously the Ritual Book translated according to these principles. This was long before the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy which voiced the same openness and balance for liturgical translations. Will the wisdom of the American Bishops in 1953 influence present-day Bishops in their handling proposed liturgical translations? Will the primacy of the translation principles in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy prevail in judging the New Missal?

If Msgr. McManus were with us today, he would call us to fidelity to the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy and encourage us to produce a translation of the Missal that is accurate, inspiring, reverent, proclaimable, understandable, pastoral in every sense --- a text that raises our minds and hearts to God.

¹³ **Michael Mathis: American Liturgical Pioneer**, Robert J. Kennedy, The Pastoral Press, Washington, DC, 1987, p. 19.