

CREDO! I BELIEVE!
A Reflection on the Sacred Liturgy



Ninth Festival Letter of
✠ Most Reverend Daniel R. Jenky, C.S.C.
BISHOP OF PEORIA

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I. INTRO

“I do believe, help my unbelief!” (Mk 9:24).

These simple but heartfelt words are found in the Gospel of Mark. They were spoken by a man who so desperately wished for God's love to be manifested. And, of course, that is exactly what the Church celebrates today on this solemn feast of the Epiphany of our Lord.

But I believe these words are also on our lips every time we approach the altar of God. For many of us, the liturgy can be a bit of an enigma. It truly is a mystery, but a mystery we have difficulty penetrating. It's full of symbolic language and sacramental imagery and yet it is also rich with scripture and theological meaning. Nevertheless, despite these challenges, we do believe! We come every Sunday and believe that ordinary bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ.

And could these words of the Gospel not also come to mind as we prepare to receive the newest translation of the Roman Missal, the book of prayers used at Mass? The liturgy is something near and dear to the heart of every Catholic. For this reason, even the hint of a change can bring about great anxiety. And so many of us, while trusting in the Church's decision to revise the English Mass texts, truly desire to embrace them so as to understand more thoroughly the reality we celebrate.

In September, I asked all the priests of the diocese to attend a presentation on the newly translated texts. This presentation was given by two members of the Liturgical Institute at the University of St. Mary of the Lake. Not only were they enthusiastically received, but they also provided us with a sort of “diocesan vocabulary” which I hope we can all use to speak about the liturgy and, in particular, our new English translation.

Along this same vein, our presenters also reminded us priests of our duty as “stewards of the mysteries” not only to “understand what we celebrate” but also to pass this knowledge on to our parishioners. After all, how can anyone grow in his or her faith if the deep richness of the liturgy is never explained to them? As St. John Vianney once said, “If we really understood the Mass, we would die of joy!”

For this reason, I hope this festival letter can be a springboard for our diocesan wide effort not only to faithfully implement the third edition of the Roman Missal of Paul VI, but also to continue the larger liturgical renewal enthusiastically called for by the fathers of the Second

Vatican Council.

II. THE LITURGY: FACILITATING OUR ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

There are numerous ways we could engage the liturgical texts and this most recent translation. In fact, our presenters from the Liturgical Institute made exactly this point at the beginning of their presentation. While I do think it is valuable to understand how we arrived at this point, an historical analysis alone is not sufficient to “help our unbelief,” that is, to take us deeper into the mystery. Nor is a purely authoritative understanding helpful. For while it is true that the Holy See has called for a new translation of the liturgical texts, simply appealing to the Church’s authority does nothing to aid our understanding of *why* a new translation is of any value.

Instead, as those from the Liturgical Institute proposed, I would like us all to take a deeper approach as we engage these new texts. Very simply, this means that liturgical prayer really facilitates our encounter with God. Such a sacramental approach will help foster our liturgical spirituality and catechesis (Cf. GIRM, number 13).

The liturgy is the principle means by which we encounter God and God encounters us. The Second Vatican Council's great document on the liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, described it this way:

Christ indeed always associates the Church with Himself in this [celebration of the Paschal Mystery] wherein God is perfectly glorified and men are sanctified. The Church is His beloved Bride who calls to her Lord, and through Him offers worship to the Eternal Father. . . In the liturgy the sanctification of man is signified by signs perceptible to the senses, and is effected in a way which corresponds with each of these signs (n. 7).

From the beginning, God has desired for mankind to be in an intimate communion with him. But the sin of Adam and Eve – their failure to listen and to say yes to the divine plan – ruptured that communion. Yet God immediately set a plan in motion for mankind's salvation, a plan which used the created order to express to him the hidden truth of his call to holiness. In this way, God gradually prepared man to hear, once again with full clarity, the fullness of his revelation which is most clearly expressed in the person of Jesus Christ.

In Christ, mankind is able to respond fully and perfectly to the Father's will. On Calvary, Christ's “yes” to the Father's saving plan makes it possible for “all men to be saved” (1 Tim 2:4). In the liturgy, then, our hearts are united to Christ and are lifted up in spiritual worship, a true sacrifice of praise. His “yes” becomes our “yes.” Our voices blend with Christ's in giving praise and thanks to the Father. Our liturgical language restores our communion with God.

Throughout the centuries, and most notably at the Council of Trent and the Second Vatican Council, the Church has not been afraid to revise both her ritual and its language. In this way, the Church accomplishes two things. On the one hand, she ensures that the liturgy more clearly and faithfully hands on the truths of the faith; and, on the other hand, she makes their comprehension more attainable by the faithful.

At the beginning of the new millennium, Pope John Paul II continued this renewal by promulgating the third typical edition of the Roman Missal. In light of this new Latin missal, the Vatican called for new vernacular translations to be used throughout the world.

At the same time, as I wrote in 2003 in my first letter to the faithful of the Diocese of Peoria, the Church emphatically proclaims that "the celebration of the Mass is not simply a human creation or a product of our personal tastes or sensibilities." Rather, it is a "life-giving and unbroken tradition of sacramental celebration that the Church has diligently safeguarded, preserved, and protected for almost two thousand years" (Jenky, numbers 4, 5).

In modern times, the most notable liturgical change has been the use of the vernacular. This, together with other reforms, has enabled the faithful to receive with renewed vigor the riches of the Church's liturgy.

My letter of 2003 concerned the implementation of the new *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, the "rules of the road" for celebrating the Mass. At that time I saw it as a "privileged opportunity to fall more deeply in love with the Mass and the celebration of the Holy Eucharist" (Jenky, n. 6). Now, as we find ourselves on the verge of taking the next "big step" in the ongoing grace of liturgical renewal, I invite you once again to come to a greater understanding of the mysteries we celebrate.

The revised translation of the prayers of Mass is the maturation of a long and diligent process. Our current translations have served us well for forty years, but now its time to go deeper into the mystery, to see with renewed clarity the great riches of our faith.

While it is true that, for the most part, our revised translation of the prayers for Mass more closely follows the Latin wording and structure, it is done so for good reason. While it will no doubt take some getting used to (for both the faithful and the priests), fidelity to the Latin ensures that Catholics throughout the world are united in their prayer. It also ensures that, from country to country, the faith is passed on in all its fullness, while at the same time making these truths readily accessible through the use of the vernacular.

One of the benefits of our revised translation will be its effect upon our Catholic culture. A special ritual language, different from how we speak "on the street," will start to take hold of us. While it will take some getting used to, this shouldn't scare us. Every "subculture" has its own language, whether it's baseball, Starbucks, teenage texting, or even our own field of work. Our written language differs depending on whether it's a formal business letter, a quick "thank you" to a relative, or a love note to a spouse. It is all the more appropriate that when we enter into the sacred spaces of our churches, we should have a special, sacral language with which to address God.

Change can be hard. I myself can remember the difficulty of the liturgical changes of the 1970s and what confusion they brought to so many. This is why it is all the more important to take some time in these coming months to explore these changes on a diocesan and parish level. Remember; every change in translation was undertaken for a reason. While I cannot explore

with you every change here in this letter, I would like to take a brief look at five specific changes:

- “And also with you.” to “And with your spirit.”
- “We believe” to “I believe” at the beginning of the Creed
- “For you and for all. ..” to “For you and for the many”
- The omission of the memorial acclamation: “Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again.”
- “Lord I am not worthy to receive you” to “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof.”

III. EXAMPLES

Before diving into a handful of examples, it is worth saying that not every single text will see a change and those that do, will still seem quite familiar. For instance, the Lord's Prayer remains unchanged as do most of the people's responses. At other times there is a slight tweaking of the prayers as in the *Holy, Holy, Holy* at the conclusion of the Preface. And then, at other times, a more obvious re-translation has taken place as will be seen in some examples below.

A. “And also with you.” to “And with your spirit.”

Several times during the Mass the people respond to the ordained minister's greeting, “The Lord be with you.” Our new response at these times will be, “And with your spirit,” a literal translation of the Latin, “*Et cum spiritu tuo.*” The Church has been using this response in her liturgy since the early third century, and so it is certainly a part of our rich “family heritage.” While its exact translation was called for by the Church, it's still worth asking the question, “Why?”

Currently, we respond, “And also with you.” On the surface, this seems like a natural response, a sort of “Hi, good to see you, too,” but it doesn't encompass the richness of what is occurring at this point in the Mass.

The people have been assembled as a body in order that they, with the priest as their head, might give fitting worship to God and that they might be sanctified. Thus, the priest rightly greets them with the Word of God (cf. 2Cor 13:13, Rom 1:7, and Ruth 2:4). The people, for their part, also using the words of scripture (cf. Gal 6:18, 2 Tim 4:22), acknowledge that the man standing before them has been set apart by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Holy Orders. In the fifth century, Narsai of Nisibis explained it this way: “He gives the name spirit not to the soul of the priest but to the Spirit he has received through the laying on of hands.”

This is a remarkable example of the sacramentality of our liturgical prayer. These words, which we will soon use, may sound a bit strange, but they contain a reality far greater than can be expressed in our common, everyday language. We use sacred language for sacred worship.

B. “We believe ...” to “I believe ...”

Normally, every Sunday we pray together the Nicene Creed. This creed was composed by the Council of Nicea in 325 and later amended by the Council of Constantinople in 381. As composed by the council fathers it was in the first person plural, i.e., “we” since it was a declaration of a diverse episcopate. But in the liturgy, the Church prays in the first person singular or “I.” As the Catechism of the Catholic Church states, “‘I believe’ is also the Church, our mother, responding to God by faith as she teaches us to say both ‘I believe’ and ‘We believe’” (n. 167). For this reason, it is appropriate that we once again say, as is said throughout the world, “I believe.”

So while it goes without saying that we should each individually believe in what is being professed in the creed, the recitation of the Nicene Creed, as a liturgical action, symbolizes the whole Church professing the one faith. This point was emphasized further by the Church in a 2001 document:

By means of the Creed or profession of faith, the whole gathered people of God respond to the word of God proclaimed in the Sacred Scriptures and expounded in the homily, recalling and confessing the great mysteries of the faith by means of a formula approved for liturgical use ... 'the confession of faith is handed down in the Creed, as it were, as coming from the person of the whole Church, united by means of the Faith' (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* II-II, I, 9) (Liturgiam Authenticam, 65).

C. “For you and for all...” to “For you and for the many”

Within the formula of the consecration of the wine, the priest will now say:

Take this, all of you, and drink from it, for this is the chalice of my blood, the blood of the new and eternal covenant, which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in memory of me.

While the scriptural accounts of the institution do not use the words “for all” or “for many,” it is clear from other scriptural accounts that the merits of Christ's redemptive death are available to all (cf. I Tim 2:4, 2 Peter). Nevertheless, the Latin expression, “*pro multis*.” is precisely translated for an important theological reason. Francis Cardinal Arinze explained in 2006:

[T]he expression ‘for many,’ while remaining open to the inclusion of each human person, is reflective also of the fact that this salvation is not brought about in some mechanistic way, without one's willing participation; rather, the believer is invited to accept in faith the gift that is being offered and to receive the supernatural life that is given to those who participate in this mystery, living it out in their lives as well so as to be numbered among the ‘many’ to whom the text refers.

Cardinal Arinze helps us to see again the sacramental nature of our prayer. More than just being slavish to the original Latin, the Church is concerned with preserving a theological tenant that has been held since the early Church.

D. The omission of “Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again”

Many may note that a common form of the Memorial Acclamation is not included in the new Missal: “Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.” Interestingly, this particular acclamation was an American adaptation included in the 1970 and 1975 editions of the Sacramentary approved by the Vatican. Yet, there has never been a version of this acclamation in the original Latin Missal. The Vatican turned down the request to add this exception for the United States, in part because it has no roots in the Latin tradition, but perhaps more importantly for theological reasons.

We proclaim “the Mystery of Faith” immediately after Christ has been made truly and substantially present on the altar through the words of institution and the action of the Holy Spirit. The acclamations given in the missal express our belief in the Presence of Christ by speaking to Him grammatically in the second person: “By YOUR Cross and Resurrection ...” or “... we proclaim YOUR death, O Lord” etc. The Memorial Acclamation is the first time in the Liturgy of the Eucharist that the Son is directly addressed and as such is a pinnacle moment. On the other hand, the American acclamation “Christ has died” grammatically speaks about Christ in the third person, lessening our profession that He is truly present on the altar.

E. “Lord I am not worthy to receive you” to “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof.”

This dialogue between the priest and people immediately before receiving Holy Communion is perhaps the best example of how the new translations more perfectly express the scriptural richness found throughout the Church's liturgy. With almost exact quotes from the words of the Gospel, the priest calls out the words of St. John the Baptist: “Behold the Lamb of God.” And the people, filled with humility and faith, respond with the words of the Centurion (cf. Lk 7:6-7): “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.”

This veneration for the Word of God is found throughout the texts of the Mass. I am sure that as we begin to pray the new translations our appreciation for scriptural prayer will greatly increase. The Mass is full of biblical references and allusions.

IV. PRACTICAL

I was moved by how well the priests of our diocese responded to the presentation last September. Obviously, the priests, especially our pastors, are instrumental in carefully preparing for and implementing the new Missal and more broadly – and more importantly – are essential to bringing about a deeper liturgical renewal. To aid our priests, deacons, parish liturgical leaders, and all our faithful, I have asked our pastors and my curia staff to prepare the following:

- The Summer Catechetical Institute, to be held at the Spalding Pastoral Center at the beginning of June 2011, will be especially focused on liturgical renewal.
- In September, members of the Liturgical Institute will return to the diocese for an all day workshop for our liturgical musicians, and the next day will give a special presentation to

our deacons and those in diaconal formation. I ask pastors to make sure that their ministers and staff attend these events.

- To foster the renewal of our liturgical music and to prepare for the new sung texts, the Office of Divine Worship has assembled a special committee of pastoral musicians to suggest to me common settings of the Mass that should be introduced in our parishes so that we may have a unified voice at regional and diocesan liturgies. Further, to foster a liturgical renewal that goes deeper than just the renewed texts, I have asked this committee to recommend to me a “canon” of common hymns and chants that should be universally known in our parishes, schools, and Newman centers.
- At the recommendation of several priests and lay leaders, I will prepare a short, instructional DVD, similar to the annual film for the ADA, to be shown in our parishes and institutions at the beginning of October.
- Following the DVD presentation, and for the six weeks leading up to Advent 2011, I have asked that a comprehensive parish-based program be presented. This program will include parallel elements for our Sunday congregants, our Catholic school and CCD students, and RCIA and adult education programs. Homily notes, bulletin inserts, and age-appropriate aids will also be used to prepare all our faithful to welcome the new translations at the beginning of Advent.
- To deepen this liturgical catechesis, members of the Diocesan Commission on Liturgy, Churches, and Chapels will present regional workshops especially designed for liturgical leaders, teachers, catechists and anyone who wishes to develop their liturgical spirituality.
- The new Missal takes effect with the Saturday vigil Mass for the First Sunday of Advent (Saturday evening, November 26, 2011). At that time, the current sacramentary may no longer be used. However, the new Missal may not be used at Mass before that date. Therefore, to aid the proper participation at Mass, pastors should provide for “commentators” or readers at each Mass to help lead the congregation from the microphone in the common prayers. This practice should continue through the Masses of Christmas, but must end by the celebration of the Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God, January 1, 2012. By Clergy Assembly Days 2011, the Office of Divine Worship will provide liturgical aids to help pastors implement these changes in the pews.

More personally, I encourage the Faithful to pray these new texts. Similar to meditating on Sacred Scripture or spiritual authors, the prayers of the Mass provide abundant food for personal spiritual growth as they succinctly and eloquently present the eternal truths of our Faith and help us to experience the Word Made Flesh made present in the words of man. Many of these renewed prayers can already be found on the Internet, especially the official website of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: usccb.org/romanmissal. And, of course, any number of printed materials will soon be available to aid, not just in the practical, but also our spiritual preparation.

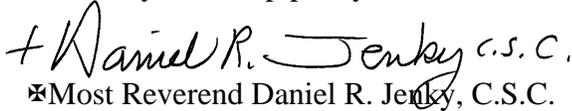
V. CONCLUSION

I think it is fitting that I should end this reflection on the liturgical renewal with a call to personal holiness, for that is the purpose of the divine liturgy – that our worship is offered to God “for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.” This

forthcoming translation of the new Roman Missal is so much more than just changes in language. I pray that the months leading up to Advent 2011 give us an “excuse” to deepen our love for the liturgy and renew all of our liturgical practices. As a family gathered and as individuals at worship, “we do believe!” But it is God who reaches out to us through the Church “to help our unbelief.” Truly, then, it is in the Church's liturgical action that He transforms us with His grace, heals us with His mercy, and deepens our faith.

I invoke all the great liturgical reformers in the Communion of the Saints: St. Gregory the Great, Saint Pius V, Saint Pius X. But in a special way, let us make the prayers of the heavenly liturgy our own as we cry out with one voice: “Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts! Hosanna in the highest!”

Given at my Chancery,
January 2, 2011
Solemnity of the Epiphany


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