

"Clear, brief and easily assimilated by all"

Authentic Liturgy

RADICAL NEW TRANSLATIONS of the *Roman Missal*, *Liturgy of the Hours* and *Roman Ritual*, and possibly of the Bible itself, are required by *Liturgiam Authenticam* (henceforth LA), "Authentic Liturgy," issued by Cardinal Jorge Arturo Medina Estevez, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. Moreover the Pope "confirmed it by his own authority and ordered its publication". It was released on 7th May, 2001.

Some basic principles in LA §§20, 22, 23 are:

LA §§20, 23:The translation of the liturgical texts of the Roman Liturgy is **not so much a work of creative innovation as it is of rendering the original [Latin] texts faithfully and accurately** into the vernacular language.....**it is always the text of the Latin itself that is to be translated...**

LA §22: Adaptations... are to be considered on the basis of true cultural or pastoral necessity, and should not be proposed out of a mere desire for novelty or variety, nor as a way of supplementing or changing the theological content...

EXAMPLES in the Ordinary of the MASS

What follows are a few examples based on LA's principles (emphasis in bold/italics is not in original). It would seem that little will be left intact of the translations in use for over 30 years of the International Committee for English in the Liturgy (ICEL).

The Greeting

The response to the priest's "The Lord be with you" (or its alternatives) will be, "**And with your spirit.**" (See over for 'And with thy spirit.'). LA §§43, 56.

I confess...

The triple *mea culpa* is to be restored. The pre-Vatican II popular Missals would suggest, "through my fault, through my own fault, through my own most grievous fault." LA §56.

Glory be to God on high... LA §23.

- "...and on earth peace to men of *goodwill*..."
- Not just a summary, but: "we praise You, we *bless* You, we *adore* You, we *glorify* You, we give You thanks for Your *great* glory..." The Latin *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC] uses capitals for personal pronouns for God, and so must translations of the new Missal, says LA §§33, 50(a).
- No reduction of, "who takes away the *sins* [plural] of the world, have mercy on us, who takes away the sins of the world, receive our prayer, who are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us..."

The Collect

- No longer called the 'Opening Prayer'.
- Abolition of ICEL's alternative Collects.
- "Almighty and eternal God" or other literal translation of the address to God. LA §§51, 57.
- It will always have the doxology of the long ending;
- including "*in the unity of the Holy Spirit*" (not 'and').

Bible Readings

Even the best available Bible may need amendments for liturgical use. LA §§34-38.

Nicene-Constantinople Creed

- "I [not 'we'] believe in one God, the Father almighty..." The Greek plural is irrelevant. LA §65.

Offertory

- "*My sacrifice and yours*", (not conflated to '*ours*').
- "...and for our good and of all *His holy* Church."
- In the Prayer over the Gifts and the Prayer after Communion there will be no more 'We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord', but "*...through Christ our Lord.*"

Dialogue before the Preface

"*It is right and just* (so to do)" or some such.

Prefaces

The preface takes up this response and will address God solemnly: "*It is truly right and just, fitting and salutary*" [not 'we do well...'] This is very hard to translate felicitously because of the pairs of synonyms], "always and everywhere to give You thanks, *Lord, Holy Father, Almighty and Eternal God...*"

Sanctus

"Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of *Hosts*" (or even 'Angel hosts') but certainly not '*God of power and might*' (demythologizing angels in their own prayer!).

Eucharistic Prayers

Required corrections too numerous to detail here, though LA §§64 urges minimal changes — *if possible*.

Consecration

"*For* this is *My Body*" (capitalized) and "*For* this is *the chalice of My Blood* of the new and everlasting covenant which will be shed for you and *for many* so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in *commemoration of Me.*" LA §§ 33, 50(c), 57.

The Three Acclamations

The ICEL rendition, 'Let us proclaim the mystery of faith', will become "(This is) *The Mystery of Faith*". Also ICEL's first acclamation 'Christ has died...' will cease to exist as it is not in the Latin text. Perhaps the other three will be more literally translated.

Our Father...

The new Missal will follow the capitalization in the Latin CCC: hence "*Thy Name*", "*Thy Kingdom*", and "deliver us from *Evil*" (or 'Evil One'). The French and Italian of the CCC also capitalize 'Will'.

Before Holy Communion

- "*Behold* the Lamb of God, *behold Him* who takes away the sins of the world. *Blessed are those who are called to the feast of the Lamb.*" There is a temptation here to complete the reference to Apocalypse 19:9 with 'marriage feast', but such embellishments are forbidden: it is for the homilist and catechist to fill out the context, says LA §29.
- "Lord, I am not worthy *that You should enter under my roof* but only say the word and *my soul* shall be healed." Here ICEL obscured Matthew 8:8 and its Latin liturgical adaptation.

CONCLUSION

This introduction does not deal with the timetable for the new translations, nor the very important rejection of 'inclusive language' in LA §§30-32.

"Sacral Vernacular" and Literal Translations

Liturgiam Authenticam, "Authentic Liturgy" [LA] asserts a **bold new principle**:

- No more bland, banal or clobber language of everyday
- and not just the quality English of good literature,
- but a **SACRAL VERNACULAR!**
- Often achieved by a literal translation of the Latin
- and including *archaic* 'out-of-date' language —
- a sign of the timelessness of God's eternity —
- prayable, inspiring and memorable.

Liturgiam Authenticam heeds the 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops: "It is evident that the liturgy must favour the **Sense of the Sacred** and make it shine forth. It must be permeated by the spirit of reverence, adoration and the glorification of God." Also, LA §20 is like *The Statement of Conclusions* §43 (as agreed to by the Australian Bishops in Rome, 1998).

FIRST, we let Authentic Liturgy speak for itself (with editorial emphases in bold/italics/capitals):

LA §47: "While the translation must transmit the perennial treasury of orations [=prayers] by means of language understandable in the cultural context for which it is intended, it should also be guided by the conviction that liturgical prayer not only is formed by the genius of a culture, but itself contributes to the development of that culture. Consequently it should cause no surprise that **such language differs somewhat from ordinary speech**. Liturgical translation that takes due account of the authority and integral context of the original texts will **FACILITATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SACRAL VERNACULAR**, characterized by a vocabulary, syntax and grammar that are **proper to divine worship**, even though it is not to be excluded that it may exercise an influence even on everyday speech, as has occurred in the languages of peoples evangelized long ago."

LA §27: "...should be free of an overly servile adherence to prevailing modes of expression. If indeed, **in the liturgical texts, words or expressions are sometimes employed which differ somewhat from usual and everyday speech, it is often enough by virtue of this very fact that the texts become truly memorable and capably of expressing heavenly realities...** contribute to the gradual development of a **SACRED STYLE** that will come to be recognized as proper to liturgical language. Thus it will happen that a certain manner of speech which has come to be considered **somewhat obsolete in daily usage** may continue to be maintained in the liturgical context."

LA §43: "...As regards certain terms, such as those translated in the New Vulgate [Latin Bible] as *anima* and *spiritus*... one should avoid replacing these terms by a personal pronouns or a more abstract term... It should be borne in mind that **a literal translation of terms which may initially sound odd in a vernacular language may for this very reason provoke inquisitiveness** in the hearer and provide an occasion for catechesis.

LA §50: "Since the liturgical books of the Roman Rite contain many fundamental words of the theological and spiritual tradition of the Roman Church, every effort must be made to **preserve this system of vocabulary rather than substituting other words that are alien to the liturgical and catechetical usage** of the people of God in a given cultural and ecclesial context.

LA §59: Since liturgical texts by their very nature are intended to be proclaimed orally and to be heard in the liturgical celebration, they are **characterized by a certain manner of expressions that differ from that found in everyday speech** or in texts intended to be read silently...

In poetic texts, greater flexibility will be needed... Even so, expressions that have a particular doctrinal or spiritual importance or those that are more widely known are, insofar as possible, to be **translated literally**.

SECOND, my own suggestion — please don't dismiss it out of hand with, "People won't wear it..." but speak for *thyself*: "Art *thou* capable of coping with it?"

The Sacral Vernacular is described in §§47, 27, 43, 50, 59 above, especially the passages in bold. These assert the inevitability and desirability of a certain **archaic** flavour.

Such was achieved in pre-Vatican II people's Missals with the constant use of the second person singular — ***Thou, Thee, Thy*** and ***Thine*** — pronouns which achieve a sacral vernacular even on their own. In fact, can it be achieved without them?

So let us must master our personal pronouns (and the present tense of the verb 'to be', shown in italics):

Nominative Case	Singular Number	Plural Number
1st Person	<i>I am</i>	<i>we are</i>
2nd Person	Thou (1) <i>art</i>	you (ye) <i>are</i>
3rd Person	he, she, it (2) <i>is</i>	diey <i>are</i>
Objective Case	Singular Number	Plural Number
1st Person	me	us
2nd Person	Thee (3)	you (ye) (3)
3rd Person	him, her, it	them
Possessive Case	Singular Number	Plural Number
1st Person	my	our/ours (5)
2nd Person	thy/thine (4)	you/yours
3rd Person	his, her/hers, its	their/dieirs

1. 'Thou' and 'you' both have 'ou' but are pronounced differently.
2. Only in the third person singular do English pronouns differ in gender—masculine, feminine, neuter. 'He' as *anyone* includes 'she' so men have to share their pronoun with women, but not vice-versa.
3. 'Thee' seems related to the archaic 'ye' (latter nominative as well).
4. 'Thy' changes to 'thine' before a vowel or an 'h' and also in constructions like 'I am thine for ever' or 'for thine is the kingdom'.
5. Contrast 'Those are *our* books' with 'Those books are *ours*'; and similarly with *her/hers, your/yours* and *their/theirs*.

THAT BLAND PRONOUN 'YOU'

'You' does not change number from singular to plural, nor case from nominative to objective. This can lead to ambiguities: "He loves me more than you" can mean either "He loves me more than he loves you" or "He loves me more than you love me". There is no ambiguity with 'thou' and 'thee': compare "He loves me more than thee" with "He loves me more than thou". See Luke 22:31-32 for the doctrinal advantages of using 'thou' as the singular of 'you'. Moreover, the bland 'you' is singularly incapable of conveying the sense of the sacred.

SAMPLE PRAYER

Here is a 'sacral vernacular' prayer for priestly vocations. The continuous present tense ('is living') avoids 'liveth'. (If addressed to Christ, it would conclude, 'who art living and reigning with God the Father...' etc.)

**LORD, Holy Father, Almighty and Eternal God,
for Thy greater glory and for the service of Thy people,
call more men to the Priesthood;
give those whom Thou art calling
the grace to respond generously and to persevere faithfully;
help all Thy people to know their vocation in life
and assist them to prepare for it,
and help us all to heed Thy call
and live out our Mission in the Church,
through our Lord Jesus Christ Thy Son,
Who is living and reigning with Thee
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. Amen.**