

Our Prayer Reflects Our Beliefs, Our Way of Living

Dear Parish Family:

As you may have heard or read, some of the words of the prayers of the Mass have been revised. The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments has approved revisions in *The Roman Missal*, the book of prayers used during the Mass. With all of the other dioceses in the United States, our parish will begin to pray the revised texts of the Mass on the First Sunday of Advent in 2011, November 27, 2011. This third typical edition of *The Roman Missal* was issued by Pope John Paul II in 2000. After it was published in Latin in 2002, the work of translation began. During this translation a different model was used than after the Second Vatican Council, so some of the words that we proclaim at Mass today will be changed. The United States is not the only country making these changes. The words prayed in the Mass are being revised around the world, no matter what language is spoken. By the nature of the language in some parts of the world, though, the revisions are less extensive.

Words affect our lives. How we say and hear words affects how we react to life: the way we live, pray, and believe. The revised translation of *The Roman Missal* can convey images that can help us express our feelings of praise and thanks to God for all he does for us in new ways.

What differences will we hear in this translation? This version will be more formal in language and scripturally richer in images. Some of the words in the Gloria; Creed; Holy, Holy, Holy; and Memorial Acclamations will be different. A few of the acclamation changes will be in the responses for “The Lord be with you” and the “Lord, I am not worthy.” The sung Mass parts will be assigned new musical settings.

We should each be personally excited to pray this revised translation when it is ready, since it will give a fuller meaning to the words expressed in the document from the Second Vatican Council, the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, “full, conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations called for by the very nature of the liturgy” (CSL, 14).

Change, as we all know, is a part of life. Nothing stays the same, locally or globally. Just think how our world has changed in the United States since September 11. We also are not the same Catholic

people we were only a few years ago. I am sure that both you and I have grown in our holiness and in our faith and understanding of God.

After praying the same words of the Mass for so many years, both the priest and the people will have the opportunity once again to be more conscious of the words we pray. Richer meanings of the words may be spiritually heard in a new way, transforming our hearts. They will not be words said by rote, but words with a fuller, thoughtful understanding.

As a parish, we can grow spiritually from this experience. We will have parish meetings on the revised translation to better understand the reasons for these changes and how they can help us grow closer to God. Until those meetings, you may want to think about your concerns. Consider and pray over any discomfort you have. I would like you to ask questions about the changes at the parish meeting. The first meeting will be scheduled later this fall.

As with all changes, it will take time to adapt. But we will adapt to the changes easier if we understand them.

Just as we do anything new in life, it takes time to adjust. Just think of the other changes we have made in our parish over the years and how we now see them as “always having been done that way.”

Let us pray that we are open to the Holy Spirit in exploring these revisions in the prayers of the Mass. May we understand that these words will assist us in lifting our minds and hearts to grow deeper in our faith by praying the Mass more consciously, fully and actively, together giving praise and thanks to God.

Truly yours,

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