



A More Conscious Prayer

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(Editor's note: Father John Mark Klaus, TOR, has written the homily below for priests to adapt in their parishes. The homily was written to help priests explain what the English translation of the third edition of The Roman Missal will mean to the liturgies in their parish.)

You may have heard that some of the words to the prayers that we say at Mass are changing. For about ten years, the Bishops from the English-speaking countries around the world have been working on the translation of the third edition of *The Roman Missal*. This translation will not change the structure of the Mass, but will change some of the words we now proclaim at Mass. After praying the same words to the Mass for so many years, we now have the opportunity to again be more conscious of the words we pray. Words affect our lives. How we say and hear words makes a difference in how we live, pray, and believe.

The words that I pray at Mass will sound different to you. Your prayers and responses also will be different. These new prayers should help us to pray more consciously, since we will be thinking more about what we are praying and not saying the words by rote, which many of us can admit we often do now. Think of the way we say the Our Father. Do we really think about what we say when we pray “forgive us our trespasses, / as we forgive those who trespass against us”?

Why is this change in the prayers of the Mass necessary? The revised translation will reflect the current Latin edition. The previous translation does not do this as accurately.

Although this translation will sound more formal in language, it is scripturally richer in its meanings and images, better connecting the biblical images to the images in the prayers of the Mass. Now, instead of hearing in Eucharistic Prayer III, “from east to west / a perfect offering may be made,” you will hear, “from the rising of the sun to its setting / a pure sacrifice may be offered to your name.” This text presents a richer biblical image for us to picture.

The Mass parts will have new musical settings, since some of the words we sing have been changed. The sung Mass prayers that our assembly usually sings that will change are the Gloria; the Creed; the Holy, Holy, Holy; and Memorial Acclamations. We will be learning new melodies to accompany these texts.

Other changes you will notice are the responses to the *Confiteor*, “Lord, I am not worthy” and “The Lord be with you,” to which you will respond “And with your spirit.” We will place cards in the pews for you to follow along with the changes until our prayers become more familiar to us.

I am excited to pray this new translation, since it will give a fuller meaning to the aim of the Second Vatican Council for a full, conscious, and active participation by the faithful in the liturgy. I believe that it will make us more conscious of what we pray at Mass.

Change, as we all know, is a part of life. Nothing in life stays the same. Just think how our world has changed in the United States of America since September 11, 2001. We are not the same Catholic people we were only a few years ago. I would hope that all of us have grown in holiness and in our faith and understanding of God.

As a parish, we can grow spiritually from this experience. The changes will go into effect on the First Sunday of Advent in 2011. From now until that date, November 27, 2011, we will have time to meet to understand this revised translation. Please attend the coming parish meeting on the new translation, to better understand the reasons for these changes and how they can help us grow spiritually closer to God.

It will take some time to get used to the idea of our prayers changing at all. But after a year of exploring the translation, it will seem more natural to us. I encourage you to attend as many sessions as possible, so that the words are familiar to you when we first pray them together.

As we begin this journey together of exploring the revised translation of the Mass in our parish, may we be spiritually blessed as we better consciously pray and understand that the Mass truly is thanksgiving to God.

