

Explaining the history of the *Roman Missal*

The *Roman Missal* is the book containing the prescribed prayers, chants, and instructions for the celebration of Mass in the Roman Catholic Church. Published first in Latin under the title *Missale Romanum*, the text is then translated and, once approved by a *recognitio* by the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, is published in modern languages for use in local churches throughout the world. In 2002, Pope John Paul II introduced a new edition of the *Missale Romanum (editio typica tertia*, the “third typical edition” [since the Second Vatican Council]) for use in the Church. Soon after, the complex work of translating the text into English began. As the Church in the United States and throughout the English-speaking world prepares to introduce the new edition of the *Missal*, so does the Church in other countries as the *Missale Romanum, editio typica tertia* is translated into other languages. The process of implementing a new edition of the prayers of the Mass is not new, but has occurred numerous times throughout the history of the Church as the Liturgy developed and was adapted to particular circumstances to meet the needs of the Church.

In the earliest centuries of the Church, there were no books containing prescribed liturgical prayers, texts, or other instructions. Because the faith of the Church was (and still is) articulated in liturgical prayer, there was a need for consistency and authenticity in the words used in the celebration of the Liturgy. Collections of prayers developed gradually for use in particular locations and situations such as for a particular monastery, for the Pope, or for other local churches. Such collections were contained in *libelli* (“booklets”) which over centuries were drawn together into larger collections of prayers.

Eventually larger, more organized collections of prayers were assembled into “sacramentaries” (*liber sacramentorum* or *sacramentarium*), which contained some, but not all, of the prayers of the Mass. The earliest of these sacramentaries were attributed to Pope Leo I, “Leo the Great” (440-461), and Pope Gelasius (492-496), but surviving versions of those sacramentaries date from centuries later. Other early manuscripts (such as the *Ordines Romani*) contained detailed descriptions of the celebration of the Mass with the Pope in Rome. Those written accounts may have gradually served as instructions or *rubrics* for the celebration of Mass in other settings. Liturgical books grew as they passed from one community (a local church, a diocese, a monastery, *etc.*) to another, often with prayers added in margins or in blank spaces. The process of sharing text was by copying by hand. This was a laborious task which at times led to inconsistencies and errors.

The first true liturgical books which could be called “missals” were found in monasteries beginning around the 12th and 13th Centuries. A *missale* contained not only the prayers but the biblical readings, the chants, and the rubrics for the celebration of Mass. It is difficult to trace exact origins of the first missal. The first book bearing the name *Missale Romanum* appeared in 1474, perhaps not coincidentally in the same century as the invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg (1440). But it was not until after the Council of Trent that Pope Pius V, in 1570, promulgated an edition of the *Missale Romanum* that was to be in obligatory use throughout the Latin Church (except in cases where another rite had been in place for at least 200 years). This marked the first official attempt at uniformity in the celebration of the Mass in the history of the Church. Since that time, to accommodate the ongoing evolution and development of the Liturgy, new editions of the *Missale Romanum* were promulgated by Popes for use in the Church:

- 1604 – Pope Clement VIII
- 1634 – Pope Urban VIII
- 1884 – Pope Leo XIII
- 1920 – Pope Benedict XV
- 1962 – Pope John XXIII
- 1970 – Pope Paul VI
- 1975 – Pope Paul VI
- 2002 – Pope John Paul II

In addition, there were a number of other minor revisions to the text, published as “reprints” which incorporated minor changes. The most recent of these were in 1957 after Pope Pius XII’s revisions to the rites of Holy Week and the Sacred Triduum in 1955, and in 2008, when Pope Benedict XVI incorporated a number of additional prayers, included those for recently canonized saints as well as for the celebration of an extended Vigil for Pentecost.

Timeline Leading to this Change - Vatican II - Present

U.S. *Roman Missal* Approved – 2009

Order of Mass Confirmed - 2008

Order of Mass Approved - 2006

English *Order of Mass* Draft - 2004

ICEL Statutes - 2003

General Instruction Approved - 2002

Vox Clara Established - 2002

Liturgiam Authenticam - 2001

Missale Romanum Third Edition - 2000

U.S. *Sacramentary* Approved - 1996

Sacramentary Revision Begins - 1987

U.S. *Sacramentary* Second Ed. - 1985

Missale Romanum Reissued - 1975

U.S. *Sacramentary* Confirmed - 1974

U.S. *Sacramentary* Approved - 1973

Order of Mass Confirmed - 1970

Order of Mass Approved - 1969

Missale Romanum Promulgated - 1969

Comme le Prévoit - 1969

ICEL Takes Shape - 1964

The *Consilium* is Formed - 1964

Sacrosanctum Concilium - 1963

Q: In the Niceno-Constantinopolitan (Nicene) Creed, why has "one in being with the Father" been changed to "consubstantial with the Father?"

A: The new translation is more in keeping with the ancient Latin text of the Creed and a more accurate translation. The bishops at the Council of Nicea (AD 325), in order to ensure that Jesus was professed as the eternal Son of God, equal to the Father, stated that he is "the Son of God, begotten from the Father, the only-begotten, that is from the substance of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, the same substance (*homoousion*) with the Father..." The Creed of the Council of Constantinople (381), which is professed at all Sunday Masses and Solemnities within the Catholic Church, similarly stated: "We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of the same substance (*homoousion*) with the Father." When these two ancient creeds were translated into Latin, the term "*homoousion*" was rendered as "*consubstantialem*," that is, "the same substance of the Father." Prior to the Second Vatican Council, the Latin "*consubstantialem*" was rendered as "consubstantial" within the English translation of the Creed. Many theologians and the Holy See thought that the term "consubstantial" was more in keeping with the Latin tradition and a more literal and accurate translation than the more recent "one in being." This is in keeping with the mind of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, which published an Instruction, entitled *Liturgiam Authenticam*. It stated: "Certain expressions that belong to the heritage of the whole or of a great part of the ancient Church, as well as others that have become part of the general human patrimony, are to be respected by a translation that is as literal as possible" (no. 56).

Based upon Roman Missal Formational Materials provided by the Secretariat for the Liturgy of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2010.

For more information see the following websites.

www.usccb.org/romanmissal

www.revisedromanmissal.org

<http://liturgy.nd.edu/webcatechesis/>

For the technologically savvy, subscribe to free podcasts on the sacred liturgy and Roman Missal

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