



Over the past year, the Catholic media has been preparing us for upcoming changes in the prayers of the Mass which will be implemented on the First Sunday of Advent, November 27, 2011. Over the next few months we are presenting ten articles to help inform all of us as we anticipate the changes. If you miss any of these articles, they can also be found on our parish website: www.saintmike.com

The Roman Missal Changes Present Challenge and Opportunity

By Joe Paprocki, D. Todd Williamson

We human beings are essentially creatures of habit. As infants, we struggle to learn how stand up and take our first steps. Eventually, however, through repeated efforts, we are able to accomplish the task without conscious thought. Our minds are designed in such a way as to not have to repeat the learning process all over again. That's the essence of habit. As a result, however, we don't take very kindly to change!

Adapting to change is always a challenge. As we prepare to adapt to the changes in the prayers we use at Mass, we are indeed faced with a challenge. At the same time, however, change also brings us opportunity. The new translation of the 3rd Edition of the Roman Missal presents us with, not only a challenge, but also an opportunity to delve deeper into the Mystery of the Eucharist and to bring all Catholics to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Eucharist.

One of the "banners" of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* has been the phrase, from paragraph 14: "full, active and conscious participation of all the faithful." This was one of the aims of the renewal of the Liturgy sought by the Second Vatican Council. Over the last 40 plus years, we have done very well to encourage and enable all of our people to do just that. People do participate actively. People *do* participate fully. Now, with the English translation of the 3rd Edition of the Roman Missal, we have the opportunity to focus on *conscious* participation! New words can make us take notice. New words can make us pay attention in new ways. New words can cause us to listen at a deeper level.

One of the inherent dangers of *ritual* is that, if we are not careful, we can let it become *routine*. We know these words so well and we know the pattern of the Mass so well that, quite frankly, sometimes the words can "go in one ear and out the other!" This is an opportunity to let the words of the Mass take us to that deeper understanding, to that deeper level of *praying the Mass*.

The new Roman Missal changes more than just the words in the Mass

In a very real way, if all we do is make this about "new words," then we are in danger of missing this unique opportunity for a profound catechesis on the Eucharist. If our approach is simply, "This is what we don't say anymore; and this is what we do say," then we are at risk of doing a real *dis-service* to the people to whom we minister. With the English translation of the 3rd Edition of the Roman Missal this can be a time when all Catholics can renew for themselves the sense that the Mass is the very source and summit – the very heart – of our Christian lives. This can be a time when catechetical leaders can lead their people to participate in the celebration of the Church's liturgy in the *very best way possible*. It can be a time to once again recall our fundamental belief in the centrality of the Eucharist to our lives of faith!

The renewal of the Liturgical life of the Church, called for by the Second Vatican Council has been a process in which we've been engaged for four decades. This is one moment in that process – a very key moment. As noted, there will be challenges – in these articles we have made suggestions on how these challenges might be approached. At the same time, there are endless opportunities for how we might continue to help our people "lift up [their] hearts" in the great prayer of praise and thanksgiving that is the Eucharist!