

Paul Collins

AND ALSO WITH YOU

**Is the New English Version of the
Mass
A Betrayal of Vatican Council II?**

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As far as the ordinary Catholic is concerned, the first and the greatest achievement of Vatican Council II (1962-5) was the vernacular liturgy. Nothing that the Council did impacted on parishes, communities, laity and priests to the extent that the translation of the Mass and sacraments into English did. While there was a difficult period of transition in the late-1960s, the new liturgy has been widely accepted by Catholics across the English-speaking world.

The liturgical changes, however, were even more significant: in historical terms Vatican II brought about the most radical reshaping of worship that had ever been attempted in the history of Catholicism. And this re-structuring has been astonishingly successful. The vast majority of ordinary Catholics embraced the changes with genuine enthusiasm, and they are now part of the essential fabric of what it means to be Catholic.

Part of the reason why Catholics have been so accepting of the changes is because the prayers and words of the liturgy make sense to them: they are using an English idiom that gives expression to their innermost convictions and spirituality. The text has become their prayer and while it is not perfect, it is in tune with the culture and the mentality of the people for whom it was intended. To take it from them now would be to deprive them of a core element of their faith.

Those who rejected the liturgical reforms constituted a *tiny* minority. This was shown up at the Council itself: in the final vote 2,147 bishops voted for *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Vatican II's document on worship, and only four bishops voted against it. For dissenters the renewal of worship became the most potent symbol of what they saw as Vatican II's compromise with the modern world. They saw it as an abandonment of the sacred and mysterious elements of worship, a loss of the so-called 'vertical' aspect of the liturgy. They perceived the English translations to be banal, untrue to

the original, insufficiently sacred and commonplace, and they were constantly critical of what they saw as liturgical excesses.

Certainly mistakes were made and the occasional baby was thrown out with the bath water. But this was the biggest change ever attempted in the history of Catholic worship, and what is extraordinary is how quickly the Catholic community integrated the changes and, in retrospect, how few misjudgments occurred.

The model for the tiny reactionary rump was the so-called 'Tridentine Mass', more accurately the 'Mass of Pius V' because it comes from the missal this pope issued in 1570; the Council of Trent had already concluded in 1563. While the schismatic Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre and his followers were the most extreme of these reactionaries, others who remained within mainstream Catholicism fought tooth and nail to retain the Latin liturgy and to oppose the English translation. They claimed that they were trying to preserve the sacred character of worship: they were horrified at what they described as at best an uninspired and dull English text and at worst a betrayal of the tradition.

Many saw the changes as surrendering to Protestantism and some reactionaries went in for the most outrageous character assassination, attacking those they considered to be responsible for all that had happened as vandals and barbarians. In other words, reactionary Catholics turned the liturgy in a battleground, a symbol of everything that horrified them most about contemporary Catholicism. They knew that if they could persuade the Vatican to roll back the liturgical reforms they would have won a symbolic victory over the other 'excesses' of Vatican II. They are now very close to succeeding in their aim.

In the next year or so a new, more literal translation of the English used in worship and especially in the Mass is going to be imposed on priests and Mass-going Catholics in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, the US and the UK. In fact, there has been a rather arcane process going on since 1998 and even since the close of Vatican II in 1965. This activity has understandably tended to slip under the radar of most Catholics, but it will certainly impact on all who still go to Mass.

However, we need to be absolutely clear: this is not just about tweaking the English translation to introduce a more 'sacred' feel to liturgical rhetoric. It is really about the acceptance or rejection of Vatican II. No matter how apologists for new translation try to present it, this is essentially about the meaning of Catholicism in contemporary culture, about the nature of the church and about where you stand on the role of the Council.

Essentially those pushing the new English translation say that what they are doing is 'reforming the reform'. The phrase actually comes from the Sri Lankan Archbishop Malcolm Ranjith Patabendige Don, previously secretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship (CDW) in the Vatican, now Archbishop of Colombo. He argues that what happened after Vatican II often veered away from the intention of the bishops at the Council. Speaking about the liturgy specifically Ranjith says: 'Some practices which *Sacrosanctum Concilium* had never even contemplated were allowed into the Liturgy, like Mass *versus populum* (towards the people), Holy Communion in the hand, altogether giving up on the Latin and Gregorian Chant in favor of the vernacular and songs and hymns without much space for God, and extension beyond any reasonable limits of the faculty to concelebrate at Holy Mass. There was also the gross misinterpretation of the principle of "active participation".'

Ranjith offers no evidence for his claims that the liturgical vision of Vatican II has become distorted, but this view is now the dominant one in Rome, especially since the advent of Benedict XVI who expressed views like this long before Ranjith.

To get some perspective on all this we need to backtrack a bit.

On 4 December 1963, at the end of the second session of the Council the bishops finally passed the *Constitution on the Liturgy*. It was necessary to have the Latin texts translated quickly. The English-speaking bishops immediately set up a commission to carry out the work of translation, the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL), representing eleven national bishops' conferences: Australia, Canada, England and Wales, India, Ireland, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Scotland, South Africa and the United States. While based in Washington, DC, it is important to emphasize that ICEL's line of responsibility was explicitly to the bishops' conferences of the whole English-speaking world, not to Rome and the Vatican's CDW.

The role of Rome was simply to approve the work carried out under the guidance of the English-speaking bishops. This was later to become a real bone of contention.

As the *General Instruction on the Roman Missal* (issued by the Post-Conciliar Commission on the Liturgy on 3 April 1969) emphasized the translator's task was to find a 'faithful but not literal' English equivalent of the Latin and that 'the unit of meaning [was] not the individual word, but the whole passage.' Further 'the prayer of the Church is always the prayer of some actual community assembling here and now. It is not sufficient that a formula handed down from some other time or region should be translated verbatim, even if accurately, for liturgical use. The formula must become the

genuine prayer of the congregation and in it each of its members should be able to find and express themselves.'

This is called the 'principle of equivalence' and no doubt Ranjith would say that it was something 'never contemplated' by the Council. What Ranjith forgets is that this principle was articulated by the Commission actually set up by the bishops themselves at Vatican II to do the practical work in the process of renewing the liturgy after the Council concluded. He also ignores the fact that the present vernacular liturgy is not so much a 'modernization' as it is an attempted return to the ancient and traditional way in which the liturgy was celebrated in the early church. It is also an unequivocal expression of the kind of collegiality mandated by the Council because it involved the English-speaking bishops in developing the language that was to be used in countries where the most widely used language on earth is spoken. That is why I want to emphasize that this is not just about tampering with a translation but is essentially about the acceptance of rejection of the all the Council represents.

The translation work was done quickly and introduced in stages so that by the beginning of the 1970s the whole of the Mass and sacraments had been translated into English and an English lectionary had been prepared. Working on the principle of dynamic equivalence the ICEL translators' didn't translate the Latin literally. While remaining faithful to the sense of the original Latin, they tried to find the nearest genuine contemporary English equivalent that both sounded elegant, could be spoken with ease, and above all that prayerfully raised the mind and heart to God. This was a difficult process.

Much of the work of ICEL was extraordinarily successful, but there were some problems: repetitions, at times a lack of elegance when texts descended into prosaic English and a lack of sensitivity to inclusive language.

Nevertheless the translation was widely and even enthusiastically accepted by the vast majority of mainstream Catholics throughout the English-speaking world. The great strength of the translation was its accessibility. Yet it still retains a prayerful, respectful approach to God. And it is the only text known to all Catholics under middle-age; it has been the language of worship since the late 1960s.

It was always envisaged that the English translation needed to be revised, and in 1981 the English-speaking bishops and ICEL began a careful revision of the whole process which aimed at improving the translation by giving it a more poetic, elevated, sacred feel. At the same time there was a realization that inclusive language also needed to be introduced. Work progressed throughout the 1980s and 1990s and by the late 1990s a Revised English Missal was ready.

Meanwhile the political ground in the Vatican had already shifted dramatically. Up until the mid-1980s the CDW didn't oppose the work of ICEL and recognized that it was the responsibility of the English-speaking bishops' conferences.

But from 1984 with the advent of the John Paul II papacy (1978-2005) the senior personnel at the CDW gradually changed. A series of Cardinals Prefect of the CDW (the German Paul Augustin Mayer, OSB (1984-88) and the Spaniards, Eduardo Martinez Somalo (1988-92) and Antonio Javierre Ortas, SDB (1992-96)) showed little sympathy for the Vatican II vision of the church, let alone tolerance for a vernacular liturgy under the control of local bishops' conferences. Mayer said publicly that ICEL needed to be restructured and redirected.

But the real crunch came when the Chilean Cardinal Jorge Medina Estevez, a friend of the military dictator, Augusto Pinochet, and who presided at the general's funeral Mass, was appointed cardinal prefect of the CDW in 1996 by John Paul

II. He came to the CDW right at the time when ICEL was ready to submit the revised English liturgy to Rome for a *recognitio*, an approval for use throughout the English-speaking world.

Also at this time the centralizing process that had come with John Paul II was well under-way and *Romanita*, the Roman-Vatican view of the world, was re-asserting itself with a vengeance. It was intolerable to the bureaucrats of the Vatican, and particularly to people like Medina, that English-speaking bishops' conferences were making decisions about the English used in the liturgy. Bishops were there to do what Rome wanted. What is also significant is that at this point not one of these cardinal-critics of ICEL was a natural English-speaker, nor is there any evidence that any of them spoke English with any facility.

I've already mentioned the tiny rump of Catholics who continued to reject the new liturgy. Nevertheless they have had an influence that far transcends their numbers. As older reactionaries died, they have been replaced by younger people, particularly young men, who are attracted to 'bells and smells' and an extravagant, dressing-up style of worship. Many of these are technologically literate and have elaborate web-pages that reflect their point of view. They are also politically savvy in that they know how to influence Rome. This is because they have worked out how to make their views known to sympathetic and influential decision-making prelates in the Vatican, including in the CDW. For decades they have been bombarding Rome with complaints about the new liturgy and in Mayer, Martinez Somalo, Javierre Ortas and above all in Medina they found allies and supporters. Austen Ivereigh has correctly pointed out that 'To traditionalists, ICEL had become the symbol of the Church's sell-out to fallen modernity, the target of wealthy American traditionalists who had the ear of Rome' (*The Tablet*, 17 January 2004).

But Medina didn't need convincing. As soon as he got to the CDW he set about systematically dismantling the whole liturgical renewal. His strategy was clear: if he could bring the English-speaking bishops to heel, the largest linguistic group in the Catholic world, he would have no trouble bringing over the other language groups under Roman control, including his own Spanish-speaking world. A key element in achieving this was the need to replace the basic techniques of translation as set out in *The General Instruction on the Roman Missal*, such as dynamic equivalence, with other principles that fitted in with Medina's own priorities.

So on 20 March 2001 the CWD issued *Liturgiam authenticam* (LA). This is an instruction on the principles of liturgical translation which was meant to replace *The General Instruction on the Roman Missal*. Medina claimed that John Paul II had asked the CDW to prepare LA, but these were the declining years of Pope Wojtyla and the Curia was doing pretty much what it wanted to do. LA actually reflects Medina's views - and those of the liturgical reactionaries - rather than the views of mainstream liturgical scholars and ordinary Catholics.

The former editor of *The Tablet*, John Wilkins, in an important and detailed article in *Commonweal* on the liturgy wars says that LA did not recommend, 'it commanded. It insisted that translations follow an extreme literalism, extending even to syntax and rhythm, punctuation, and capital letters. The clear implication was that in this way it would be possible to achieve a sort of "timeless" English above the change of fashion, a claim reminiscent of that made for the Ronald Knox translation of the Bible, which today is so dated that it is not read except as a period piece' (*Commonweal*, 2 December 2005).

Medina was supported by the then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger who had made it clear for many years before his election to

the papacy that he thought that vernacular Masses were to blame for the drop in church attendance and vocations to the priesthood. He offers no empirical evidence to support this contention. He has also often expressed concern about the loss of a 'vertical' dimension to the liturgy. Ratzinger says that much contemporary liturgy has lost a sense of reverence and a deep consciousness of the presence of God. He feels that nowadays we are far too concerned with the community and human relationships. As he said at the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday, 2005, just before he was elected pope: 'How often do we celebrate only ourselves without even realizing that Jesus is there.' What he is doing here - as he so often does when arguing - is overstating the case. That is, while there is some truth in what he says he goes to the other extreme and dichotomizes the situation as though we were faced with an either-or choice. He sets up a straw man and then destroys it.

So given this tendency it is perfectly understandable that, when he became pope, Ratzinger had the CDW push ahead with the revision of the English liturgy.

LA aimed at replacing all previous post-conciliar texts which set out the principles of liturgical translation. A kind of 'overview' put out by the CDW itself describes Medina's time at the Congregation as 'a new era in translation of liturgical texts.'

LA shifts the emphasis from making sense in English to a focus on a literal rendering of the Latin. In other words, it constitutes a shift from an emphasis on the prayer of the congregation to a focus on the centrality of the Latin text. It says that translation 'is not so much a work of creative inventiveness as one of fidelity and exactness in rendering the Latin texts into a vernacular language.' No care or sensitivity is shown for the praying people or their needs. It's as though the Latin text had a priority call on God's attention, and unless

the English follows that text literally the prayer of the priest and people goes nowhere.

LA is especially critical of any attempt to integrate inclusive language into the translation: 'The abandonment of these terms [i.e. pronouns that refer to both male and female] under pressure of criticism on ideological or other grounds, is not always wise or necessary.' You can't even get around it by using 'men and women' for the Latin *homo*. 'The expression of such inclusivity may not be achieved by a quasi-mechanical change in grammatical number, or by the creation of pairs of masculine and feminine terms.' LA also maintains that 'Translations must be freed from exaggerated dependence on modern modes of expression and in general from psychologizing language. Even forms of speech deemed slightly archaic may on occasion be appropriate.' No clarification is offered as to what 'psychologizing language' might mean in this context.

All this certainly sounds more like 'ideology' than a care for the prayerful expression of worship by the community gathered at Mass. It assumes that there is such a thing as timeless English, a moment when the language was somehow perfectly adapted to the sacred. In the process of trying to discover this, the proposed new translations actually fall into the trap of using a kind of pseudo-mid-Victorian English rather than more modern modes of speech. It is the kind of English that a minor nineteenth century romantic novelist might have used on a bad day. The language that results from LA is not so much sacred as pompous and affected. Since hardly anyone now prays in Latin, is it really appropriate to make that the norm for prayer in a living language like English? Only someone besotted with ideology could think that.

The English-speaking bishops' conferences and ICEL fought very hard against the CDW's *putsch*, but this led to long-term

and experienced ICEL personnel, particularly Dr John Page, the executive secretary, being increasingly marginalized by the Congregation in the late-1980s and 1990s. The final result was that Medina refused a *recognitio* to the revised English Missal in 2002. Page resigned that same year after 22 years as head of ICEL and thirty years as a translator of liturgical texts, as did ICEL chairman, Bishop Maurice Taylor of Galloway, Scotland.

After they left, the subversion of ICEL began. Taylor was replaced by Bishop Arthur Roach of Leeds and a new executive secretary was appointed, Father (now Monsignor) Bruce Harbert, a priest of Birmingham archdiocese and a convert from Anglicanism to Catholicism. Previously he had been highly critical of the work of the old ICEL and was associated with pressure groups in the UK who wanted a restoration of the Latin Mass. Former staff left. Under Harbert ICEL became increasingly secretive. Previously, proposed translations were publicly available, but in 2002 a complete revision of all ICEL's translation work began in secret.

The result was that ICEL no longer sought 'the advice of poets and other writers, but only of patristic scholars. The language is to be distinctively Catholic, sacral, Roman; as the mind and heart are raised to God, they should be sure to stop off in Saint Peter's' (Austen Ivereigh, *The Tablet*, 17 January 2004).

ICEL was to be assisted and guided by Vox Clara ('Clear Voice'), a committee appointed by the CDW, of generally conservative-minded English-speaking cardinals and bishops with a couple of moderates like Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor of Westminster thrown in to give the appearance of balance. Vox Clara was chaired by Cardinal George Pell of Sydney another outspoken opponent of the old ICEL approach; it was public knowledge that Pell was unhappy with ICEL's work under John Page and his colleagues and that he favored the insertion of a more 'vertical', sacred tone in the English liturgy. Vox

Clara's precise function was never really clarified, but it seems to have been a kind of reference group that assessed the translation work of the reconstituted ICEL.

As the new ICEL worked their way through the ordinary of the Mass they sent out their work to bishops' conferences for comment. Many bishops were very unhappy with the suggested changes. The bishops sent in many corrections, amendments, criticisms and suggestions. They could foresee what was ahead in terms of pastoral acceptance by priests and people. But no one in Rome was listening and their advice was usually ignored. The CDW apparently couldn't care less what happened pastorally.

As the new translation went through its various phases and the bishops sent in their comments and criticisms, the whole process was meant to be kept secret and ordinary Catholics were excluded from the loop, although in an almost comic 'investigative piece' in the London *Catholic Herald* (14 October 2005) the paper reported that a copy of the supposedly secret Mass translation was being offered for sale on EBay with the *Herald* claiming: 'Finger of suspicion points to Australian ex-priest with liberal sympathies.' The liberal ex-priest's identity still remains unknown.

Medina retired from the CDW in October 2002 and was replaced by the Nigerian Cardinal Francis Arinze. Arinze was joined as Secretary of the CDW in 2005 by the Sri Lankan Archbishop Malcolm Ranjith, the former Bishop of Ratnapura who, for a year and a half had been papal nuncio to Indonesia. In June 2009 he was appointed Archbishop of Colombo. He was the bishop who was behind the brief excommunication in 1997 of Father Tissa Balasuriya, the Sri Lankan theologian. Ranjith quickly emerged as the real power-broker in the CDW. From the perspective of ICEL at least both Arinze and Ranjith were English speakers, but they continued to follow the policies of their predecessors, particularly Medina. As we

saw Ranjith believed that there needed to be 'a reform of the reform', that is the reforms of Vatican II had gone too far and they need to be further reformed along more conservative lines. For Ranjith the liturgy is the natural starting point in this process.

And just when it seemed that things couldn't get any worse at the CDW, in December 2008 after the retirement of Arinze, Benedict XVI appointed Cardinal Antonio Canizares Llovera, the former archbishop of Toledo, as Prefect of the Congregation. Llovera is close to Pope Ratzinger; in fact his nickname in the Vatican is 'Little Ratzinger', a reference to his height and rigid orthodoxy. He is a former head of the Spanish Bishops' Office of Doctrine, a former member of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) and a fierce opponent of 'relativism'.

In July 2009 Ranjith was replaced as secretary of the CDW by the American Archbishop Augustine di Noia, OP, also a former official of the CDF under Ratzinger. Di Noia has obviously been appointed by the Pope to drive through the changes to the English translations. He might also have been appointed to assist in the process of receiving so-called Traditional Anglicans back into union with Rome, but it should be noted that he, along with Llovera, has no specialist background or training in liturgy.

The new English text of the Ordinary of the Mass was gradually and often unenthusiastically approved by the English-speaking bishops' conferences, with the US conference being the last to pass it. Following this on 23 June 2008 the CDW gave the new text an immediate *recognitio*. The text only includes the Ordinary of the Mass: the penitential rite, the Gloria, creed, offertory, Eucharistic prayers, acclamations and other prayers and responses used in the daily and Sunday celebration of Mass.

The rest of the missal remains to be translated and approved. This process has begun and Australia's Archbishop Mark Coleridge of Canberra-Goulburn is the Chairman of the Roman Missal Editorial Committee for ICEL as well Chairman of the International Commission for the Preparation of an English-language Lectionary. The CDW wants bishops' conferences to begin a 'pastoral preparation' for an introduction of the new translation of the Mass in 2010.

A foretaste of what might happen pastorally was provided when, in a misunderstanding some South African parishes started using the new text in late-November 2008. It was met with widespread rejection by Mass-going Catholics. The South African Catholic newspaper, *The Southern Cross* reported in an editorial that 'the anger of the people in the pews and many priests (and some bishops) seems to be rooted not so much in what they feel are anachronistic and clumsy translations - vexing though they appear to be to many - but in what they see as an arbitrary imposition of liturgical values that are foreign to them by faceless bureaucrats in Rome.'

In an 18 January 2009 letter to *The Southern Cross*, Bishop Kevin Dowling, C.S.S.R., of Rustenburg in the north-west of South Africa, said that his first reaction to the new texts 'was that it was a purely arbitrary decision to demand that the English text had to faithfully represent the Latin in the first place, that many of the changes made no sense, and that some of the formulations were simply bad English.'

A full copy of the new ICEL text of the Ordinary of the Mass is available on the web page of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops web site. The US bishops plan to spend the whole of 2010 training priests and liturgical ministers in the minutiae of the new text. They intend to introduce it into parishes in 2011. Australia is to follow a similar time-table.

In order to get some idea of what is ahead I want to examine the proposed changes that not only impinge on the celebrant

and ministers but that also impinge on the whole congregation.

Catholics will be pulled up short right at the commencement of Mass if the priest uses the greeting 'The Lord be with you', because the new response is '*And with your spirit*' replacing 'And also with you'. Of course this is a literal translation of *Et cum spiritu tuo* but it is meaningless in modern English. What precisely is 'your spirit' in this context? It sounds almost 'new age' or like the psychobabble condemned in LA. Since this response recurs several times throughout the Mass people are going to be constantly struggling with '*And with your spirit*'.

The Mass begins with the Penitential Rite which ICEL now calls the 'Penitential Act' because the Latin uses the word *actus*. So right at the beginning we see this principle of literalism at work.

The text of the 'I confess' will change with the insertion of the word 'greatly' for it to read '*I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned ...*'. Does the word 'greatly' indicate that everyone present is guilty of serious or mortal sin? And in case that was not enough emphasis on sinfulness, ICEL have added '*through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault*' to the text of the 'I confess'. This kind of overly dramatic repetition is inappropriate, even embarrassing in contemporary English. It may work in an operatic, romance kind of language; it doesn't work in the more phlegmatic, matter-of-fact forms of speech used by English speakers. So far there seems to be only one other option for the penitential rite. Previously there were eight different options.

The Gloria has also undergone a rewrite as the following comparison shows:

<u>Present Form of Gloria</u>	<u>Proposed Form of Gloria</u>
<p>Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people on earth.</p> <p>Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.</p> <p>Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.</p> <p>For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father.</p>	<p><i>Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.</i></p> <p><i>We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King. O God, almighty Father.</i></p> <p><i>Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.</i></p> <p><i>For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father.</i></p>
Amen.	Amen.

There is a kind of modesty and lack of pretentiousness about the Gloria we use at present. It is characterized by directness and an economy of words. While it is hardly high poetry, it follows the rhythms of contemporary English without

awkward verbal juxtapositions. In the new Gloria the kinds of problems we are going to have with the rest of the new text become apparent. You have the feeling that the word order has been changed just for the sake of following the Latin literally. For instance 'Peace to his people on earth' becomes '*and on earth peace to people of good will*'. There is no apparent reason why this has been changed except to follow exactly the order of the words in Latin (*et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis*). 'God' is no longer simply 'God' but becomes '*O God*'; 'only son of the Father' now becomes '*only begotten son*' a meaningless theological gloss for most Catholics. Repetitions are introduced: '*you take away the sins of the world ... you take away the sins of the world*'.

The same kinds of problems are even more apparent and exaggerated in the Creed.

<u>Present Form of Creed</u>	<u>Proposed Form of Creed</u>
<p>We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. 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 one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made.</p> <p>For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the</p>	<p><i>I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made.</i></p> <p><i>For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit</i></p>

Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one, holy Catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

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For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

And one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

Many commentators have pointed out already that in the proposed new text we no longer believe as a community, but as individuals. Sure, *credo* means '*I believe*', but we are not at the Eucharist as individuals. Some also argue that the 'I' represents not the individual worshipper, but the community as the one body of Christ at prayer. While there is some plausibility to this argument the danger is that people do not think or speak that way nowadays: 'I' is individualistic in modern English and 'we' clearly conveys the sense of the community. So the problem is that for the sake of a pedantic translation of the Latin we run the risk of losing consciousness of the essentially communal nature of worship and belief.

And in the new sentence Jesus is no longer just 'only Son of God' but '*only begotten son*', an arcane and archaic way of speaking in English. And just in case you missed it, a couple of lines later Jesus is '*begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father*'. These are theological niceties, but they have no meaning for contemporary worshippers. The aim is clearly to express a kind of 'high' Christology, but to what purpose? These philosophical terms only make sense within the context of the cosmology and theology of the late-Greco-Roman world. They have little or no impact on modern Catholics who are trying to *pray* the creed. The words are there to assist prayer. All that the new text does is to create rhetorical obstacles in raising minds and hearts to God, a difficult enough process even in the present formulation of the creed. Jesus is no longer simply 'incarnate from the Virgin Mary', but now '*by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary*'. Again this is a pedantic precision, meaningful only to theologians. The English is contorted simply to fit into a theology which has little significance to most Catholics who live within the context of a modern, scientific cosmology.

The CDW's answer to this difficulty - which it acknowledges - is that the purpose is to get people to go and ask the priest what the theological terms mean. It is more likely that they will

simple see this as arcane language of no significance to them or their lives. People may have anathematized and even killed each other over these terms in the fourth and fifth centuries. In the twenty-first they will simply shrug their shoulders and might even walk away. This is not because they are indifferent; while the language is meaningful to theologians, it is simply not the way that contemporary Catholics think about God, Christ and the Holy Spirit. We think in inter-personal terms, we talk the language of love and affection and, as the heirs of Freud, Jung and modern psychology it is difficult if not impossible for us to embrace the philosophical categories that created the Nicene Creed.

When we come to the Eucharistic Prayer, again there are changes made simply for the sake of change. At the beginning of the Preface when the celebrant says 'Let us give thanks to the Lord our God' the congregation now replies '*It is right and just*', when in the old formula we said something that actually made sense in a conversational dialogue: 'It is right to give him thanks and praise'. In the Sanctus the Lord is no longer 'God of power and might', but '*Lord God of hosts*', whatever 'hosts' might mean for those not trained in the rhetoric of biblical warfare.

In the actual Eucharistic Prayers there are a whole series of changes with which priests are going to have to deal. However, the most contentious change with implications for all Catholics is in the actual words of the consecration of the wine. The old formula was: 'This is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and ever-lasting covenant; it will be shed for you and for all'. This expresses the clear, constant and unequivocal teaching of the Catholic Church that Christ died for all, that his death has a universal impact without exclusion. But this has been changed in the new translation to '*For this is the chalice of my blood, the blood of the new and eternal covenant, which will be poured out for you and for many*'. Why the 'cup' becomes the arcane word '*chalice*' is anybody's

guess, but what is most worrying is the change from saying that Christ died **for all**, to saying that he died **for many**. The reason given is that this is the accurate translation of the Latin *pro multis*. While that is correct linguistically, it is totally incorrect theologically and probably heretical. This is about a central plank of Catholic belief that is especially important nowadays - the universal salvation won by Christ.

Bishop Donald Trautman of Erie, Pennsylvania discusses this in some detail in an article in *The Tablet* (3 February 2007). Trautman refers to a commissioned piece in the official periodical of the CDW itself, *Notitiae* (May 1970, pp 138-140) by the expert exegete and linguist, Max Zerwick, SJ, where the Jesuit clearly states: 'According to exegetes, the Aramaic word which in Latin is translated *pro multis* ['for many'] means *pro omnibus* ['for all']. The multitude for whom Christ died is unbounded, which is the same as saying Christ died for us all.'

Zerwick concedes that the Bible uses the phrase 'for many', but that in the Semitic mind this phrase clearly meant 'for all'. But he argues that this is not clear to people today so that *pro multis* should be translated 'for all'. This leads Bishop Trautman to challenge the CDW and Benedict XVI to explain what the translation '*for many*' means, and he asks them to justify why they have allowed what is essentially a distortion of a central tenet of Catholic belief: the universal salvation brought about by Christ.

As he says: "'Many" does not mean everyone. On a pastoral level we must have from the Vatican a better rationale for this major change than what has been given ... We need a pastoral approach. How many people in the pews will hear a universal inclusive meaning in "for many"?' This is a vivid example of the result of the literalism adopted by the CDW: essentially they end up with a translation that is at best misleading, at worst, heretical.

It has been claimed by apologists for the new translation that 'many' means 'all' in this context. That immediately suggests that if that is the case why introduce the word 'many' when it actually means 'all', the word you already had in the text in the first place! According to the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary the word 'many' means 'a great number', whereas 'all' means 'the whole amount', 'without exception', the lot. It has even been suggested that the Vox Clara committee took this issue of translation to Benedict XVI and he assured them that the English word 'many' really meant 'all' in this context. While his theological acumen is undoubted, Pope Ratzinger's mastery of the English language surely has serious limitations, especially when compared to the authority of the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary.

When we get to the Our Father the simple, straight-forward words 'Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us' becomes the pompous '*At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say*'. At the Communion it is no longer sufficient to say 'Lord I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed'. In the new version the congregation will be expected to say: '*Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed*'.

Again one is faced with the question of the purpose of this. Sure, it refers back to the centurion who asks Jesus in the gospel to cure his servant, but why is this complexity introduced which obscures the meaning?

Bishop Trautman gives voice to the kinds of questions that occur to anyone who has read the new ICEL translation: 'In evaluating the translations we need to consider whether the texts are both understandable and proclaimable, and whether they use a word order, vocabulary and idiom of the mainstream of English-speaking people. If these texts are to be the prayers of the people, are they owned by them and expressed in their language? The texts include new words

such as "consubstantial to the Father" and "incarnate of the Virgin Mary", while words in the various new Collects include "sullied", "unfeigned", "ineffable", "gibbet", "wrought", "thwart". Do these texts communicate in the living language of the worshipping assembly?' These are the real *pastoral* questions that the proponents of these changes have to answer.

Priests, of course, are faced with many other changes. Some of the changes in the Eucharistic Prayers (EP) are worth examining - although it is clear that EPs one and four are not used very often these days in parishes, even on Sundays. There is a real sense that they have not been 'received'. The reason seems to be their length and complexity.

In my view there are some improvements in the translation of EP1 (the Roman Canon). But if the old translation errs on the side of being prosaic, the new translation often-times seems a little over-the-top. For instance in the prayer just before the consecration:

<u>Present Form of Prayer</u>	<u>Proposed Form of Prayer</u>
<p>Bless and approve our offering; make it acceptable to you, an offering in spirit and in truth. Let it become for us the body and blood of Jesus Christ your only Son, our Lord.</p>	<p><i>Be pleased, O God, we pray, to bless, acknowledge and approve this offering in every respect; make it spiritual and acceptable, so that it may become for us the body and blood of your most beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.</i></p>

In the link prayer between the consecration of the bread and the wine the simple and straight-forward present form 'When supper was ended he took the cup. Again he gave you thanks and praise, gave the cup to his disciples and said ... ' (with the

formula of the consecration of the wine following) is replaced with the more verbose *'In a similar way, when supper was ended, he took this precious chalice in his holy and venerable hands, and once more giving thanks, he said the blessing and gave the cup to his disciples saying...'* (This formula is more simply expressed in the other EPs). Later in EP1 the simple phrase addressed to God 'Look with favor on these offerings...' becomes *'Be pleased to look upon them with serene and kindly countenance...'*. In an attempt to be reverential the proposed text actually becomes slightly groveling.

In the preface of EP2 you again see the replacement of words in common use with others that are more arcane. For instance the straight-forward 'He [Christ] took flesh and was born of the Virgin Mary' becomes *'our Savior and Redeemer, incarnate by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin'*, and the succinct and clear 'For our sake he opened his arms on the cross; he put an end to death and revealed the resurrection' becomes *'He stretched out his hands as he endured his Passion, so as to break the bonds of death and manifest the resurrection'*. In EP3 words like 'offering' becomes *'oblation'*, 'saints' become *'elect'*, 'peace' becomes *'reconciliation'* and 'all the bishops' becomes *'the Order of bishops'* which could suggest to the uninitiated that the bishops constituted a religious order!

Essentially the text that has been produced is by this whole process is characterized by pretentious Latinisms and pseudo-Victorianisms. Because it follows the rhythm and dynamics of the Latin, it is difficult to speak aloud with facility in English. The kind of literalism that this introduces is very close to fundamentalism.

Essentially, most of the responsibility for the implementation of these changes will fall on the priests. Responses to this challenge will differ, of course, between priests. The large

majority of Australian priests clearly support the changes introduced by Vatican II and they certainly don't want to see these reforms dismantled. Most are also aware that these linguistic changes to the liturgy symbolize a shift away from a commitment to the kind of Catholicism that has emerged from Vatican II. This will immediately put some priests on the defensive against the changes. A minority are already quite hostile and have no intention of implementing them. As one priest put it, 'I'll never use the Gloria again'.

Other priests, both rural and urban, have become very congregational in their approach; that is their primary commitment is to their parish communities and if they feel that the changes are too much to ask of the laity they will either not implement them or only implement them in part. Some also don't like the pseudo-sacred, neo-Victorian style, and will continue to use the kind of language that people understand. Their view is that words in liturgical books have no priority claim on God's attention, but that it is the sincere prayer of the community that counts.

But most priests will want to play this in a very low key way; they are not looking for confrontation, especially with the 'temple police' or other 'heresy hunters'. Perhaps the majority of Vatican II priests will go along with the changes to some extent, but without enthusiasm. Many of them are worn out and couldn't care less about reforms of the reform that they never asked for, nor wanted.

The whole process shows that very few in the hierarchy are listening to ordinary Catholics. This whole exercise has been driven by an ideological coterie who not only know nothing about the lives of ordinary Catholics, but who really have no concern about the pastoral needs of people in parishes, schools and other communities. The whole process has been carried on by so-called experts in secrecy. Never once have the ordinary faithful been consulted. Nothing has ever been

openly 'road-tested' in a real parish. If this is meant to be the prayer of the people then surely the people ought to have been asked what they think. All the decisions have been taken at the top level by bishops' conferences and in Vatican offices and Vox Clara committees. The pastoral irresponsibility of those in the Vatican and elsewhere who have driven this process is mind-blowing.

My own view is that this exercise will be a disaster pastorally. It will simply put people off and be perceived as a meaningless change with no credible rationale. The history outlined above shows that this whole process has been ideologically driven by a tiny, unrepresentative minority who are insensitive to the real needs of the Catholic community and who, at heart, reject the Second Vatican Council. Worse, they are ideologues who don't care about what happens, they are not interested in how many more people are driven out of the Church by the pomposity of what is essentially a failed attempt to create a kind of perennial, 'sacred' language.

The tragedy is that this will alienate more Catholics right at the time when we are struggling to involve people from Generations X and Y. But even worse than the proposed new text is the process through which this translation was imposed on the church. It was done in secret and dominated by those determined to abandon the translation we use at present. The faithful were never consulted. So it remains to be seen if this imposed text is ever fully accepted.

Commentators such as Austen Ivereigh concede that the new ICEL translation may work, but he warns that 'it is also conceivable that the new missal will prove a disaster, stuffed with archaisms and artificiality, reeking of a restorationist *putsch*, reflecting a fundamentalist response to modernity ... History may record that at the precise moment when liturgical translation was finding its own better balance between enculturation and fidelity, a fearful Rome intervened

aggressively, alienating experienced liturgists just when they needed them.'

I return to where I started. Essentially this whole exercise is rooted in a rejection of Vatican II and all that it achieved for Catholicism. At its core it is driven by those who want to 'reform the reform' out of existence. Perhaps the time has come for those of us who are still actively committed to Catholicism to make a stand and reject outright this exercise in nostalgia which will make it even more difficult to hand on the faith to coming generations.

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