

# Bulletin Blurbs on the New Roman Missal

May 2011

*In preparation for the implementation of the new Roman Missal in November, we're encouraging parishes to include a short blurb in their bulletins each week. The Office of Worship will send suggested bulletin blurbs monthly. Since this is an excellent opportunity for catechesis on the liturgy, some blurbs will focus specifically on the upcoming changes; others will focus on our celebration of the Eucharist in general.*

*Below are the bulletin blurbs for May 2011:*

## **Sunday, May 1, 2011**

*On Sunday, November 27 of this year, Catholics in the United States will begin worshiping with the newly-translated texts of the third edition of the Roman Missal.*

The Eucharistic Prayer is the “center and high point” of the entire celebration of the Mass. It offers praise, and it asks God to change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. For many years in our history, this prayer was recited quietly by the priest alone. Now, the people are also expected to unite their hearts and minds with the priest as he offers the prayer aloud. The first part of this central prayer of the Mass is called the Preface. That term in this instance does not mean that it is a preliminary section like the preface of a book; rather, it comes from a Latin word that simply means a proclamation. In the preface we proclaim our praise of God, focusing on one or several aspects of God’s wondrous works on our behalf. The preface itself begins with a dialogue that we could probably recite in our sleep: The Lord be with you. And also with you. Lift up your hearts. We lift them up to the Lord. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give him thanks and praise. In Advent of this year, those words will be changing slightly to the following: The Lord be with you. **And with your spirit.** Lift up your hearts. We lift them up to the Lord. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right and just.**

## **Sunday, May 8, 2011**

*On Sunday, November 27 of this year, Catholics in the United States will begin worshiping with the newly-translated texts of the third edition of the Roman Missal.*

Most Catholics are familiar with our tradition of calling the Mass a sacrifice. It is less clear whether most of us understand how the Mass is a sacrifice and what it means for us to make that claim. We begin with Christ’s own sacrifice. The core of his sacrifice was expressed in his prayer in the garden of Gethsemane: “Not my will but yours be done.” His sacrifice was his surrender to the Father’s will in all things, no matter what that might cost. This commitment led to his death and resurrection. In the Eucharistic Prayer, we recall what Jesus did for us – his sacrifice on the cross. We recall what Jesus did so that we might unite ourselves with his sacrifice. In one of our Eucharistic Prayers, we pray: “Father, look with love on those you have called to share in the one sacrifice of Christ.” To do that means to surrender our wills to the Father’s will just as he did. It means being willing to give ourselves for others as he did. It means being willing to accept whatever

comes as a result of our faithfulness to the Father's will. For Jesus, that meant death on the cross and resurrection to new life. Most of us will not hang from a wooden cross, but all of us have to embrace the crosses that life brings us. We share in Christ's sacrifice to the extent that we embrace his attitude, his act of will, his relationship with the Father.

### **Sunday, May 15, 2011**

*On Sunday, November 27 of this year, Catholics in the United States will begin worshiping with the newly-translated texts of the third edition of the Roman Missal.*

From the fourth century on, the Eucharistic Prayer, along with the whole Mass, was prayed in Latin – the vernacular language for many in the Holy Roman Empire. Over time, however, as places of worship grew larger and the language of the people evolved, much of what the celebrant prayed in Latin with his back to the people was not heard by the congregation, much less understood. The role of the assembly became increasingly passive. Because of their passive role during the Eucharistic Prayer, people often prayed private devotions, stopping only for what they felt was the most important moment in the Eucharistic Prayer – indeed in the entire liturgy – the moment of consecration. Most believed that this moment was accomplished solely by the priest uttering, in Latin, the words “This is my body” and “This is my blood” while elevating the consecrated Host and wine. People came to believe that Jesus' words “Do this in memory of me” were referring to something the priest alone was to accomplish through his power to consecrate. However, Jesus' words are addressed to all who are gathered to celebrate the Eucharist. Although the priest alone prays aloud the words of the Eucharistic Prayer, he is praying the words on behalf of, and in union with, all of those gathered. The priest shares the Eucharistic Prayer with the community of believers who are worshipping together with him.

### **Sunday, May 22, 2011**

*On Sunday, November 27 of this year, Catholics in the United States will begin worshiping with the newly-translated texts of the third edition of the Roman Missal.*

There are currently four basic Eucharistic Prayers prayed at Mass (and each of these will see some changes in wording with the introduction of the newly revised Roman Missal in Advent). **Eucharistic Prayer I** is also referred to as the Roman Canon since it was the only Eucharistic Prayer permitted in the Roman rite from the Council of Trent to the Second Vatican Council. It was inspired by a Eucharistic prayer written by St. Ambrose in the fourth century. This prayer calls to mind the story of salvation history, beginning with the Jewish people and continuing through the apostles, saints, and martyrs. **Eucharistic Prayer II** was written after the Second Vatican Council but actually has its roots in a third century Eucharistic prayer written by St. Hippolytus of Rome. This prayer is beautiful in its brevity and simplicity. **Eucharistic Prayer III** imitates the pattern of Eucharistic Prayer I, although it is much shorter. The focus of this prayer is on God's saving action, calling all of God's children to be united “wherever they may be.” **Eucharistic Prayer IV**, modeled on prayers from the West Syrian liturgy, uses images from Scripture – creation, the covenant, the Incarnation – to tell the story of salvation history. These four Eucharistic Prayers all contain the same principal elements and they

all provide us with a clear focus of what Jesus wants us to do in his memory – namely, remember, celebrate, give thanks, and believe.

**Sunday, May 29, 2011**

*On Sunday, November 27 of this year, Catholics in the United States will begin worshiping with the newly-translated texts of the third edition of the Roman Missal.*

As the Eucharistic Prayer draws to its climactic conclusion, the celebrant sums up all that we have just prayed together. Our response is not just any old “amen” but a thunderous one. This amen, through which we give our assent and approval of the entire Eucharistic Prayer, is a resounding or “great” amen. This great amen reminds us that the Eucharistic Prayer belongs to all of those gathered to celebrate Eucharist. This great amen is an expression of ownership, allowing the faithful to confirm that the words of the Eucharistic Prayer are indeed our own words. The richness of the Eucharist Prayer is deep. In those few moments during the Mass, we witness and take part in not only what Jesus gathered with his apostles to do on Holy Thursday, but in the very act of salvation that was his death on Good Friday and his resurrection on Easter Sunday. Our faith is strengthened by what we have shared, strengthened to the point of taking this presence of the risen Lord with us into the word.