



# Word on Worship

Newsletter of the Worship Office, Archdiocese of Newark, NJ

**Editor's Note:** It is our usual practice to publish original material in each issue of *Word on Worship*. This issue is entirely devoted to reprinting the remarks of Bishop Donald Trautman of Erie, PA, which he delivered at a lecture in February. The text appeared in *Origins* earlier this year. The editorial board wanted to circulate Bishop Trautman's remarks since the issue of inclusive language is of concern to those involved in liturgy and because of the need for sound reflection on the topic.

*"The church in the United States awaits two essential liturgical books to complete the liturgical renewal: the revised Sacramentary and the revised New American Bible Lectionary," Bishop Donald Trautman of Erie, PA, immediate past president of the U.S. Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, said in a lecture Feb. 27 at St. Mary Seminary of the University of St. Thomas in Houston, Texas. Trautman focused on the legacy of the liturgical renewal connected to Vatican Council II and the challenges faced by translators of liturgical texts, particularly in regard to inclusive language. Asking, for example, "what makes the proposed Lectionary so problematic," Trautman responded: "inclusive language." Trautman called inclusive language "a complex and sensitive issue which has ramifications far beyond translations." His lecture began with a recollection of Vatican II's liturgical renewal. "With bold and authoritative words, the council fathers re-established liturgy in its rightful place: on center stage in the life of the church."*

*However, he said, 30 years after Vatican II "liturgy remains the battleground, the focal point for tensions in the church." He said: "More than ever we need to realize that the liturgical movement and the reform of Vatican II call for not simply a change of liturgical forms and texts, but rather a transformation of people. The revision of liturgical books and rites seeks to give new life to people based on a formation that has its summit and source in the liturgy." Trautman discussed goals in the translating of texts for the liturgy; he distinguished horizontal from vertical inclusive language, he distinguished the use of inclusive language from endorsement of a feminist agenda or women's ordination; and he acknowledged the existence of bad inclusive language. "Great havoc is being done to the inspired word by people not trained in Scripture. There is an urgent pastoral need for an approved, scripturally sound Lectionary with the use of horizontal inclusive language," Trautman said. He said, "Inclusive language is simply a recognition of contemporary culture and the changes in the English language. It is clearly a response to the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy that there be full participation in the liturgy." Trautman's text follows.*

Among the most significant and pivotal religious events of the 20th century stands the

renewal of Catholic liturgy. In fact, the 20th century has witnessed the simultaneous growth of three great revivals within the church — liturgical, biblical and catechetical. All three are interconnected: A renewed liturgy leads to a greater love and understanding of the Bible; a greater appreciation of the word of God embodied in the liturgy leads to a more zealous proclamation of the word in catechetics. The Catholic Church in the United States can boast of its contributions to all three movements. <sup>1</sup>

The council fathers of Vatican II embraced and endorsed a liturgical revival as the central focus of church renewal. With clear and decisive words, the council fathers stated that the reform and restoration of the liturgy must be seen as a "sign of the providential disposition of God in our time, a movement of the Holy Spirit." <sup>2</sup> With bold and authoritative words, the council fathers re-established liturgy in its rightful place — on center stage in the life of the church: "The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the church is directed; at the same time, it is the fount from which all the church's power flows." <sup>3</sup>

The central importance of liturgy in the life of the church is unequivocally reflected in these conciliar words: "Every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the priest and of his body the

---

---

## INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE AND REVISED LITURGICAL BOOKS

---

---



**"We must avoid simplistic approaches that call us back to an era that has passed. A pre-Vatican II liturgical theology and practice have no chance of speaking to a post-Vatican II world."**

church, is a sacred action surpassing all others. No other action of the church can match its claim to efficacy, nor equal the degree of it."<sup>4</sup> Here the church defines liturgy as an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ.

Clearly the liturgical movement of the 20th century, reaching its zenith at Vatican II, has left distinguishing and lasting marks on the church's life. What are these marks? What are these liturgical achievements?

- The vernacular.
- The restoration of the role of the assembly with full, conscious and active participation.
- The church defined as people of God.
- Lay people in various liturgical ministries.
- The pre-eminent role of sacred Scripture in all liturgical rites — the opening of the storehouse of Scripture as reflected in the three-year cycle of biblical readings.
- The renewal of biblical preaching.
- The restoration of the catechumenate and Scripture-centered catechesis.
- The restoration of noble simplicity in liturgical rites.
- Ecclesial recognition of liturgical adaptation and inculturation — ("norms for adapting the liturgy to the genius and traditions of peoples," *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 37-40).
- Reformed liturgical books.

This is the legacy of the liturgical renewal. In the course of centuries much of the vitality in the worship life of the church had been lost, but thanks to the "movement of the Holy Spirit" at Vatican II, a new beginning was made. The church of the 20th century now

donates to the church of the 21st century a rich liturgical inheritance — a dynamic and ongoing process of renewal.

Nothing is more evident at the core of Christian life than our public worship. It is therefore understandable that the reforms of Vatican II made their greatest impact in the area of liturgy. Thirty years after the renewal of Vatican II, liturgy remains the battleground, the focal point for tensions in the church. It is disconcerting to hear voices in the church that call us away from the vernacular in the liturgy. Those who seek a return to liturgical life as it was prior to Vatican II contradict the teaching of that council. It is disconcerting to hear voices in the church accuse liturgists of de-emphasizing the sacred. Good liturgy will always seek a balance between transcendence and immanence. It is disconcerting to have liturgists blamed for all the ills of the church. Due to many cultural forces, society itself has changed radically since the 1960s. We must avoid simplistic approaches that call us back to an era that has passed. A pre-Vatican II liturgical theology and practice have no chance of speaking to a post-Vatican II world.

We need, however, to keep in mind that in the contemporary church, despite all the revision and reform, there is still a chasm of Grand Canyon proportions between the intended reality and our worship experience. There are parish communities which are communities in name only. Christopher J. Walsh has put it so well: "Reforms and revisions we've had in plenty, but liturgical renewal will never be achieved until our texts, rites and affirmations are translated not into this or that sort of English, but into reality

in the lived experience of the people; and they will rarely be experienced as real until the congregations celebrating them are genuine communities of faith, witness and action."<sup>5</sup>

More than ever we need to realize that the liturgical movement and the reform of Vatican II call for not simply a change of liturgical forms and texts, but rather a transformation of people. The revision of liturgical books and rites seeks to give new life to people based on a formation that has its summit and source in the liturgy. How do we reach that goal? What are some steps toward that transformation? Fundamental and vital are the liturgical and scriptural texts which give meaning and context to what we celebrate. We seek transformation through sung and proclaimed texts, especially the Scriptures in the liturgy of the word, and through the liturgical texts of the Sacramentary — those texts composed by the church such as the prayers of the Mass and the eucharistic prayers themselves. We seek transformation foremost through the sacramental elements, the bread and wine at the eucharist changed into the body and blood of Christ.

In September 1974, Cardinal Knox, then the prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, stated that the liturgical books represented "the basic structures of the liturgical services of the Roman Rite" and adaptation of those books was "absolutely essential" if the ultimate goal of liturgical reform was to be achieved.<sup>6</sup>

The church today stands at the brink of the 21st century. While the church has made momentous liturgical contributions to the next



century, the church in the United States awaits two essential liturgical books to complete the liturgical renewal: the revised Sacramentary and the revised New American Bible Lectionary.

#### THE REVISED SACRAMENTARY

Most of the U.S. bishops recognize that the proposed translation and new original prayers in the revised Sacramentary are a vast improvement over those presently in use. The revised Sacramentary is better suited for public proclamation. It will offer new pastoral introductions and revised translations of collects, ecumenical texts (e.g. Nicene Creed and Apostles' Creed), prefaces and eucharistic prayers and slightly modified introductory rites. The revised missal also includes certain American adaptations such as another option for the sign of peace and the inclusive washing of feet on Holy Thursday.

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops has completed its review of the revised Sacramentary. All the action items pertaining to this revised missal have been approved by a two-thirds canonical vote. There are over 2,000 texts in the Roman Missal and nearly 300 original or newly composed texts that have been carefully scrutinized by the bishops. Never in the history of our country have bishops taken such an active role in the examination of liturgical texts. Approximately 150 texts have been remanded to the International Commission on English in the Liturgy<sup>7</sup> for further consideration. The National Conference of Catholic Bishops will review the revisions made to the texts

remanded to ICEL at its June 1997 meeting. At that time the consideration of the revised ICEL translation and proposed American adaptations to the Roman Missal will be complete. The Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy will then compile the various segments and forward them to the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments for confirmation.

The bishops' approval process for the new Sacramentary has lasted three years, and at times it has been a tedious and tense endeavor. I need to stress that on average more than three-quarters of the bishops have voted in favor of the revised ICEL segments of the Sacramentary. This is a remarkable vote of confidence in the work of ICEL, considering that the Apostolic See requires only a two-thirds approval. The bishops have shown strong support for the revision and admirable patience in dealing with this long and laborious approval process.

Throughout the three-year debate and vote on the various segments of the revised missal, the bishops have been concerned about the fidelity of liturgical translations. This concern is certainly in concert with the instruction of the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments, which states that "the content of the text of the Latin typical edition is to be preserved."<sup>8</sup> This is essential since it is of the very nature of translation to "faithfully communicate to a given people, and in their own language, that which the church, by means of this given text, originally intended to communicate to another people in another time."<sup>9</sup> How is this accomplished?

Father Anscar J. Chupungco, OSB, of the Pontifical Liturgical Institute in Rome, observes that "fidelity to the original refers to the content or meaning of the text, not to the form or component words and phrases. That is why a word-for-word translation is not a guarantee of fidelity to text. On the other hand, the use of dynamic or culturally evocative equivalent to express the original message is the ideal translators should strive for."<sup>10</sup>

Liturgical translation is an art more than a science. Liturgical translation deals primarily with the art of communication. Consider, for example, the fact that the vast majority of texts in our liturgical celebrations are translations from another language. All the texts in the present and proposed Sacramentary, except for some alternate opening prayers and some collects for saints, are from the Latin. All the texts from the sacred Scripture are originally in Hebrew or Greek and some, Aramaic. We need to be sensitive to the problems that translators face in trying to bridge the past and the present, classical and contemporary idiom, different cultures, different grammatical and lexicon systems.

Roman collects are Roman collects, not American, and yet they are destined to become prayers expressed in contemporary culture and English idiom. No translator can render a Latin text into contemporary English which has exactly the identical meaning, form, nuance, tone and feeling of the original. The translator will always be faced with making choices between legitimate word alternatives. The translator will always be involved in interpreting and adapting to a new grammatical structure and

#### Staff

##### Editor:

Rev. Michael A. Saporito

##### Design/Layout:

Rev. Michael C. Santoro

##### Editorial Board:

Joan Conroy

Sr. Sandra DeMasi, SSJ

Rev. Thomas A. Dente

Rev. Peter K. Funesti

Dr. E. Regina Giuliani

Msgr. Richard Groncki

Rev. Thomas B. Iwanowski

Sr. Marlene Milasus, OSB

Rev. Michael C. Santoro

William Shlala

#### Subscription Information

One year subscription to *Word on Worship*, 4 issues, \$10.00. Special Bulk rate, five or more issues to the same address, \$8.50 per year per subscription. Foreign subscription, \$13.50 per year. To begin your subscription call 973-497-4345.



**"No translator can render a Latin text into contemporary English which has exactly the identical meaning, form, nuance, tone and feeling of the original. The translator will always be faced with making choices between legitimate word alternatives. The translator will always be involved in interpreting and adapting to a new grammatical structure and lexicon system."**

lexicon system.

How literal should a translation be? Should a translation be made one word at a time or one phrase at a time, or is the meaning of each sentence sufficient to be rendered? This is an important question that raises significant issues. The instruction on translation of 1969 responds that "a faithful translation cannot be judged on the basis of individual words: The total context of this specific act of communication must be kept in mind as well as the literary form proper to the respective language."<sup>11</sup>

Liturgical translations have also another requirement. They must be effective when proclaimed aloud. Some texts must be suited for singing. All liturgical texts are meant to be prayers coming from the heart.

ICEL has faced no easy task in presenting to the English-speaking world accurate, dignified and intelligible liturgical texts suitable for public proclamation and singing. When the vernacular was decreed for liturgy more than 30 years ago, there was little experience or expertise available in Catholic circles for dealing with the vernacular as a liturgical language. ICEL deserves the thanks of the church for having pioneered the development of a scholarly, sophisticated and systematic approach to the translation of Latin liturgical texts into English liturgical texts.

In what ways is the translation of the revised Sacramentary superior to our present English Sacramentary? There is greater intelligibility for public recitation and singing. There is coordination of biblical images in collects with the Scripture readings of the day. There are new pastoral notes and American adaptations.

The new translation also offers greater doctrinal precision. For example, in the Apostles' Creed the words *he descended into hell* have been changed to *he descended to the dead*. The present translation conveys the fiery hell of the damned, Gehenna. However, the doctrine of the church, made explicit in this article, teaches that Christ descended into Sheol. According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Christ descended *ad inferna* to free the just who had gone before him.<sup>12</sup> This particular article of the Creed has nothing to do with Gehenna. The descent to the dead represents the moment of redemption for all who died before Christ.

The new translation in the revised Sacramentary captures this meaning with greater doctrinal precision. A contemporary congregation understands *hell* as the place of eternal punishment and not as the abode of the dead. The new translation renders the text accurately in accord with the teaching of the Apostles' Creed.

The Eucharistic Prayers 1-4 have been well received over the past 20 years. The revised translations have changed only that which was necessary for greater fidelity to the Latin text or for the sake of proclamation. Eucharistic Prayer 4 has been rendered inclusive.

The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* and the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* give each conference of bishops the authority to make variations and adaptations in the revision of liturgical books, provided that the substantial unity of the Roman rite is preserved. Missals already published in French, German, Spanish, Polish and Italian have a large number of

variations and adaptations. All of these were approved by the Apostolic See.

*Adaptation* is not a bad word. It is part of our ecclesial tradition to situate the Gospel in the world and to adapt the rites of the church to new circumstances. Vatican Council II is a good example itself of adaptation to contemporary culture while preserving the substance of the faith. In 1994 the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments issued an instruction on the Roman liturgy and inculturation.<sup>13</sup> This document explains the nature of adaptation.

American adaptations have been incorporated into the new revised Sacramentary. For example, the sign of peace may be celebrated as an option after the general intercessions, that is, before the preparation of the altar and presentation of the gifts. Other examples are the following: the invitation to the assembly to extend their hands during the Lord's Prayer in the ancient gesture of prayer, the so-called *orans* posture. The assembly may also be invited to kneel for the penitential rite during Lent. The Apostles' Creed could be permitted as an alternative to the Nicene Creed at Mass. These are some of the options proposed in the American adaptations.

The revised Sacramentary holds great promise and potential for God's people.

#### REVISED NAB LECTIONARY

In his apostolic letter on the third millennium, Pope John Paul II stated, "In order to know the true identity of Christ, Christians must return with renewed interest to the Bible."<sup>14</sup> For most Catholics, the Lectionary is the primary



place for encountering the word of God. It is in the Liturgy of the Word — the Lectionary that more Catholics meet Christ than in any other exposure to the inspired word.

On Dec. 13, 1996, all seven active cardinals of the United States met in Rome with the prefects of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments. What prompted such a high-level meeting of church leaders? The cardinals had traveled to Rome in behalf of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops to hasten the approval of the revised New American Bible Lectionary, which has been awaiting confirmation in Rome since 1992.<sup>15</sup> Why has there been such a delay? What makes the proposed Lectionary so problematic? The answer: inclusive language.

The council fathers of Vatican II called “all the faithful” to full, conscious and active participation in the liturgy and stated such participation is “their right and duty by reason of their baptism.”<sup>16</sup> This particular conciliar text is the foundation for the principle of inclusive language. Inclusive language is language that is sensitive to the equality and dignity of each person. Inclusive language also concerns race, ethnic background, age and personal abilities. The term *the handicapped* stresses disability rather than personhood and should be replaced with *persons with disability*. Michael Mulvihill, writing in the liturgy publication from the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, stresses that the very nature of the eucharist, as a sacramental celebration of the event of universal salvation, calls for

liturgical texts that do not exclude anyone from the call to participate at the table of the Lord:

“Jesus, Son of God and Son of Mary, is the all-inclusive person in whom all humankind finds the source of their unity and communion. The eucharist is his memorial. As such, it is an all-inclusive celebration. It is a challenge to all and any kinds of discrimination. It is a call to affirmation of the dignity of each and every human person. All without exception or preference are called to sit in equality in sister/brotherly relationship with the Lord himself, so as to share together his life.”<sup>17</sup>

How important an issue is inclusive language? Is it much ado about nothing?

Consider the experience of two college girls who attended Mass in their parish church. Recall that they have grown up with textbooks, newspapers, television and songs that use *man* to mean “male.” This is what they heard on the fourth Sunday of ordinary time in the opening prayer at Mass: “Lord our God, help us love you with all our hearts. . . and to love all *men* as you love them.” Then came the Scripture reading from 1 Corinthians 1:26-31 (Year A): “*Brothers*, you are among those called . . . that many of you are wise, as *men* account wisdom.... Let *him* who would boast, boast in the Lord.”

Then came the prayer of the faithful, a petition “that all *men* might discover peace and happiness in their faith, we pray to the Lord.” The priest prayed the fifth preface for Sunday’s ordinary time: “You chose to create *man* in your own image, setting *him* over the whole world. You made

*man* the steward of your creation to praise you day by day.”

The priest celebrant chose Eucharistic Prayer 4 and prayed: “Father, we acknowledge your greatness. All your actions show your wisdom and love. You formed *man* in your likeness and set *him* over the whole world to serve you, *his* creator.... Even when *he* disobeyed you and lost your friendship, you did not abandon *him* to the power of death, but helped all *men* to seek and find you. Again and again you offered a covenant to *man* and through the prophets taught *him* to hope for salvation.”

In 11 lines of this eucharistic prayer, the words *man*, *he* and *him* occur seven times. One girl turned to her friend and said, “Why should I come to church when all I hear is language that excludes me?”

If those girls attended Mass before 1981, they would have heard these words spoken by the priest over the chalice at Mass: “This is the cup of my blood. The blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all *men*.”

In 1981 the Apostolic See permitted the dropping of that one word, *men*, making the text inclusive. For those opposed to inclusive language, is there anyone who would go back to restoring the word *men* to the words of consecration?

Inclusive language is a complex and sensitive issue which has ramifications far beyond translations. It has become the focal point for judging continued liturgical progress or retrenchment. It is a major pastoral concern for the church in the United States. There has been a noticeable





**"Horizontal inclusive language refers to the use of inclusive or gender-neutral phrasing for references to humans, that is, terms which are intended to refer to both men and women. Today major newspapers, magazines, television, textbooks used in schools employ sex-inclusive language."**

loss of the sense of grammatical gender in the American usage of the English language. Modern English does not have grammatical gender the way French, German and Spanish do. With the course of time and the influence of culture, the meaning of words has changed. Words that once referred to all human beings are increasingly taken as gender specific and consequently exclusive.

Words such as *man*, *brethren*, *forefathers*, which were once understood as inclusive generic terms, today are often understood as referring to only males. Certain usages of *he*, *his* and *him* once were generic and included both women and men, but today in contemporary American usage refer to only males. For more and more people generic language no longer works. To refer to women using masculine language appears to many to be unjust and inaccurate. It does not promote full participation in the liturgy. The church today is grappling with the sex-specific singular pronoun.

It is important to distinguish vertical inclusive language from horizontal inclusive language. Vertical inclusive language is God language, and the bishops of the United States have stated: "In fidelity to the inspired word of God, the traditional biblical usage for naming persons of the Trinity as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is to be retained."<sup>18</sup> Horizontal inclusive language refers to the use of inclusive or gender-neutral phrasing for references to humans, that is, terms which are intended to refer to both men and women. Today major newspapers, magazines, television, textbooks used in schools employ sex-inclusive language. Continued use of

terms which are interpreted as sex exclusive will harm the church's pastoral mission. Our younger people are taught routinely in their secondary and college education to use sex-inclusive language.

In many instances a more inclusive translation will actually be closer to the original Greek or Hebrew text. For example, consider Mark 8:36, 37: "For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give in return for his life?" This is the Revised Standard Version translation. However, if you consult the original Greek text you will find that the word *anthropos* is used for *man*. That Greek word does not mean a male human being, but rather a human being in general. In this instance inclusive language actually corrects a distorted translation and accurately brings out the meaning of the inspired text.

Addressing women using male language denies women their own identity. When women are not named specifically, they are excluded from full participation. This diminishes the church. It is a problem for the whole church, for men and women alike.

While we all admire and welcome the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, it is regrettable that it does not employ inclusive language. In Paragraph 1579 the catechism deals with celibacy and states: "Called to consecrate themselves with undivided heart to the Lord and to the affairs of the Lord, they (the ordained ministers of the Latin church) give themselves entirely to God and to men." This is a most unfortunate translation in view of pedophile behavior in our society. This is not the

language to promote celibacy in the contemporary culture of the United States. This is a dramatic example of why exclusive language is unacceptable.

The longer the confirmation of the new Lectionary is delayed, the greater difficulty we will have in preventing people from changing biblical texts on the basis of their own personal likes and dislikes. Great havoc is being done to the inspired word by people not trained in Scripture. There is an urgent pastoral need for an approved, scripturally sound Lectionary with the use of horizontal inclusive language.

Bad inclusive language also exists. The Oxford University Press recently published *The New Testament and Psalms: An Inclusive Version*. This is a most irresponsible translation that offends the doctrine of the church and revealed truths. This translation eliminates all references to God the Father. The Lord's Prayer begins "Our Father-Mother in heaven." In some instances the translation is not based on the inspired texts and even adds words not found in the original. In my opinion, this biblical version is not so much a translation as a rewrite based on contemporary political and social ideologies. The editors of this volume have done a great disservice to biblical scholarship and the need for a balanced use of inclusive language.

A new American Lectionary without horizontal inclusive language will be inferior to other biblical translations, even from fundamentalists, who certainly uphold the literal meaning of Scripture. This past year a new translation of the Bible, with a recommendation by Billy Graham, was published by Tyndale, titled *Holy Bible: A*



*New Living Translation.* This Bible is the work of conservative biblical scholars from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Southeastern College of the Assemblies of God, Westminster Theological Seminary, Fuller Theological Seminary, Dallas Theological Seminary and Denver Conservative Baptist Seminary to name just a few. This text boasts of the fact that it uses gender-inclusive language.

In the introductory notes the translators comment: "In the Pentateuch most of the laws are stated in language that is replete with masculine pronouns. But since it is clear in many cases that the recipients of these laws were both male and female, we have used gender-neutral language where appropriate."

Another example is found in the New Testament of epistles, where the believers are called *brothers (adelphoi)*. Yet it is clear that these epistles were addressed to all believers — male and female. Thus, we have usually translated this Greek word *brothers and sisters* or *Christian friends*.<sup>19</sup>

It will be a sad day for Catholic biblical scholarship and even a sadder day for the pastoral life of the church in the United States if the new Lectionary does not incorporate the principles of gender-inclusive language. If biblical scholars from the fundamentalist tradition, who clearly revere the literal interpretation of the Bible, employ gender-inclusive language and Roman Catholics are denied, there is not just a liturgical problem, there is an ecclesiological problem of great magnitude. It is the fear of many Catholic Scripture scholars that our new

Lectionary will be called inclusive but in fact will offer only a tokenism, thus making the Lectionary inferior to existing non-Catholic translations.

We have used inclusive-language liturgical texts in English since 1976 without any significant problem. ICEL has used inclusive language rather than generic language in the Rites of Anointing and Viaticum, *the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* and the *Order of Christian Funerals*. These texts have been well received by our people. Now there is a need to bring inclusive language into the Sacramentary and the Lectionary.

Finally, let it be stated forcefully that the use of inclusive language does not mean an endorsement of feminist agenda or women's ordination. Inclusive language is simply a recognition of contemporary culture and the changes in the English language. It is clearly a response to the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* that there be full participation in the liturgy.

#### CONCLUSION

The goal of all Bible translation is to convey the meaning of the inspired text as accurately and faithfully as possible to the modern reader. However, the Pontifical Biblical Commission notes that "a translation is always more than a simple transcription of the original text. The passage from one language to another necessarily involves a change of cultural context."<sup>20</sup> This must be the guiding principle for the revised Lectionary and the revised Sacramentary.

From the beginning of the church the proclamation of the Scriptures has been an

essential part of the liturgy. The first Christians inherited the reading of the Scriptures at liturgy from the synagogue. When the Scriptures are proclaimed in the midst of the community of believers at liturgy, it is Christ who speaks. The *Constitution on Sacred Liturgy* states: Christ is "present in his word, because it is he himself who speaks when sacred Scripture is read in the church."<sup>21</sup> It is in the context of liturgy that the written word becomes the living word.

When people come to liturgical celebrations, they come with the everyday language of contemporary life in their ears. When people pray in their own words, they use the language with which they are conditioned daily. That language reflects the influence of television, videos, movies, newspapers, magazines and best sellers. Our liturgical and Scriptural language must be "within the people's powers of comprehension and normally should not require much explanation."<sup>22</sup> How much longer will the church in the United States have to pray with liturgical and biblical texts that are exclusive, unintelligible, culturally insensitive and outmoded? How much longer must women pray, "For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven"?

Liturgical and biblical texts have been evolving for centuries. They connect us to the church of all ages: past, present and future. May the contemporary church be open to that further development. Let us be proactive and persuasive, patient and prayerful as we seek the liturgical and biblical texts for the third millennium.+

**"It is the fear of many Catholic Scripture scholars that our new Lectionary will be called inclusive but in fact will offer only a tokenism."**



## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Pioneers in liturgical movement in the United States include Father Virgil Michel, OSB, Gerald Ellard, SJ, H.A. Reinhold, Martin Hellriegel, Michael Mathias, CSC, Godfrey Diekmann, OSB.

<sup>2</sup> Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 43.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>5</sup> Gabe Huck, ed., *A Sourcebook About Liturgy* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1984), p.169.

<sup>6</sup> *Documents on the Liturgy, 1963-1979: Conciliar, Papal and Curial Texts* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1982), DOL 100, No. 697.

<sup>7</sup> The International Commission on English in the Liturgy was established during the Second Vatican Council, Oct. 17, 1963, by

representatives of 10 English-speaking conferences of bishops: Australia, Canada, England and Wales, India, Ireland, New Zealand, Pakistan, Scotland, South Africa and the United States.

<sup>8</sup> Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments, "The Roman Liturgy and Inculturation: The Fourth Instruction for the Right Application of the Conciliar Constitution on the Liturgy" (March 29, 1994), No. 53.

<sup>9</sup> Consilium, *Comme le Prevoit* (Instruction on the Translation of Liturgical Texts for Celebration With a Congregation), *Documents on the Liturgy*, 123, Nos. 838-880.

<sup>10</sup> The Roman Liturgy and Inculturation," Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions Newsletter, December 1994, Vol. 21, No. 6.

<sup>11</sup> *Comme le Prevoit*, 6.

<sup>12</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, 632, 633.

<sup>13</sup> The Roman Liturgy and Inculturation."

<sup>14</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 40.

<sup>15</sup> On July 20, 1992, the Revised New American Bible Vol. 1 of the Lectionary was sent to the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments. Two hundred nineteen bishops voted in the affirmative and 27 voted in the negative. The biblical translation used in the Lectionary is the New American Bible with revised New Testament and the New American Bible Book of Psalms.

<sup>16</sup> Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 14.

<sup>17</sup> Liturgy Office, Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, "Some Remarks on Women, the Eucharist and

Inclusive Language," Vol. 20, No. 2, December 1995-January 1996, p. 49.

<sup>18</sup> "Criteria for the Evaluation of Inclusive-Language Translations of Scriptural Texts Proposed for Liturgical Use," U.S. Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy Newsletter October/November 1990, No. 30.

<sup>19</sup> Page xlv, *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Tyndale House Publishers, 1996).

<sup>20</sup> Pontifical Biblical Commission, "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church," (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice, 1993) IV, B.

<sup>21</sup> Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 7.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.



Worship Office  
PO Box 9500  
Newark, NJ 07104-9500

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Permit No. 5406  
NEWARK, NJ