

HOMILY HELPS

CATECHESIS FOR THE RECEPTION OF THE ROMAN MISSAL, THIRD EDITION

January 16, 2011 – Second Sunday of Ordinary Time

Lectionary #65

Bulletin Insert Topic: The Process of Translation

- Words matter. This is especially true when we are choosing the words we use in our liturgical prayer because they express and foster faith. They are carefully chosen to reflect our theology, often quoting directly from Scripture and from Patristic sources. All this is done to give worthy praise to God and to equip us to leave the liturgy and to proclaim God's salvation -- "I will make you a light to the nations that my salvation may reach the end of the earth" (First Reading).
- In his First Letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes "...to the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus called to be holy with all those everywhere who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Second Reading). We continue to use this same greeting in the Introductory Rites of our Mass.
- The word liturgy means "the work of the people." But the work is not simply our work, it is God's work. We are called by God to enter into his salvific work and to participate in and benefit from the redemptive act of his obedient Son. Like the Christians at Corinth, we are called to be holy.
- John the Baptist describes the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus in the River Jordan and notes, "Now I have seen and testified that he is the Son of God" (Gospel). So, too, in our worship, we continue to witness to the truths of our faith and to testify that Christ is the Son of God.

February 13, 2011 – Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary #76

Bulletin Insert Topic: Greetings and Dialogues

- "The rites that precede the Liturgy of the Word, namely, the Entrance, the Greeting, the Penitential Act, the Kyrie, the Gloria...and the Collect, have the character of a beginning, an introduction, and a preparation. Their purpose is to ensure that the faithful who come together as one, establish communion and dispose themselves properly to listen to the Word of God and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily" (GIRM 46).
- By their nature, dialogues foster and bring about communion between the priest and all the members of the assembly. They are an outward sign that this is a communal celebration and that we, priest and people, are about to enter into an important liturgical act. It should be the normative practice to sing these dialogues (*Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*, 115).
- "The Lord be with you." is often used as a greeting or as words of encouragement in Scripture (cf. Judges 6:12; Ruth 2:4; Luke 1:28). A bishop says, "Peace be with you" (John 20:19, 26; Lk 24:11).
- "And with your spirit" is a literal translation of *et cum spiritu tuo*. It can be found in several places in Scripture, especially in the writings of St. Paul -- "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen" (Gal 6:18; see also 2 Tim 4:22, Philippians 4:23, and Philemon 25).

- Through Baptism, the Spirit of God dwells in all of us and unites us as one Body in Christ. Together, we gather for worship. “We speak of God’s wisdom, mysterious, hidden, which God proclaimed before the ages for our glory...” (Second Reading).
- “When you bring your gift to the altar and there recall that your brother has anything against you...go first and be reconciled with your brother.” (Gospel) The Introductory Rites of Mass help us to recall our own sinfulness and to prepare us to enter into the mystery we are about to celebrate.

March 13, 2011—First Sunday of Lent

Lectionary #22

Bulletin Insert Topic: The Act of Penitence

- The season of Lent has both a penitential and baptismal character (GNLYC).
- In his letter to the Romans, Paul acknowledges that “the gracious gift of the one man Jesus Christ” overcame the transgression of Adam and “brought acquittal” (Second Reading).
- For many centuries, the Mass had no penitential rite. The Confiteor was part of the private prayers said by the priest and the ministers at the foot of the altar. After Vatican II, a brief penitential rite was added that had its source in both Scripture (Matthew 5:23-25) and tradition (cf. *The Mystery of Faith* by Lawrence Johnson, page 13).
- Now the Act of Penitence has several options. Each begins with an invitation by the priest to recall our sins and a pause for silent reflection.
- We may all respond by praying the Confiteor, a prayer that acknowledges the social dimension of sin. The new translation of this prayer restores the “through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault.” The Gospel reading today reminds us of the strength that Christ gives us to overcome temptations of this world.
- Alternately, we may respond to a series of invocations addressed to Christ. What was once a long litany, was shortened in the sixth century and now consists of three verses (tropes) that conclude with the ancient Greek response –*Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison*. St. Paul used the word *kyrios* to acknowledge Christ and his divinity. We may also respond in English – Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.
- The final option may be used on Sundays, especially during the Easter season. Water is blessed and sprinkled on the people as a reminder of their baptism and the reconciliation brought about by Christ. The *Asperges* rite comes from Psalm 51:9 “Cleanse me of sin with hyssop, that I may be purified.” During Eastertide, this verse is replaced by the *Vidi Aquam*, a text about the water flowing from the temple (Ezekiel 47:1, 8, 9).
- Each of these rites concludes with the priest’s absolution – “May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.” Though these words lack the efficacy of the Sacrament of Penance (GIRM 51), they are a fitting reminder that we all seek God’s mercy, especially as we come together to celebrate his sacred mysteries.

April 10, 2011—Fifth Sunday of Lent

Lectionary #34

Bulletin Insert Topic: The Gloria

- A “doxology” is literally, a “word of praise” and we have several in our Mass that usually conclude a prayer. But the Gloria is known as the “Great Doxology!”
- Some call it the “Angelic Hymn” since its first words are taken from the angels’ greeting to the shepherds at Bethlehem (Luke 2:14).
- It is a Christian hymn modeled after the psalms and canticles of the Bible. Originally used as an Easter Hymn and at the conclusion of Morning Prayer, it can be found in Greek and Syrian sources as early as the fourth century, most notably in the *Apostolic Constitutions* in 380.

- It was first incorporated into the Pope’s Christmas Mass in the sixth century. By the eleventh century, it was sung at all Masses on Sundays and special occasions.
- The text of this hymn may not be replaced by any other text (GIRM 53). It is sung or said on Sundays outside the seasons of Advent and Lent, on solemnities and feasts, and at special celebrations of a more solemn character (ibid.). In less than two weeks, we will joyfully sing this hymn again.
- A large part of this hymn acknowledges the power of Christ to take away the sins of the world. This is especially made manifest in today’s scrutiny when we ask the Trinity to “uncover, then heal all that is weak, defective, or sinful in the hearts of the elect, then strengthen all that is upright, strong, and good” (RCIA 141).
- Indeed, Christ’s power over death itself is demonstrated in the raising of Lazarus.
- In this prayer, as in all Liturgy, we join the entire Church in a sacrifice of praise.

May 8, 2011 – Third Sunday of Easter

Lectionary #46

Bulletin Insert Topic: The Creed

- In the Sacred Liturgy, we join with the faithful in all times and places to “confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil 2:11). This is especially true when we recite the Creed.
- In today’s gospel, Jesus reminds his disciples about the words he spoke while he was still with them and about everything that was written about him “in the law of Moses and in the prophets and psalms.” Like the Apostles, we too, must bear witness to these things.
- The Nicene Creed was formulated at the Council of Nicea (325 AD) and the Council of Constantinople (381 AD).
- “I believe” is the literal translation of the Latin “*credo*.” It will replace the current “We believe.” We profess our individual faith, even when we do so in unison with others.
- Jesus is “born of the Father before all ages.” This is a literal translation of “*natus est*.” However, we believe that Jesus was not merely “born” in Bethlehem, but that he is eternally begotten by the Father. The Son is always being born of the Father and the Father is always begetting the Son.
- “Consubstantial with the Father” is a direct use of “*consubstantial est*.” Though it is a difficult word, it is a good one for us to become accustomed to. Everything has being and we all have that being in God. But the Father and Son, together with the Spirit are of the same substance, that is, they are only one God.
- While the current translation uses “he was born of the Virgin Mary,” the new translation will use “was incarnate of the Virgin Mary” (*incarnatus est...ex Maria Virginae*). This is a more literal translation and encourages us to grasp the significance of the incarnation of Christ, that is, his coming to us “in flesh.” God the eternal and almighty loves us so much that he took on our flesh.

Source: Bishop Earl Boyea, *Faith Magazine*, October 2009.

June 19, 2011 – Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity

Lectionary #164

Bulletin Insert Topic: Presidential Prayers

- With rare exception, all prayers of the liturgy are addressed to God the Father, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit.
- Four times during the Mass, the priest, who presides over the assembly in the person of Christ, addresses God in the name of all those present. We call these the “Presidential Prayers”

because they are voiced by the presider (GIRM 30). Foremost among these is the Eucharistic Prayer, but three other orations (*ora*, “to pray”) are offered – the Collect, the Prayer over the Offerings, and the Prayer After Communion.

- Like all Roman Rite texts, these prayers are marked with noble simplicity and clarity of expression. There are usually three major parts – the **Address** (“Heavenly Father,” “Almighty God”), the **Petition** (“Grant that we may ...) and the **Conclusion**, which acknowledges the mediation of Christ.
- In the Introductory Rites, we silently call to mind all the intentions we may bring before the Lord this day. Then the priest begins the Opening Prayer or the “Collect,” so called because it “gathers together” the silent intentions of the faithful (GIRM 54). The Collect concisely expresses the character of this particular celebration.
- After they have been placed on the altar and the accompanying rites completed, the priest invites us to pray that these gifts may be acceptable to the Father. He then prays the *Prayer over the Offerings* (GIRM 77).
- After the distribution of Holy Communion, the people pray together silently or sing a hymn of thanksgiving (GIRM 164). “To bring to completion the prayer of the people of God, and also to conclude the entire Communion Rite, the priest says the Prayer After Communion, in which he prays for the fruit of the mystery just celebrated (GIRM 89).
- The Gospel today is a perfect summation of the paschal mystery – that God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that all who believe in him might have eternal life.
- Today’s second reading contains words we often quote at Mass -- “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you” (1 Cor 13:13). Paul also reminds us to “greet one another with a holy kiss” – the scriptural origin of the Sign of Peace.

July 10, 2011 – Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary #103

Bulletin Insert Topic: The Eucharistic Prayer – Dialogue, Preface, and Sanctus

- The Eucharistic Prayer begins with a dialogue between the people and the priest, who invites us to give thanks to God. “The Lord be with you/ **And with your spirit**” is an exchange experienced twice before during the Mass.
- Next, the priest invites the people to “Lift up your hearts” (*sursum corda*) and they respond “We lift them up to the Lord.”
- “Let us give thanks to the Lord our God” can be found in sources dating back to the first Christian communities. Indeed, it is found in nearly all sources except the East Syrian texts. In the new translation, we will respond “**It is right and just.**” This is an accurate translation from the Latin. Moreover, it is a natural complement to the line that follows: “It is truly right and just...” The priest reinforces what we have just said as he begins the Preface.
- In the Preface (*praedicatio*- “speaking before”), the priest, “in the name of the entire holy people, glorifies God the Father and gives thanks for the whole work of salvation or for some special part of it that corresponds to the day, festivity or season” (GIRM 79a). The scholars of Vatican II restored the practice of having a rich variety of prefaces -- some are proper to the prayer itself, but most have been composed for a particular liturgical season or day. They highlight a particular reason to be thanking God.
- The Sanctus (“holy”) is one of the oldest congregational hymns of the Mass. It is taken from an ancient synagogue practice and was incorporated into Christian worship as early as the first century. It is not seen everywhere in Western practice until after the fifth century.
- The first line of the *Holy, Holy, Holy* is from Isaiah (6:2-3). In a vision, the prophet sees God on a throne surrounded by his angels. In Hebrew, the term is *sabaoth* and implies that God has

command over an army or “host” of angels. It is just one more indication of God’s power over all things. So, in the new translation, we will say **“Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts.”**

- “Hosanna in the highest” quotes what the crowds said as Christ entered Jerusalem (Matt 21:9). “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord” recalls those same crowds who originally were shouting out a verse from a psalm (118:26).
- In today’s reading, Paul reminds the Romans that all creation is still awaits the revelation of the children of God.
- Jesus tells his disciples the parable of the sower , explains why he uses parables, then explains the rich parable in detail.

August 14, 2011 – Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary #118

Bulletin Insert Topic: The Eucharistic Prayer

- In the First reading, Isaiah reminds us that salvation is to come and justice are to be revealed and that all who call upon the Lord and become his servants will be made joyful in the Lord’s house of prayer., ...for “my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples”
- In today’s Gospel, Jesus cures the daughter of the Canaanite woman, after he sees her great faith. He speaks of the food meant for the children [of God.]
- Paul reminds us (Second Reading) that “God delivered all to disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all.” In the sacrifice of Christ, which offer again at each Mass, we recall the salvific work of God.
- The chief elements making up the Eucharistic Prayer are Thanksgiving, Acclamation, Epiclesis, Institution Narrative and Consecration, Anamnesis, Offering, Intercession, and Final Doxology. (GIRM 79).
- *The text that follows is taken from Bishop Boyea’s column in Faith Magazine, October 2010:* In the Eucharistic Prayers, which the priest prays at every Mass, he says over the chalice of wine, “Take this, all of you, and drink from it: this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven.” The new translation will read: “Take this, all of you, and drink from it, 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** for the forgiveness of sins.” Again, this new translation is closer to the Latin.

What will be most jarring for some people is to hear, “for many,” instead of, “for all.” A recent article in Antiphon (14:2, pp. 169-229) by Manfred Hauke on this difference of wording is excellent. He surveys the biblical texts, the various liturgical texts, and the testimony of church councils and theologians, and reaches some general conclusions. First of all, Jesus’ suffering and death was directed to the salvation of all, that is, God desires all to be saved and this was the way to provide that blessing. However, not all wish to be saved and thus some are not. Thus he quotes then-Cardinal Ratzinger: God “does not, by some magic trick, set aside our freedom but allows us to choose to enter into his great mercy.” Thus there is a difference between God’s will for universal salvation and what effectively will take place due to our freedom to say, “No.”

Secondly, when we translate these words of Jesus from the Scripture, we should avoid interpretation and stick as exactly to the text as we can.

Thirdly, neither the Greek, *hyper pollon* (in the Scripture), nor the Latin, *pro multis* (in the Latin Mass text), should be translated as “for all” but rather “for many.” This, in fact, is how the liturgies of East and West have always translated the Greek, that is, “for many.”

It is the author’s contention, consistently recognized by most theologians over the past 2,000 years, that this text in the Eucharistic Prayer is directed to the apostles and those who will hear the apostles and believe. It is not about the sufficiency of Jesus’ sacrifice, which everyone

recognizes as being “for all,” but rather this particular text in the Mass is about the efficacy of that sacrifice for us, that is, for those who will actually benefit from this pouring out, and that, we hope, will be many.

- Hauke concludes: “Certainly all men are invited to this covenant, but no one is constrained. For the acceptance of the covenant, the free decision of the faith operating in charity is necessary.... [T]he immediate addressees of the making of the covenant [at the Last Supper] are not all men in general, but rather the disciples who believe in Christ: the blood of the Lord is shed ‘for you’ (Lk 22:20) and ‘for many.’ (Mk 14:24; Mt 26:28) The covenant is offered in a certain way to all men, but accepted only by many. This relationship between offer of salvation and efficacy of salvation is seen for example in the Epistle to the Hebrews: ‘...so that by the grace of God he [Christ] might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through suffering.’” (Heb:9-10)

September 11, 2011 – Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary #130

Bulletin Insert Topic: Communion Rite

- At the Last Supper, on the night when he was betrayed, our savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of the cross throughout the centuries until he should come again and in this way to entrust to his beloved Bride, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet “in which Christ is eaten, the heart is filled with grace, and the pledge of future glory given to us.” (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 47, quoting the Liturgy of the Hours, EP II, feast of Corpus Christi).
- Since the Eucharistic Celebration is the Paschal Banquet, it is desirable that in keeping with the Lord’s Command, his Body and Blood should be received as spiritual food by the faithful who are properly disposed. This is the sense of the fraction and the other preparatory rites by which the faithful are lead directly to Communion (GIRM 80).
- For a fuller explanation of each element of the Communion Rite, please see GIRM 80-89, 152-165.
- Today’s readings speak of the necessity of forgiveness. If we expect to be forgiven for our sins, that we must offer that same mercy to others. Even the responsorial psalm reminds us that “The Lord is kind and merciful, slow to anger, and rich in compassion.”
- Especially in the Eucharist, the sacrament of love, we find the manifestation of Christ’s reconciling sacrifice which forgave the sins of the world.
- An exposition on the ancient chant, the Lamb of God, would be an appropriate complement to today’s readings.
- On this day, when the country will be observing the tenth anniversary of the terrorist attack, mention should be made in the Prayers of the Faithful. In the homily, the preacher may fittingly allude to the promise and the Bread of eternal life.

October 9, 2011 – Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary #142

Bulletin Insert Topic: Concluding Rite

- The Eucharistic Liturgy we celebrate each Sunday is a foretaste of the heavenly banquet, the wedding feast of the Lamb, described in today’s readings.
- At the Eucharistic table, all are equal. There must be no division of wealth, race or nation. All who believe must join in giving praise and worship to the Father, through the Son and in the Spirit.

- As the guest must come with his wedding garment, we must come with our hearts and minds prepared to fully participate in the Liturgy.
- (Source: Committee on Divine Worship: USCCB. *Parish Guide to Implementing the Roman Missal, Third Edition*, page 51)

November 13, 2011—Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary #157

Summary – Anticipating the new translation of the Roman Missal

- God calls us to be prudent with the gifts given to us, guarding them carefully, using them well. The Liturgy is the great treasure of the Church. The Church takes great care that the Liturgy, in every age, expresses the truths of our faith, strengthens the faithful in their Christian living, and through Christ and in the Spirit, offers a worthy sacrifice to the Father.
- Although the form of the Liturgy may differ in various times and places, it remains a witness to an unchanged faith and an unbroken tradition (GIRM, Preamble).
- (Source: Committee on Divine Worship: USCCB. *Parish Guide to Implementing the Roman Missal, Third Edition*, pages 51-52)

Office of Worship ✠ Diocese of Lansing
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