

Interview three: Effects of the new translation

Can you explain how the new translation may help us better understand the proper role of the priest and the laity in the Mass? The prior translations were developed at a time when the role of the laity was often seen in contraposition to the role of the priest. A more proper balance is achieved in the present translations with the accurate rendering of language referring both to the role of the priest and the sacrifice he is called to offer. The priest is the one presiding and acting in the person of Christ, possessing within the Church the power of Holy Orders, to offer sacrifice in the person of Christ.

Can you give some examples of how the new translation will teach us good doctrine? The first Collect from the Common of the Blessed Virgin Mary is like a little catechism of who we are in relationship with the Mother of God:

Grant, O merciful God,
protection to us in our weakness,
that we, who keep the Memorial
of the holy Mother of God,
may, with the help of her intercession,
rise up from our iniquities.

When meditating on the mysteries of she who was conceived without original sin, we are bound to feel a little bit inadequate! Notice how this, and many prayers relating to the Mother of God, emphasized our weakness, sinfulness, and inadequacy. Notice too, however, how the prayer beautifully talks of our reliance on the Blessed Mother's protection and intercession. The single Collect provides enough food for thought for a whole retreat!

What effect do you think the new translation will have on the hearts of the faithful? I pray that the emphasis of the prayers of the Roman Liturgy on our littleness and God's greatness will have a significant effect on us all and will call us to a new humility and an appreciation of our need to praise God in his infinite Majesty.

Do you think the new translation will have an effect on sacred (and not so sacred sounding) music at Mass? Yes. Both the models of liturgical chant provided for the canonical texts, as well as some of the new translations of canonical hymns, the *Exultet* Easter hymn, and the liturgical texts can provide us with models for sacred music. The US Bishops' recent guidelines on music in the liturgy, *Sing to the Lord*, makes the point that what makes music sacred is its intimate association with the Sacred Liturgy. The more all liturgical music is influenced by the liturgical music of the Missal, the more all liturgical music will truly become more sacred, and more appropriate for use in the Sacred Liturgy.

For those who love the Tridentine rite, do you think the new translation will affect their attitude toward the *Novus Ordo* and the English vernacular Mass? Many who have never felt “at home” in a vernacular celebration of the Sacred Liturgy have reported that the language used sounded sterile or lacked a particularly “Catholic” sense. I believe that many of those faithful Catholics who have chosen to participate only in Latin Masses will find the new translations beautiful, accurate, and reflective of the depth of the mystery we are called to celebrate.

How does the new translation relate to liturgical architecture, art, vestments, and so on? Architects Duncan Stroit and Steven Schloeder see a return underway to traditional iconography, to the use of quality materials, to the sacred, and to beauty in contemporary Church architecture and art. Is the new translation part of this movement? Like the use of quality materials and traditional forms in art and architecture, the accurate translation of the prayers with which the Church has built her Sacred Liturgy for the past millennium and a half will, I pray, more clearly reflect the face of God to the Church and to the world.