

Preparing for the Revised Roman Missal

Sacred Heart Cathedral prepares for the Revised Roman Missal, 3rd Typical Edition

The Roman Missal

Preface Dialogue

The Eucharistic Prayer itself begins with the Preface dialogue. The first change is another instance of “And with your spirit.” This is the third time the exchange appears during the Mass, and it is a particularly profound moment. The Priest, by the spirit given him at ordination, is about to act in the person of Christ to consecrate the bread and wine into the Holy Eucharist.

The second change lies in the phrase, “It is right and just.” This is a simple rendering of the Latin, “*Dignum et iustum est*,” emphasizing the fact that it is fitting and appropriate, or fair (“just”), to “give thanks to the Lord our God,” because He is both our Creator and Redeemer.

This dialogue is followed by the Preface, a more lengthy prayer that can vary depending on the liturgical occasion. Most Prefaces in the new translation expand upon the words of the preceding dialogue by beginning, “It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks.” The Preface itself is a prayer of praise and thanksgiving to God for what he has done for us in Jesus. When we give thanks and praise to God, we do it with all the saints and angels. While each begins similarly, the middle portion of each preface is varied. The Roman Missal offers almost 100 different prefaces to be used at different times, in celebrations of the liturgical seasons, saints and the sacraments. All of them have something to say about what God has done for us in Jesus Christ.

Sanctus

At the conclusion of the Preface comes the *Sanctus*, which in Latin means “Holy.” The *Sanctus*, like the *Gloria*, is intended to be sung – in fact, many different set-

Preface Dialogue

Priest: The Lord be with you.
People: **And with your spirit.**
Priest: Lift up your hearts.
People: We lift them up to the Lord.
Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People: **It is right and just.**

Sanctus

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of **hosts**.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Mystery of Faith

Priest: **The mystery of faith.**
People:
A – **We proclaim your death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.**
or B – When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your death, **O Lord**, until you come **again.**
or C – **Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection, you have set us free.**

Invitation to Communion

Priest: **Behold** the Lamb of God, **behold him** who takes away the sins of the world.
Blessed are those called to the supper **of the Lamb.**
All: Lord, I am not worthy **that you should enter under my roof**, but only say the word and **my soul** shall be healed.

Dismissal

Priest: Go forth, the Mass is ended.
or
Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.
or
Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.
or
Go in peace
People: **Thanks be to God.**

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tings of the Latin text exist even in Gregorian chant.

The only textual difference from our current version is that “God of power and might” becomes “God of hosts.” The word “hosts” refers to a great gathering or multitude, and speaks here of God’s command over the heavenly host of angelic armies.

This reference has a Biblical foundation in Isaiah 6:1-3, where the prophet writes, “I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne... Seraphim were stationed above... ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts!’ they cried one to the other. ‘All the earth is filled with his glory!’”

And in Luke 2:13, a “multitude of the heavenly host” also announces the birth of Jesus to the shepherds.

The words of the final three lines of the *Sanctus* can be found in the Gospel of Matthew, during the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem before His Passion, as the people shouted, “Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest” (Mt 21:9). Versions of this acclamation appear in the other Gospels, and the “Blessed is he...” line comes from Psalm 118 (117), amidst a passage that became understood as a reference to Christ.

The *Sanctus* reminds us that all creatures on “heaven and earth” owe thanksgiving to God (“Eucharist” actually means “thanksgiving”). And because we truly believe that the Angels are also present and worshiping with us as we celebrate the Holy Eucharist, then every fiber of our being is made to reflect the ut-

most reverence. Therefore, immediately after the *Sanctus*, we kneel. Kneeling is a sign of respect and humility that is distinctly human and bodily – it is something that even the Angels, being pure spirit, cannot do.

Mystery of Faith

As part of the new Mass translation, after the consecration, rather than saying, "Let us proclaim the mystery of faith," the Priest will simply announce, "The mystery of faith" ("*Mysterium fidei*"). It will be a declarative statement about the Eucharist now present. Blessed John Paul II reflected on these words in his encyclical, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, writing that the very thought of the mysterious gift of the Holy Eucharist should fill us with "profound amazement and gratitude" (no. 5).

In response, the people shall make one of three revised acclamations. All three are rooted in Scripture. Option A, and especially option B, are derived from 1 Corinthians 11:26 – "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes." And Christ's title in option C is found in John 4:42, when the woman who met Jesus at the well is told by her fellow Samaritans, "we know that this is truly the savior of the world."

The three acclamations all incorporate familiar elements, although some of the phrases have been rearranged when compared to our present text. One acclamation that we use now – "Dying you destroyed our death..." – has been substantially amended to shift the emphasis more upon Christ's own death and Resurrection.

What is conspicuously absent is the popular current acclamation, "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again." This line, although powerful, is not found in the Latin. In addition, unlike the other acclamations, it does not directly address Christ made present in the Blessed Sacrament, nor does it speak of our relationship with Him.

Invitation to Communion

After the Lord's Prayer and the Sign of Peace, we sing the *Agnus Dei* ("Lamb of God") as the Priest breaks the sacred Host. The *Agnus Dei* text remains unchanged, though it is always good to recall its origin in the words of John the Baptist, as he heralds Christ's arrival at the River Jordan: "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn 1:29). That passage from the Gospel of John is also embedded in the subsequent line spoken by the Priest, while he holds the Host over the chalice: "Behold the Lamb of God..."

The new translation recovers the word, "behold," which also evokes the words of Pilate to the crowd in presenting the scourged Jesus: "Behold, the man" ("*Ecce homo*" – Jn 19:5). The Holy Eucharist is a representation of that same sacrificial Victim, and our partaking in it is a foretaste of the heavenly wedding banquet of the Lamb (Rev 19:9).

Then come the words we pray in response, before the distribution of Holy Communion begins: "Lord, I am not worthy..."

The replacement of our current, relatively terse "not worthy to receive you" with "I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof" is a significant

change. The new line comes directly from the Gospels, particularly Matthew 8:8, in which the faith-filled centurion begs Jesus to heal his paralyzed servant: "Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof; only say the word and my servant will be healed." It is therefore a Biblical text that conveys humanity's unworthiness on account of sin, and our need for sincere humility before receiving the Holy Eucharist. Indeed, when Jesus encounters the centurion's humility, he says, "Amen, I say to you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith" (Mt 8:10).

Nonetheless, despite these Biblical origins, speaking of "my roof" may seem strange before Holy Communion, since Christ is coming to us in the form of food – not literally entering into our houses. Certainly, the clear association with Matthew, chapter 8, has a figurative intent, but it may also be helpful to recall that Saint Paul says, "your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you" (1 Cor 6:19).

We are therefore to make our bodies into fitting homes for God's grace to dwell within our souls. The Eucharist is true food that provides spiritual nourishment, which is why we will refer more specifically to "my soul" in the last line. But this sacramental strength for our souls in turn informs both our mental and physical deeds (recall the *Confiteor* also incorporates both types of action – "in my thoughts and in my words"), such that the totality of our bodies, souls, and lives may become suitable instruments of the Lord.

Concluding Rites

For the last time during the Mass, the Priest says, "The Lord be with you," and we respond, "And with your spirit."

Following our response of "Amen" to the final blessing, Mass is concluded with the dismissal, said or sung by the Priest (or a Deacon, if one is present). With the new Missal, our three current dismissal formulas will be replaced by four options.

The first corresponds to the actual Latin dismissal, which is familiar to many: "*Ite, missa est.*" In fact, this is where the word "Mass" comes from – "*missa est*" – which at its most fundamental level means "it is sent" or "it is the dismissal." More than a mere declaration that it is time to leave, this has the function of emphasizing our Christian call to "mission" (a word with the same Latin origins).

The Holy Father himself selected the three other dismissal formulas that we shall receive, and they were added to the Latin text of the *Missal*.

Our response at the dismissal remains the same: "Thanks be to God." What else can we do except give thanks to God? He has provided us with an inestimable gift in the Holy Mass, and a means by which He draws us and the entire world into closer communion with Him.