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Lectionary

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Meanwhile, Bishop Donald W. Trautman of Erie, Pa. — a Scripture scholar and former chairman of the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy — charged at the meeting that the bishops' 1992 proposed lectionary "has been substantially and radically altered, rendering it no longer an inclusive-language text."

Father Joseph Jensen, executive secretary of the Catholic Biblical Association of America — which coordinated translation of the New American Bible for the bishops — told the *Courier*. "This is not something dreamed up by ultra-feminists ... The initiative came from the bishops to be pastoral."

"They spent years to come out with criteria for inclusive language ... These criteria contain a great deal of wisdom. They contain a great deal of concern."

Bishops in June said they feared more "cut and paste" approaches in which pastors, parish liturgy committees or readers insert unauthorized changes. Father Jensen cited the example of one lector who translated Romans 5:15 as, "For if by the offense of one man and one woman all died, much more did the gracious gift of one man and one woman abound for all."

The revised New American Bible translation of the verse reads, "For if by that one person's transgression the many died, how much more did the grace of God and the gracious gift of the one person Jesus Christ overflow for the many." The first "one person" refers to Adam.

"Amateurs are not supposed to be rewriting Scriptures," he commented.

In fact the Constitution on Sacred Liturgy issued in 1963 by the Second Vatican Council stated of church liturgical texts, "No one on his own authority may make changes, substitutions, additions or deletions in them."

Making matters difficult even for professionals are Vatican translation norms released this spring. Father Jensen acknowledged. The norms state, for example, that

a singular term of gender may not be made plural, a key way the NRSV broadens terms.

Sister Schuller and others noted that English presents its challenges. "There's very strong recognition it is not an easy language to make inclusive," she said.

The norms, according to CNS reports quoting the National Council of Catholic Bishops' associate general secretary, were written to clarify why the NRSV lectionary and a new Psalter were not approved.

"It appears the norms have been constructed precisely to avoid inclusive language, and also by someone who has no appreciation of changes in the English language," Father Jensen said.

The norms were confidential until published in the July 4 *National Catholic Reporter*. They were confirmed independently by the *Courier*.

The priest wrote in his association's Web site, "Apparently Rome does not realize as the U.S. bishops certainly do, that to wish upon us a lectionary that is in fact non-inclusive ... will result only in parishes continuing to turn to the Canadian lectionary or in some lectors continuing the practice of making their own extemporaneous adaptations."

What to buy

Meanwhile, publishers in the United States wonder what lectionary version they will be printing. And parishes wonder where to invest their \$50-150 or more as their 1970 lectionaries become more ragged. Because of misconceptions that the 1970 *Lectionary for Mass* is out of print, as well as the desire for inclusive language, some parishes have bought Canadian lectionaries.

Even Joan Workmaster, director of the diocesan liturgy office, seems to have fallen prey to these misconceptions.

"There's nothing new to buy. There's nothing left in the warehouses," she said, referring to U.S.-authorized lectionaries.

But copies of the 1970 Lectionary — the first major update since a 1570 lectionary standardized selections — are still being printed. One supplier, Liturgical Press of Collegeville, Minn., has witnessed sales increases of 10 percent a year over the last

five years. Mark Twomey, managing editor, said the company sells about 1,000 hard-bound copies a year of current cycle readings, and has 12,000 looseleaf, dated lectionaries in circulation.

Catholic Book Publishing Company, now in Totowa, N.J., stopped printing the *Lectionary for Mass* four years ago but does sell a smaller, chapel-size copy, according to Annette Altavilla, customer service manager.

Besides that New American Bible-based lectionary of 1970, two lectionaries using older Bible versions are also authorized for general parish use, according to Father Moroney.

As for the illicit Canadian lectionary, Workmaster said if asked by a parish, she would have to say she has "no idea" how to obtain it. Still, she mentioned several parishes using it and said "a fair amount" of others use their own translations.

Among diocesan parishes using the Canadian Sunday lectionary is the Corning-Painted Post Roman Catholic Community. When Sister Joan Cawley, SSJ, a pastoral associate, and Father Michael F. Conboy, arrived last summer the lectionaries were in bad shape, Sister Cawley said. And both had become accustomed to the Canadian version while serving at St. Joseph's Church in Penfield. So Father Conboy ordered four sets of Sunday lectionaries for the community's four churches.

The main difficulty with using the Canadian version, she said, is that people who find it helpful to follow readings in their missalettes see a printed version different from that proclaimed from the pulpit. So the churches use the responsorial Psalms in the older version.

Buying the lectionaries "was a risk," Sister Cawley acknowledged, "knowing they were still working on getting a translation approved from the United States bishops."

On 'borrowed time'

The Canadian bishops' publishing division has distributed 6,000 copies of its NRSV-based lectionary; the country has 5,000 English-speaking parishes.

The Canada church has permission to

use its NRSV lectionary while negotiations continue over its translations with the Vatican, said Deacon Bill Kokesch, communications director for the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

However, one consultant to the bishops who did not want to be named said, "We've been going on borrowed time and borrowed time is running out."

The Canadian bishops are conducting a mail ballot on proposed changes to their lectionary in light of questions from the Vatican. After a vote of affirmation, the proposals will be sent to Rome.

"We don't know if what we are proposing for changes will meet the demands of Rome," said Sister Donna Kelly, of the Congregation of Notre Dame, director of liturgy for the conference. "We may end up sending a crew over like the U.S. did."

The Canadians published their lectionary following approval of the NRSV for liturgy, by both the Canadian bishops and the Congregation for Divine Worship, she noted. It was only later that the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith raised questions about the NRSV translation.

And according to the Catholic News Service, in 1994 the Vatican withdrew its 1992 approval of the NRSV Bible for liturgical use, largely because of concerns over inclusive language.

"Certainly if we had known when we published ours we'd be running into problems, we wouldn't have published it," she said.

Those problems are three in particular, she said: conservative opposition; "a total misunderstanding by Europeans what inclusive language is all about"; and the "right" Europeans assume they have in "telling us how to speak English."

"They insist 'man' is an inclusive term and it's not anymore," she said. "Kids growing up aren't taught that and it's not the way we speak. Yet for some unknown reason someone got the bright idea it is connected with women's ordination and the feminist agenda. It has nothing to do with any of that. It's recognition that within a Christian community it is made up of men and women, boys and girls."

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