

## CONTINUED...

## Sacramentary

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revised Sacramentary.

The translations currently used had to be completed in two years and without prior Roman Catholic experience in using English as a liturgical language. Eleven years were spent developing the new translations, and the translators this time could draw on what has been learned from using English as a language of liturgical prayer over the past quarter-century.

Besides enriching the English translations of the Latin texts, the revised Sacramentary includes some 300 new, original compositions in English.

These new prayers — especially the new optional opening prayers — often draw on themes and images of that day's Scripture readings, so that the prayers and the readings will be more integrally related each day.

One revision affecting every Mass will take a little work for congregations to get used to. It aims at making full use of the eucharistic acclamations without causing confusion.

Currently, unless there is accompanying music, the rite offers no clear signal for which acclamation to use. The priest introduces all four by the same invitation, "Let us proclaim the mystery of faith."

In the revised Sacramentary, however, each acclamation will have its own unique invitation. After some initial explanation and effort, it is expected that people will come to automatically associate each acclamation with its proper invitation.

The revised Sacramentary permits use of the Apostles' Creed — allowed up to now only at children's Masses — as an alternative to the Nicene Creed at regular Masses.

For the simplified opening rites, the priest can choose from one of six: a rite of blessing and sprinkling of water, a penitential rite, a litany of praise for God's mercy, the Kyrie, the Gloria, or any of the opening rites available for special occasions such as baptisms or funeral Masses.

A seventh option is to add the Gloria to any of the other opening rites, except during Advent and Lent when liturgical norms rule out use of the Gloria.

During Lent, another new option will let the priest invite the people to kneel during the opening penitential rite.

Weekday Mass-goers may sometimes hear new optional eucharistic prayers. There are four of these, based on the 1974 Swiss Synod Eucharistic Prayer, which is already approved in several other languages and is used in a number of countries.

Father James P. Moroney, director of the bishops' national liturgy secretariat, said one of the most important revisions in the Sacramentary is one the average Catholic will never see — an extensive general pastoral introduction to the whole book plus pastoral introductions for each season.

These are study texts intended to strengthen and deepen the liturgical planning and preparation of pastors and other parish liturgy leaders.

Workmaster said she's looking forward to the new Sacramentary as a teaching tool in the Diocese of Rochester.

"It will give us a way to catch people up in good solid catechesis with what liturgy is all about," she said.

"When the first Sacramentary came out after Vatican II, we didn't do a good job on catechesis," she said. However, she added,

the bishops' addition of pastoral notes "will give us the opportunity to go back and do the catechesis."

The Rochester Diocese and others also will publish educational pieces about the liturgy in bulletins, she said.

She noted that her office has been informing liturgy planners in diocesan workshops about the Sacramentary revision.

The bishops began working on the new Sacramentary in 1992. Every text required approval by at least two-thirds of all the active Latin-rite bishops in the country.

Every text they wanted changed was sent back to the International Commission on English in the Liturgy, composed of bishops representing English-speaking bishops' conferences, and which is responsible for development of common English liturgical texts for use throughout the world.

They continued that process at every

June and November national meeting until last June in Kansas City, Mo., where they voted on the 160 remaining prayers they had not yet approved.

With a mail vote of absent bishops they approved a change in the wording of the priest's invitation to Communion, from "blessed are those who are called to his supper" to "blessed are those who are called to the banquet of the Lamb."

Franciscan Sister Ann Rehrauer, associate director of the bishops' liturgy secretariat, said the finished product should be on its way to Rome by the end of January. Approval could take some time, because of the sheer size of the project and because Rome will be dealing simultaneously with the new Sacramentaries from the other English-speaking countries.

Contains additional reporting by Kathleen Schwar.

## Readings

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The Lectionary, placed on the lectern, contains the liturgy's Scripture readings and the responsorial Psalms and alleluia verses connected with the readings. The Sacramentary is used by the priest at the presider's chair and at the altar. The Sacramentary contains all the prayers of the Mass — the introductory rites and opening prayers and everything after the Gospel. It also contains materials needed to prepare for or preside at the liturgy.

The Lectionary has met with criticism throughout the years, both for what it lacks, such as some difficult lessons, or what it includes, that may be open to misinterpretation, as well as for its limited scope, said Father Normand Bonneau, OMI, of Saint Paul University in Ottawa, Canada. While revision has certainly been warranted at times, he said, "I think sometimes people aren't adequately informed as to the purpose" of the Lectionary.

He would agree with Bible scholar Ched Myers, who last spring stated at a parish mission night at Corpus Christi Church, Rochester, that trying to understand the Bible from the readings in church is like trying to understand a movie by viewing its promotional trailers.

The purpose of the Lectionary is to continually bring people back to focus on Christ and the Paschal Mystery, Father Bonneau said a telephone interview with the *Catholic Courier*.

The professor of religious studies also makes that point in his in-depth examination, *The Sunday Lectionary: Ritual Word, Paschal Shape*, to be published early next year by Liturgical Press of Collegeville, Minn. The book delves into the history of lectionaries, and reform and "architecture" of the Catholic Lectionary.

While the Lectionary as a separate book emerged after the Second Vatican Council, lectionaries (with a lower-case "l") have been in use for centuries. They simply are Scripture readings read publicly, he explained. The Catholic Lectionary today has patterns replicating those of ancient Jewish lectionaries, he added.

Lectionaries began to reflect the seasons of the Christian liturgical year, as it developed, he wrote. Still, the readings usually were read from Bibles that had passages marked or lists written in them.

Only in the sixth and seventh centuries, actual books of lessons arranged by date began appearing, Father Bonneau wrote. They represented a form of "user-friendly liturgical Bible," he stated, where the presider needed to carry only such a collection. But by the end of the Middle Ages the lectionary was absorbed into the missal and was the province of the priest alone, he stated.

Father Bonneau has included in his book such facts as:

- The Lectionary presents 13.7 percent of the Bible. Almost 5 percent of the Old Testament is included and 42 percent of the New Testament. "I did count everything," he said.
- The average Gospel reading is 10.5

verses, not counting certain longer passages such as Passion narratives and Lenten readings.

- The Lectionary contains 529 different passages — 160 Old Testament, 369 New Testament — read over three years. The first year presents Matthew's Jesus, teacher and preacher; the second, Mark's Jesus, who confronts and overcomes powers of illness, sin and death; and the third, Luke's Jesus, who reveals God's mercy and compassion.

- The old one-year lectionary cycle in the Missal had 138 readings heard over and over each year. The Old Testament was read on only three occasions: feast of the Epiphany, Good Friday and Easter Vigil. Readings were read in Latin by the priest.

- The Old Testament reading is chosen in light of the Gospel reading.

- Lectionary readings were selected not only on the basis of liturgical seasons, but also on length, difficulty and suitability — whether they contain, for example, irrelevant or harsh details.

- The Roman Catholic Lectionary was within a decade, adopted with adaptations by many Protestant churches.

- The U.S. bishops approved a revised lectionary for Sundays and certain major feasts, by mail ballot tabulated in August. But at their November meeting they delayed voting on a second part of a new lectionary, with readings for weekdays, saints' feasts and other occasions until June.

Contains reporting by Catholic News Service

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