

Latin? English? What's the fuss?
 What Kind of Changes? Part I

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The US Bishops Committee on Divine Worship has posted a chart on its website (<http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/missalformation/peoplesparts.pdf>) which reveals the changes to parts of the Mass in which the people speak. (They also have a website with various resources on the new translation: <http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/missalformation/>.)

Over the next several articles, I will borrow from that chart and provide some commentary in an attempt to explain at least some of the reasons for the new translation.

PART OF MASS	PRESENT TEXT FOR PEOPLE	NEW TEXT FOR PEOPLE
Greeting	<i>Priest:</i> The Lord be with you. <i>People:</i> And also with you.	<i>Priest:</i> The Lord be with you. <i>People:</i> And with your spirit.

Many have probably heard of this change. This is one in which the Bishops did not have a choice. The document on liturgical translations, *Liturgiam authenticam*, no. 57, specifically mentions that this expression of the Latin, *Et cum spiritu tuo*, must be translated as literally as possible. Of the major European languages, English is the only one which doesn't mention the spirit. In addition to the mandate from Rome, and the need to catch up to the rest of the world there is also a theological rationale behind the phrase "And with your spirit." It is only used in response to an ordained minister. In those instances in the liturgy when a non-ordained member leads the assembly in prayer (e.g. a wake service, a Holy Communion service, the Liturgy of the Hours), they will never say "The Lord be with you" because, in part, they do not receive the phrase in return "And with your spirit." The "spirit" that is mentioned here refers to the spirit received in ordination. It is an affirmation by the assembly that this person has received the proper anointing with the spirit in order to lead them in sacramental ministry. It is less about the *person* of the priest, than the *office of the priesthood*, which is supported and guaranteed by the Spirit of God given in ordination.

PART OF MASS	PRESENT TEXT FOR PEOPLE	NEW TEXT FOR PEOPLE
Penitential Act, Form A (<i>Confiteor</i>)	I confess to almighty God, and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned through my own fault, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do; and I ask blessed Mary, ever virgin,	I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous

	all the angels and saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord, our God.	fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.
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This was another change mandated by no. 57 in *Liturgiam authenticam*. The actual prayer of the Church has the threefold admission of fault, and the English translation currently in use simply did not translate it. In the language of Jesus (Hebrew), a threefold repetition of something marks a superlative degree. Thus, for example, “holy, holy, holy, Lord” is the same as saying “most holy Lord,” though perhaps more poetically. It also stresses the personal nature of sin and the reality of sin—things which Christians do well never to forget.

PART OF MASS	PRESENT TEXT FOR PEOPLE	NEW TEXT FOR PEOPLE
Penitential Act, Form B	<i>Priest:</i> Lord, we have sinned against you: Lord, have mercy. <i>People:</i> Lord, have mercy. <i>Priest:</i> Lord, show us your mercy and love. <i>People:</i> And grant us your salvation.	<i>Priest:</i> Have mercy on us, O Lord. <i>People:</i> For we have sinned against you. <i>Priest:</i> Show us, O Lord, your mercy. <i>People:</i> And grant us your salvation.

This is an option for the Penitential Act which is not much used in parishes. All four lines are from the Old Testament: the first two from Baruch 3:2, and the next two from Psalm 85:8. Possibly the current translation was designed to simplify the people’s parts, but the actual prayer of the Church calls for the dialogue, which is restored in the new translation.

PART OF MASS	PRESENT TEXT FOR PEOPLE	NEW TEXT FOR PEOPLE
Gloria	Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.	Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. ¹ We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, ² Lord God, heavenly King,

	<p>Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God,</p> <p>you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.</p> <p>For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.</p>	<p>O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,³ Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world,⁴ receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.</p> <p>For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.</p>
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My comments regarding the new translation of the *Gloria* are given *per* the “footnotes” in the text above.

¹“People of good will” is a well-known phrase, moreover, a closer translation of the Latin original. Plus, theologically, the Church loves to stress the importance of the will, both human and divine. When a human will is ordered to the divine will, then it is a “good will,” and then, they will experience true peace.

²The prayer of the Church actually has five verbs here (as in the new translation). The current translation only renders three of them. This was a common practice in the original translation. The Latin was believed to be too florid for contemporary English, and so many of the adjectives were simply dropped, and phrases were often combined or reduced.

³This is another example in the current translation of combining terms. The original prayer of the Church has, as with the new translation, “Only begotten Son” and later “Son of the Father.” It is important to add the modifier “begotten” because the Father has many children both by creation and by adoption, but only one Son who was begotten from before the world began.

⁴The original prayer of the Church repeats this line from John the Baptist twice (cf. John 1:29: “Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”). Each time, however, it is followed by a different response: first, “have mercy on us” and then “receive our prayer.” The current translation effectively rewrites part of this prayer in accord with its own peculiar principles.

PART OF MASS	PRESENT TEXT FOR	NEW TEXT FOR PEOPLE
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	PEOPLE	
Nicene Creed	<p>We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.</p> <p>We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in Being with the Father.</p> <p>Through him all things were made.</p> <p>For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man.</p> <p>For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered, died, and was buried.</p> <p>On the third day he rose again in fulfillment of the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.</p> <p>We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.</p> <p>We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.</p> <p>We acknowledge one baptism</p>	<p>I believe¹ in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.²</p> <p>And³ in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages.</p> <p>God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;⁴</p> <p>through him all things were made.</p> <p>For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,⁵ and became man.</p> <p>For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.⁶</p> <p>He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.</p> <p>And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.</p> <p>And one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.</p> <p>I confess⁷ one baptism</p>

	for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.	for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to ⁸ the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.
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Again, my comments are given *per* the “footnotes” in the text above.

¹In its original form, the Nicene Creed begins “We believe,” yet the traditions of both the Latin and Greek Christians have traditionally begun with “I believe” when it is used within the liturgy. St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologiae* IIa IIae 1, 9) says that the Church proclaims the Creed as a single person, made one by faith. The Church is calling us to take personal responsibility for our faith by the use of the singular “I.”

²This is a reference to the New Testament, Col. 1:16, “for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible...” The change from the current version “seen and unseen” was made because something can be unseen and yet, in principle, visible (e.g. a remote galaxy), or unseen and entirely invisible (e.g. an angel).

³Whereas the current translation repeats the “We believe” for rhetorical emphasis for each of the persons of the Trinity and for the Church, the new version follows the original Latin, which makes the whole creed flow from the initial resounding “I believe!”

⁴The use of the term “consubstantial” has been carefully weighed before being chosen, but it also brings some complexities with it. The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments recommended its use. The root word “substance” is originally a technical, philosophical term that refers to the most real part of a being. Literally, it refers to that which “stands under,” its base, that which is at the heart of someone or something. This is fine as long as one doesn’t equate substance with only the physical or external dimension. Today, we can use the word substance in reference to the essential, e.g., “the substance of the matter,” but we can also use it in a rather mundane and materialistic manner, e.g., “help me wash this grimy substance off my hands!” Within the liturgy, of course, the Church is thinking of the former.

The other part of this term, which is very attractive, is the first three letters “con.” This comes from the Latin preposition *cum* meaning “together with.” Within the creed, consubstantial means that Christ was of one substance with the Father, but it also implies one substance with our humanity. He is co-substantial, referring therein to the two natures of Christ. The current translation “one in being” does not have this kind of multivalence. Also, it is believed that the current phrase is not as precise. The English word “being” has a broader meaning than the philosophical term substance. Insofar as my being comes from the Father, one could argue that myself and all creation, all that is, shares “being” with the Father, though we do not share the same interior substance.

⁵Earlier, the creed stated that the Son was “born of the Father before all ages.” Here, in relation to Mary, a different word is used. Christ was not simply “born” of the virgin.

He was enfleshed by her, he was “incarnate” by her. Mary’s unique role in our salvation was to provide the humanity, the flesh, for Christ. The new translation makes this more explicit and precise. Also, the new translation changes “by the power of the Holy Spirit” to simply “by the Holy Spirit.” This is what the creed of the Church actually professes. One must be precise in a creed. Christ was not conceived by some emanation of the Holy Spirit, by a removed “power” of the Spirit. Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit himself. The new translation rectifies this potential confusion.

⁶The literal wording of the Latin creed here states only “he suffered and was buried.” The translators inserted “death” for the sake of clarity, and this was approved by Rome. The end of this sentence “in accordance with the scriptures” adheres more closely to the text as given in Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians 15:3-4.

⁷To confess something means more than simply acknowledging it. It means to proclaim it and encourage it upon others. The Latin original is the same verb used in the penitential rite, *confiteor*.

⁸The creed does not intend that we simply sit and wait for the resurrection to come to us, but rather that we are straining forward toward it as well. Sometimes subtle changes bring about increased richness in meaning.

More changes will be reviewed and commented upon in the next issue of the Catholic Missourian.