

The chalice, tabernacle, candles, and incense, will be the familiar view from the pew for us parishioners, but the wording of many of the prayers and hymns that we have recited and sung in Mass for decades will soon sound different.

Beginning November 26, the first weekend of Advent, Catholics will experience the new translation of the Roman Missal, the book that contains the ritual text for the celebration of the Mass. The revision of the Missal, called for by Pope John Paul II in 2000, is the most significant change in the Catholic Mass in 40 years.

This is a change that has many Catholics thinking “spiritual growth.” Most of the people I’ve spoken to about this transition feel, as I do, that after having gone through the motions of Mass week in week out for many years, monotony has set in, and so this is a great time to revamp this holy routine. With the new text comes the opportunity to deepen our understanding of the sacred liturgy, as we re-learn the words we’ve recited many times over; some of us since childhood.

According to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, this third edition of the Missal which has been a decade in the making, “is a more literal and direct translation of the original Latin, containing, among other things, prayers for the celebration of recently canonized saints, additional prefaces for the Eucharistic Prayers, and updated translations of existing prayers, including some of the well-known responses and acclamations of the people.”

The new liturgical text includes changes starting with the greeting to the conclusion parts of the Mass. In the greeting part, for instance, when the priest says, “The Lord be with you,” the congregation now responds: “And also with you.” In the new translation, we will say: “And with your spirit.”

The most noticeable change is in The Nicene Creed. In this statement of faith the words “one in being with the Father” are being replaced with “consubstantial with the Father.” Consubstan-what? I know, I know, I get stuck on this word too.

Of course, there are aids already available to guide us through the changes. Helpful resources can be found in the Welcoming the Roman Missal Third Edition section of the USCCB website, which lists and discusses the new text. Also, most churches will have “pew cards” outlining the new translation, along with the new Missal book.

And in case you’re wondering, yes, there’s an app for this. The app, appropriately called The New Mass, provides a different avenue other than printed material, especially for the younger crowd. A hipper way to learn the new words. Just don’t use it in church, please!

My friends, I invite you to check out the links above and familiarize yourselves with the new text before November 26. Let’s use this opportunity to disengage our auto-pilot and re-light our spiritual fire.

God bless.

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