

Foreword



The new English translation of the third Latin edition of *The Roman Missal* is about to be published, a work achieved after several years of close consultation between the English-speaking Episcopal Conferences of the world and the Holy See. During this time the process has been facilitated by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL), whose eleven bishop members¹ have had the privilege of discovering anew some of the many hidden riches of the Church's liturgical and theological tradition.

Originally, of course, all these riches were preserved by the Church, and handed on from generation to generation in the Latin language. Today, the most widely spoken language in the Church is Spanish. However, English is the most widely spoken language in the world. And it was in the light of that growing phenomenon that, already at the time of the Second Vatican Council, a number of English-speaking bishops began to take account, with regard to the question of language, of the enormity of the task confronting them. In time, and in part because of their encouragement, a major change would come about in Church life, namely the celebrated shift from 1600 years of daily Latin usage to a vernacular liturgy. In this task, the great challenge, of course, was to preserve the beauty of previous liturgical texts and to maintain and ensure their catechetical effectiveness in transmitting the faith.

There is an ancient and important Latin tag that is often quoted in liturgical circles: *lex orandi, lex credendi!* In other words the way we pray gives shape to the things we believe. The bishops knew that, if the transition from Latin to English was to be brought about effectively, they would need to involve qualified people who would take all the care necessary to complete the task. And so it was that during the morning's coffee break at a coffee bar in

the south transept of St Peter's basilica, near to St Josephat's altar, a small group of English-speaking bishops from several countries met to discuss how they could best do this. (Incidentally, the coffee bar was known as 'Bar Jona'!) The bishops held a meeting at the Venerable English College several days later, on 17 October 1963, where the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) was born.

The result of that decision, all those years ago in 1963, has undoubtedly been something precious for the Church because, by creating a single English-speaking text for the celebration of Mass, we have been able to express, in the English-speaking world, our unity in faith around the one Eucharistic Altar of Sacrifice. English has become the new Latin. Today, English plays the role of an international language, the same role that Latin played in Europe a thousand years ago. And what's more, there are many scholars from non-English-speaking countries who use our English texts as the basis from which to prepare their own translations of the Missal. What is produced in English not only serves a wide constituency throughout the world but, more importantly, also serves the work of unity, of communion. Therefore it requires that the work be undertaken with the utmost care so that what is handed on is nothing other than the tradition of the Church which has been placed, in trust, into our keeping.

Soon after I had been elected the chairman of ICEL in 2002, I began to appreciate in a new way a text in St Paul's letters that I have cited ever since at every meeting of the Commission. This text is the earliest account we have in Sacred Scripture of the celebration of the Eucharist:

I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus

on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.²

I am struck by the care with which the Apostle recounts what happened at the Last Supper and the care with which he faithfully hands on this account as a great and precious treasure to the Church. This narrative gives witness to the motivation and pattern for what we do, week by week, and day by day in the Church—the celebration of the Mass following our Lord's own example and command. In the translation I have used, the Revised Standard Version, Saint Paul says that he 'delivered' this account to the Church at Corinth. Other versions say that he 'passed [it] on'³ or 'handed [it] on'.⁴ The Latin Bible uses here the word *tradidi*, a form of the word that has given us the English word 'tradition'. Saint Paul hands on a tradition that has continued across nearly two thousand years to this very day.

The last sixty years, since the end of the Second World War, have seen a massive questioning of tradition in the Western world. This is apparent, for example, in education, which has seen old disciplines and skills, what we might call received wisdom, give way to new methods and models. The questioning and even rejection of tradition is very visible in the decline of family life and the rise of new patterns of relationship. It can be seen in the arts with their constant exploration of new forms. It can be seen in the design of our buildings and our cities. And, not surprisingly, it can be seen in the ways in which we believe in and worship God, if we do so at all. Of course 'new' can mean better, but just because something is new does not necessarily mean that it is better.

Today, we are part of that process of absorption and appropriation. The Council articulated its response to the contemporary world most fully in its constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, but many of the themes of that document were also present, at least implicitly, in the first Constitution issued by the Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, on the Sacred Liturgy.

It is often said that Pope John XXIII wanted to open the windows and let fresh air into the life of the Church. It is certainly true that the desire of the Council Fathers at Vatican II was to enable the Church to engage more effectively with the world and the world to engage with the Church. And the gift, first and last, which the Church has to pass on to the world is, of course, nothing other than Christ Jesus. We owe it to our Lord to make the gospel available to the people of our time. We need to preserve its unutterable mystery but, at the same time, to show that it makes sense: to reveal how much it has to offer. Pope Benedict XVI is giving us a lead in this. It is his view, often repeated, that the crisis at present besetting the Church in the West is fundamentally a crisis of worship, and that getting the liturgy right is the Church's most urgent task.

There are some people who think otherwise. They argue that, with all the other serious issues facing the Church in our time, to bother about tiny changes in the wording of the Mass is like rearranging the deckchairs on the *Titanic* or, if it's not too inappropriate an analogy, fiddling while Rome burns! But let us consider another view, namely, that the Church's central task is to worship God and to bring others to do the same, especially in the form of worship that Christ himself handed down to us. To put the same thought in another way, as did the Second Vatican Council, the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Church's life. This teaching was echoed by Pope John Paul II in his last encyclical, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, and it clearly follows that if there is something defective with our liturgy, then to varying degrees, damage will result.

Amongst the many things the bishops began to discuss at the Second Vatican Council, one thing became clear very early on: many of the Council Fathers wanted to see a much greater use of vernacular languages in the liturgy. Interestingly enough, the most persuasive voices in this regard came from those bishops who themselves were from the persecuted Churches of the world—the so-called Church of Silence. Not least among them were those bishops who were ministering from behind the Iron Curtain, the former Soviet Bloc. Their argument centred upon the fact that many priests were not allowed to teach or catechise publicly and therefore the only way of instructing their flocks would be through the use of their own language for the celebration of the sacraments. This is not an unimportant point and, indeed, is most relevant to our own day. It is not only what you say but also the way in which you say it that is important.

Liturgy and catechesis have more than a loose connection. They are, in fact, intertwined and interdependent. Their essential relationship was outlined by Pope John Paul II in his 1979 Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae*, referred to in English as Catechesis in Our Time. There he states:

Catechesis is intrinsically linked with the whole of liturgical and sacramental activity, for it is in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist, that Christ Jesus works in fullness for the transformation of human beings.⁵

The mutual service of liturgy to catechesis and catechesis to liturgy is fundamental to the Church's faith and life, as demonstrated in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and *The General Directory for Catechesis*.

Catechesis, of course, is about educating and instructing in the truths and ways of faith. Drawing upon *Catechesi Tradendae*, the *Catechism* tells us that:

Quite early on, the name catechesis was given to the totality of the Church's efforts to make disciples, to help men

and women believe that Jesus is the Son of God so that believing they might have life in his name, and to educate and instruct them in this life, thus building up the body of Christ.⁶

Or, in the words of Our Lord presented by Mark the Evangelist: "Go out to the whole world; and proclaim the Good News to the whole of creation!"⁷

Clearly, there is more to 'making disciples' than liturgical texts, but as the Second Vatican Council taught: "[...] the liturgy is the summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the fount from which all her power flows."⁸ Therefore, the liturgy quite clearly has a privileged place in the work of catechesis. And catechising requires language. When considering the much rehearsed phrase "the fully conscious and active participation in the liturgy,"⁹ one question worth asking is this: Does this imply bringing the liturgy closer to the people or the people closer to the liturgy? It is not an unimportant question if somewhat enigmatic.

It is my belief that in the new translation of *The Roman Missal*, much has been achieved in opening up the liturgical treasury of the Church to the people of our time. Also achieved is a greater fidelity to the Scriptural allusions which have inspired these texts. A good example of this is the fuller translation of the *Domine non sum dignus* as: "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof," with its reminiscence of the centurion who asked Jesus to heal his servant.

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the link between liturgy and Sacred Scripture, that link on which, of course, *Liturgiam authenticam* lays such emphasis. It was said of St Bernard of Clairveaux that he knew the Sacred Scriptures so well that his language was biblical — or, as our young people would say today, he began to 'speak Bible.' It is my belief that in using a translation that is more faithful to Sacred Scripture we are also teaching ourselves to speak Bible!

Father Paul Turner's book, *Pastoral Companion to The Roman Missal*, is not only timely, but will also provide us with a scholarly tool of major importance. It will help us to discover and understand better the riches that are contained in these wonderful texts which are now being handed on to us in fidelity for our nourishment and for the faith-filled vitality of the Church.

✠ Arthur Roche
Bishop of Leeds
24 July 2010
Feast of St Sharbel Makhluḥ

1. The Bishops representing the Episcopal Conferences of America, Australia, Canada, England and Wales, India, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Scotland, and South Africa.

2. 1 Corinthians 11:23–26. Scripture text from *The Catholic Edition of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, copyright © 1965, 1966 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

3. Jerusalem Bible

4. New English Bible

5. Excerpt from paragraph 23 of *Catechesi Tradendae* © 1979, *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*. Used with permission.

6. Excerpt from the English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for use in the United States of America, copyright © 1994, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—*Libreria Editrice Vaticana*. Used with permission.

7. Mark 16:15

8. Excerpts from *Vatican Council II, Volume I: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, edited by Rev. Austin Flannery, O.P., copyright © 2007, Costello Publishing Company, Inc., Northport, NY, are used by permission of the publisher, all rights reserved. No part of these excerpts may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise—without express permission of Costello Publishing Company, Inc.

9. Ibid.

Introduction



The Roman Missal is the prayer book we use for the Roman Catholic Mass. This companion book will help you get the most out of the missal on Sundays.

The Roman Missal gathers all the predetermined words we say and actions we perform. Its scope is universal. Every Roman Catholic Mass in every country on earth uses the same book, though translated into a variety of languages.

Some words are not predetermined: the songs we may sing, the homily, the Prayer of the Faithful, and some commentaries, for example. But everything else comes from someplace, and that someplace is *The Roman Missal*.

Here are some highlights:

The Order of Mass: the script we follow at every celebration from the sign of the cross to the dismissal

The General Instruction of The Roman Missal: an explanation of the details—what to do, where to go, how to get there, and what to say

The presidential prayers: the prayers the priest says when he speaks to God on behalf of everyone else

The missal also contains the readings, although you would never know by consulting it. The readings are found in the *Lectionary for Mass*, published in four separate volumes. But if you look inside any of them, at the top of the title page, you'll find these words: "*The Roman Missal*." The missal has two main divisions; one of them is the Lectionary. The other is the book that we used to call the Sacramentary, but which always bore the Latin title *Missale Romanum*. Today it is called *The Roman Missal*.

The Lectionary used to be combined with the rest of the missal into a single volume. The

first book to bear the title *Missale Romanum* dates to 1474. It was revised after the Council of Trent in 1570. It underwent several updates in the succeeding centuries—always having the readings and prayers in the same volume. The most recent version of Trent's missal was published in 1962. After the Second Vatican Council this missal was revised and its contents divided in two. This had the practical advantage of putting the readings in a book to be used entirely at the ambo, and the other parts in a book for the presider's chair and the altar.

The division into two books also separated the contents in a more respectful manner. After all, the Bible is the word of God. The rest of the contents evolved as a fruit of the Church at prayer over the word of God. It is special to us, but it is not the same as scripture.

After the Second Vatican Council, the revised *Missale Romanum* was published in 1970, and the complete Sacramentary in English was published in 1974. The following year, the Vatican published a second Latin edition of the *Missale Romanum*, bringing its contents up to date with developing legislation. The revised Sacramentary was published in English in 1985. The first translation was a heroic effort to give English-speakers their own texts for the very first time. Within a few years, though, improvements were being sought. In 1998 the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL), which had prepared the first translation, completed a lengthy process of revision. But the Vatican did not approve that work for two reasons: It released new rules for translation in 2001, and it published the third Latin edition of the missal in 2002. Those factors caused ICEL to start again the monumental task of translating everything from Latin into English. In 2008 the Vatican reprinted the Latin missal with a few more corrections and additions, and the results were finally published in English in 2011.

Theory of Translation

The most obvious changes pertain to the translation. The first English version was freer than the revised one. A closer adherence to the Latin original reveals a deeper meaning, a wider reliance on scriptural allusions, and a closer connection with contemporary Christians who speak other languages, as well as the generations of believers who have gone before us.

The English-language *Roman Missal* of 2011 looks very different from the English-language Sacramentary of 1985 that it replaces. The reason has to do with the theory of translation that resulted in the two books. Just consider the first memorial acclamation as an example. “Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again” in the Sacramentary is based on the same Latin sentence as “We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again” in the revised missal. The Latin has not changed, but the difference in English is vast because of the new rules requiring a closer adherence to the Latin original.

The original Latin texts for the missal span the entire history of Christianity. Some are direct quotes from the Bible, such as the Lord’s Prayer and all of the greetings. Some come from the third or fourth century, such as the preface dialogue. Most of the presidential prayers come from the Hadrian Sacramentary in the eighth century, the Gelasian Sacramentary in the seventh century, and the Verona Sacramentary in the sixth century—and many of those prayers are thought to be much older, but preserved in those volumes because of their continued use, poetic structure, and spiritual meaning. Some parts of the Mass come from the late Middle Ages, such as the private prayers of the priest. Some elements of the penitential rite came with the 1570 missal. Other enhancements came with the Second Vatican Council, such as an expansion of the Eucharistic Prayers. The post-Vatican II missal reached back into this long tradition and restored quite a number of prayers that had not been in use for centuries. Now with the 2002 missal, even more of these ancient prayers were added to the repertoire. Some new composi-

tions appeared for the first time as well, such as a few of the prayers over the people. Among the additions in 2008 were additional formulas for the dismissal that concludes the Mass. These are being heard in English for the very first time.

The revised translation has us going back to the work that was done after Vatican II. It has re-examined the ancient and modern texts that scholars of the time included in the Mass. The reason they sound different to us has to do with the principles of translation, but not with their content. Almost everything you hear in the revised translation is identical to what has been in existence since the post-Vatican II missal first appeared in 1970. There are relatively small changes to the contents.

Contents

The contents of the 2002 *Roman Missal* slightly revise the first post-Vatican II missal. The basic outline has not changed, but the parts have been enhanced. The work is so vast that few people take advantage of its many parts. It takes a careful eye to see these changes, but they are worth noting.

Introductory Material

The introductory material is in ten parts. These sections lay the groundwork for what follows.

The Decree of the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship. This is the original short decree authorizing the use of the revised missal after the Second Vatican Council. The decree is dated Holy Thursday, 1970.

Decree Concerning the Second Typical Edition. Another decree from the same congregation, this one introduced the changes in the second edition of the missal. The responsibilities of some ministers had evolved, some new formulas appeared, and some other parts received a light retouching. The decree is dated Holy Thursday, 1975.

Decree Concerning the Third Typical Edition. By this time, the group responsible for the decree had been renamed the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline

of the Sacraments, but it is essentially the same group of the pope's liturgical advisors. This decree summarizes the changes in the third edition of the missal: a revised *General Instruction*, the coherence of this book with other recently published liturgical books, the expanded calendar of saints, and additional Eucharistic Prayers, for example. The decree is dated Holy Thursday of the Jubilee Year, 2000.

United States of America. This is the text of the *recognitio* by which the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments in Rome approves the translation of the revised missal for the United States. It is dated March 26, 2010, even though the text was not finalized for another nine months. That is the date on which the *recognitio* was granted, and the text as it stood was presented to Pope Benedict XVI the following months, but further corrections were required before the missal was able to be published in the United States with corrections to the text, local adaptations to the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, and the inclusion of local saints in the general calendar.

Decree of Publication. This is the decree by which the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops affirms that the book is the one duly approved by the respective authorities and processes. It establishes the First Sunday of Advent 2011 as the implementation date. This decree was dated August 15, 2010, several months before the final texts became available.

Apostolic Constitution. Earlier than the preceding documents of this section, this decree by Pope Paul VI authorized the use of the revised missal. It is dated Holy Thursday, 1969.

The General Instruction of The Roman Missal. Of all the introductory sections of the missal, this is the one most often consulted. It is the how-to document, explaining who does what, when, where, and how at Mass in the Roman Catholic Church. It is so important that when the missal was published in Latin in 2002, a provisional English translation was released immediately so that parishes would know what it contains. The version that appears in the revised English missal has polished

the translation, but the contents have not been altered since 2002.

Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America. These norms, which include more decrees from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments in Rome and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, were established in 2002. There is nothing new here, except that now they are more accessible, published not in a separate document, but within the missal.

Universal Norms of the Liturgical Year and Calendar. Here is the way to figure out what days fall where, and which days have rank over others. It opens with a letter by which Pope Paul VI introduced the new calendar of feasts and saints in 1969. Among other changes, he discontinued days like Septuagesima Sunday (three Sundays before Ash Wednesday) and moved the date for observing the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of the Universe.

General Roman Calendar. Arranged chronologically through the year, these are the days that appear on the universal calendar. The dates have been adjusted to include the adaptations and expansions pertaining to the United States of America; for example, the date for the Epiphany of the Lord and the inclusion of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. This section concludes with a paragraph describing the Special Day of Prayer approved for the United States. This day is similar in intent to the ember days and rogation days of the pre-Vatican II calendar. Every diocese within the United States may expand this with its own special days of prayer.

Table of Days. This chart shows you at a glance when Advent begins, when Ash Wednesday falls, the date for Easter, and a selection of other useful occasions. It is a table of moveable feasts. The column marked "Dominical Letter" tells you what day of the week January 1 will be that year, and hence the day of the week for the rest of the dates that year. Whenever the red capital letter A appears, you know that January 1 is a Sunday. Lower-case

b means it will be a Monday, and so on. Leap years require two letters because the system of parallel calendars adjusts after each February 29 for the remainder of that year. The column marked “Sunday Cycle” gives you two letters because the new letter comes into force on the First Sunday of Advent before that year is out. This concludes the missal’s introductory material.

Proper of Time

Here you find the prayers and antiphons that change from day to day according to the liturgical year. You will also find instructions concerning the Gloria and the Creed. The material is arranged by seasons, so you have to know what Sunday it is in order to find the right place. The pages appear exactly as they did in the 1985 Sacramentary, but there is a little more information here, and the texts on each page are arranged in better sense lines. You may notice the elimination of introductory lines such as “Pray, brothers and sisters” before the prayer over the offerings, and “Let us pray” before the prayer after Communion. The font size for the antiphons used to be smaller than the ones for the prayers, but they were always the same size in the Latin editions of the missal after Vatican II. This perhaps indicates the significance of all the texts on the page, even though the antiphons may be exchanged with more popular hymnody.

Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, and Ordinary Time are all here, followed by the solemnities that appear during Ordinary Time. In practice, Lent interrupts Ordinary Time, which resumes after the Easter season. But all the Ordinary Time Sundays are grouped together, as they were in the Sacramentary. Sometimes a week of Ordinary Time disappears because the calendar has to adjust for the movement of Christmas and Easter. The solemnities of Ordinary Time are still gathered in the back of this section, where they are notoriously hard to find. Unfortunately the *Lectionary for Mass* arranges these solemnities in a different way. Just because you can find the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of the Universe in one book doesn’t mean you can find it in the

same place in the other. But everything you need is all there.

The celebration of Pentecost now has an optional extended form for the Vigil Mass. These prayers were found in the supplement to the missal in Latin, but they have been helpfully integrated here. These prayers are not obligatory, but you may extend the Saturday night Mass on Pentecost weekend with additional scripture readings and these prayers. This will not be feasible in most parishes, but it is an option worth remembering.

Most of the prayers in this section are over a thousand years old—many are fifteen hundred years old. Some people objected to a seemingly obsessive conviction that the new translation should faithfully represent the Latin originals. They also lament the loss of the alternative opening prayers, which freely paraphrased the originals. Well, imagine having a letter from a foreign relative even a hundred years old. Wouldn’t you want it translated as accurately as possible? The names of the authors of the original prayers are lost to the passage of time, but their work was so artfully composed that succeeding generations have all passed down these gems. We are receiving them now all polished up, in order to hear the echo of how they sounded to earlier generations of Christians.

The alternative opening prayers were composed by ICEL for the English-language Sacramentary. They had a younger history and a narrower use than the other prayers in the missal. Although many communities have prayed them effectively, they have been discontinued in favor of the classic prayers being offered by other countries around the world.

The Order of Mass

It starts with the assembly of the people and it ends in their dismissal. The Order of Mass contains the words and actions assigned to a variety of ministers and the faithful for the proper execution of the Eucharist on any day of the year. The heart of the missal, it fittingly appears right in the middle of the book. It is one of the few places you find tabs. You need them to work your way quickly to certain parts of the Mass.

Most priests, deacons, and people have had their lines memorized, and have not needed to read everything from the book. But the revised translation inaugurated a period of confusion. Familiarity will increase, but for now some presiders do not trust their memory and rely on the Order of Mass to help them through. Better to have the book in front than to improvise something that does not belong here.

The revised missal includes a more thorough array of musical chants. *The General Instruction of The Roman Missal* promotes the singing of dialogues in the Mass, and the third edition provides more generous musical notation. It is hoped that these chants will be shared by English-speaking Catholics around the world.

The Eucharistic Prayer

The Order of Mass is interrupted after the preparation of the gifts to present a special section on the Eucharistic Prayer. Here is where you will find the four main Eucharistic Prayers, exactly where they appeared in the 1985 Sacramentary.

This section is introduced with the parts of the Eucharistic Prayer that stay the same: the preface dialogue and the *Sanctus*. It was quite an innovation for the Mass of the Second Vatican Council to put the heading “Eucharistic Prayer” on top of these pages. In the former missal, the “canon” of the Mass began after the *Sanctus*. But our understanding is that the entire prayer is Eucharistic. It begins with the preface dialogue and it concludes with an amen.

The variable prefaces are all arranged here. They follow the same logical sequence of the 1985 Sacramentary. They start with the seasons of the year. They continue with Sundays in Ordinary Time. The Sacramentary followed this with “weekday” prefaces, because they are used on weekdays in Ordinary Time. Actually, the original Latin edition called them “common prefaces,” which was a subheading in the pre-Vatican II missal. They appeared near the end of the prefaces, just before the ones assigned to Masses for the Dead. That is where they are today. They are still used for weekdays in

Ordinary Time, but they carry the traditional generic title.

Following the prefaces for Sundays in Ordinary Time, you find two for the Most Holy Eucharist, and then those appropriate for saints. These are arranged in a kind of hierarchy, starting with Mary and the apostles. Then come two prefaces intended for solemnities and feasts of saints, such as the day that your parish church celebrates its titular feast. If your patron is observed elsewhere as a memorial or an optional memorial, the day is treated as a solemnity in your community, and you use the appropriate preface on that day. There are now not one, but two options for the prefaces of holy martyrs, and these are followed by one of holy pastors and another of virgins and religious. After that come the common prefaces, followed by those for the dead.

The prefaces for certain feast days are available on the same page where you find the other presidential prayers for that feast. Many of the Lenten prefaces, the ones for the Immaculate Conception, Christmas, the Baptism of the Lord, the Presentation of the Lord, Pentecost, Holy Trinity, the Sacred Heart, John the Baptist, Peter and Paul, the Transfiguration, the Assumption, the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, Angels, and Christ the King are all found on the same page where you find the collect, the prayer over the offerings, and the prayer after Communion for the same day. This is a more sensible arrangement of the material for that day.

After the prefaces you find the four main Eucharistic Prayers. The first is the one with the longest pedigree in the Roman Rite: the Roman Canon. Its earliest appearance is in the writings of Saint Ambrose of Milan in the fourth century, though it has evolved quite a bit since then. In Latin the first word following the *Sanctus* is *Te*, and medieval sacramentaries usually carried a striking illumination of Jesus on the cross to decorate the first letter of that word. The custom is revived because the revised English translation now starts after the *Sanctus* with the word “To.” The difference is that the Vatican II missal places the preface dialogue and the

Sanctus on the same page, which breaks the connection between the iconography and the text. The group preparing the Vatican II missal did not want people to think that the Eucharistic Prayer begins after the *Sanctus*. It starts with the dialogue.

Eucharistic Prayers II, III, and IV follow in order, just as they did in the Sacramentary. We take these for granted. The inclusion of these prayers in the Roman Rite was one of the great contributions of the Council. For hundreds of years prior to that time the Canon was the only Eucharistic Prayer that Roman Catholics used. The variety available today is generous.

Communion Rite and Rite of Conclusion

The next sections carry different titles, but they are simply the continuation of the Order of Mass. The arrangement of material is exactly as it appeared in the 1985 Sacramentary. A careful reader will note the inclusion of more musical notation to promote the singing of some of the dialogues of the Mass.

You will notice at the very end some new formulas for the dismissal. We have always had a selection of these in the United States, but there is now a selection in Latin being translated more uniformly into the vernacular throughout the world. These appeared here and again in a supplement in the Latin edition, but they appear only here in the English translation.

Blessings at the End of Mass and Prayers over the People

Solemn blessings and prayers over the people may replace the simple blessing the priest gives at the end of Mass. The deacon or the priest asks all present to bow their heads. The priest extends his hands over the people and pronounces the blessing.

Solemn blessings are almost all in three parts. The people respond “Amen” to each section of the prayer. The choices are arranged by season of the year, then by saints, and finally by occasion.

Of the twenty-eight prayers over the people, only two are designated for saints’ days. The others may be used at any time. Throughout

the season of Lent, a prayer over the people is recommended for each day’s Mass. We have a record of that practice as early as the seventh century. The Church now restores it in the twenty-first century.

Chants for the Eucharistic Prayer

All four of the main Eucharistic Prayers appear a second time here, now with musical notation. This entire section promotes having the priest sing these prayers on occasion. In the Sacramentary, these settings appeared in the back of the book. Now they take a place right after the Order of Mass, which suggests their importance.

The main difference in these settings concerns Eucharistic Prayer I. In the 1985 Sacramentary, the length of this prayer apparently worried those who prepared the musical setting, so only a portion of it was set to music. The rest of it was to be recited. Now all of Eucharistic Prayer I is set to music in a simple tone, which affirms the integrity of the entire prayer as it encourages singing. The middle section of Eucharistic Prayer I is set to music a second time using the solemn tone.

The Order of Mass with the Participation of a Single Minister

If the priest is saying Mass with only one other person present, he uses this section of the missal. Obviously, a normal Mass is designed for the participation of an entire assembly. But circumstances may exist in which the priest has only one other person present. This section addresses that need.

Appendix to the Order of Mass

After the first publication of the Sacramentary in 1974, the Vatican approved additional Eucharistic Prayers. The ones bearing the theme of reconciliation were eventually incorporated into an appendix in the back of the 1985 Sacramentary, together with those for Masses with Children. The one for Masses for Various Needs and Occasions—in its four different forms—was published separately. Now the Eucharistic Prayers for reconciliation and for various needs have been inserted as an appendix to the Order of Mass, earlier in the book.

You may still use the Eucharistic Prayers for Masses with Children, but these will be re-translated and published separately. They were removed from the Latin edition of the missal because you would never use those prayers in Latin—no group of children on earth would understand them. There are circumstances when the Vatican II Mass is celebrated in Latin, and any of the other Eucharistic Prayers may be used in that language. The *Missale Romanum* is a practical altar book, not a repository of interesting texts. Although the children's Eucharistic Prayers exist in Latin, they were published for the purposes of study and translation into other languages—not for the purpose of usage. Because they will be published separately in Latin, they will be published separately in English.

Proper of Saints

The calendar of saints is arranged here month by month. All the prayers and antiphons that pertain to each saint's day in the universal calendar are here. Episcopal conferences add to this section those saints celebrated in their own region. The patron saints of your diocese and parish may not be listed among those in the general or national calendar. You draw those texts from the next section, the commons, unless the Vatican has approved other texts that your bishop has prepared for local usage.

Commons

The commons are used when no other texts are available for the particular celebration at hand. The first set is to be used on the anniversary of the dedication of a church. If this is the anniversary of the church where you are worshiping, the first option is chosen, and the day is treated as a solemnity on the calendar. If it is the anniversary of some other church, such as the cathedral of your diocese, then you use the second option.

The complete list of saints recognized by the Catholic Church is published in the *Roman Martyrology*. If your patron saint is not on the general calendar, you will surely find the date

in the *Martyrology*. When the missal offers no proper texts for any saint you wish to celebrate on any given day, you turn to the Common of Saints for help. These are arranged in hierarchical order: Mary, the martyrs, pastors, doctors of the Church, virgins, and other men and women saints. Subcategories group these prayers according to the season of the year or the ministry of the saint. If the day for your patron saint falls during Ordinary Time, you may observe it with these texts on the nearest Sunday.

Ritual Masses

Here you find the texts for the Masses when you are celebrating something else—the rites of Christian initiation, anointing of the sick, viaticum, ordination, marriage, blessing abbots and abbesses, consecrating virgins, professing religious life, instituting lectors and acolytes, or dedicating a church and an altar. Most of this material was in the 1985 Sacramentary, but there are a couple of changes. The Mass for anointing the sick was in an appendix in the Sacramentary because it did not appear in the *Missale Romanum*. Now it has been brought forward, and the sequence of rites has been lightly rearranged. You used to find the texts for viaticum (giving Communion to the dying) right after the ones for ordination! Now viaticum follows the anointing of the sick, and ordination precedes marriage and Masses for religious orders. There seems to be a hierarchy here too, proceeding from sacraments to sacramentals: bishop, priest, deacon, marriage, religious life, lectors and acolytes.

Masses and Prayers for Various Needs or Circumstances

This heading is self-explanatory, and all the material from the 1985 Sacramentary is still here, though it is arranged differently. Two categories (civil needs and various public needs) have been combined. Whether you have a wedding anniversary, bad weather, or just a need for more self-restraint, you'll find Masses and prayers here.

The collects in this section may be used outside of Mass for some other occasion that calls

for a prayer relative to its theme. You may start a meeting, a class, or a meal with one of these. Not every heading carries a complete suite of presidential prayers for the Mass. If you are celebrating Mass with one of these solo collects, you supply the other presidential prayers from somewhere else.

Votive Masses

Some Mass texts are set aside for devotional purposes. They commemorate certain saints, titles of Jesus, or mysteries of the Church. New to this section is the set of texts for Divine Mercy. These, however, are not to be used on Divine Mercy Sunday, when the texts for the Second Sunday of Easter take precedence.

Masses for the Dead

Here are collected the prayers we say at Masses for the Dead. First among them are funeral Masses. The texts in the *Order of Christian Funerals* may still be used, but these options are also offered.

Special prayers exist for the anniversary of someone's death, as well as various other circumstances. There are also prayers for deceased ministers of diverse categories, as well as relatives and those who died after a long illness or together as spouses.

Appendices

The chant announcing the birth of Jesus Christ has been added to the missal in the United States from the Roman Martyrology, where it is traditionally found. The first appendix gives a variety of musical tones for chanting parts of the Mass. This is where you find the formulas for singing dialogues, prayers, and readings from scripture. The music for announcing the movable feasts of the liturgical year is also here. This may be sung on Epiphany, which falls during the first week of the new calendar year.

The Rite for the Blessing and Sprinkling of Water is the second appendix. Users of the 1985 Sacramentary saw this among the options for the penitential rite much earlier in the book among the texts for the Order of Mass. In the

Latin missal, this blessing has always appeared here—even before the Second Vatican Council. Its location in the appendix is the return of an earlier custom, not an innovation.

The Rite of Deputing a Minister to Distribute Holy Communion on a Single Occasion is the third appendix. It is to be used on occasions when you have too few Communion ministers and too many communicants. A priest may appoint a minister on the spot for that one occasion.

The fourth appendix is the Rite of Blessing a Chalice and a Paten within Mass. Theoretically, you could bless a chalice and paten outside of Mass, but *The Roman Missal* is designed for use at Mass, so it does not include other such texts. If you have a new chalice and paten, blessing them at Mass in the presence of the community who will share Communion from them is a good idea.

The fifth appendix is a collection of sample formularies for the Universal Prayer, or the Prayer of the Faithful.

The sixth appendix has been added to the missal in the United States. It contains the sample invocations for the penitential act that used to appear in the Order of Mass in the Sacramentary. These are virtually the same; only the location is different.

The last appendix is a collection of sample formulas for the Prayer of the Faithful. They are just samples, but you may find them handy when someone has not prepared special intentions for the day.

Preparation for Mass, Thanksgiving after Mass

In the very back of the missal is a selection of prayers that the priest may say before or after Mass. These traditional devotional prayers may be used or omitted. Some of them—such as the *Anima Christi* and the Hail Mary—enjoy wide usage in the prayer life of Catholics.

The missal concludes with several indices. The first lists the celebrations of the liturgical year in alphabetical order. If you need a prayer for St. Aloysius, for example, and you don't

remember where it is, you can find a reference to it here. The second is an index of prefaces. This is more necessary now than in the past because the prefaces are spread throughout the missal; they are not all gathered in one place. The final index is a general one for the entire book.

The contents of the missal are extensive, and they represent only part of the prayer tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. More texts are found in other books from the liturgical library: the Liturgy of the Hours, the rites of the sacraments, and the *Book of Blessings*, for example.

How to Use This Companion

The purpose of the book you are now reading is to help you get the most out of *The Roman Missal* on Sundays. In writing this book, I have presumed that you will be consulting the missal throughout. It will be hard to make sense of many comments here unless you are also looking there.

Each section begins with a seasonal overview. It will give you a few tips about celebrating these liturgies in your parishes—some announcements to consider, some practices to think over. It may steer you to other helpful places in the liturgical library of the Roman Catholic Church.

I have laid out the material according to the liturgical year, just as the missal has. You will find for each Sunday a commentary that should open your eyes to the contents of the missal for that day.

For example, I'm telling you about the origins of the antiphons and prayers. You may not be able to tell a Verona from a Gelasian, but that really doesn't matter. I mostly want you to know that the texts we use at Mass did not just fall out of the sky, nor were they conjured up helter-skelter by a seminarian looking for a summer job. They have a rich history. They

have been handed down to us through generations of our ancestors. I want you to value the prayers for their antiquity as well as for their meaning.

I'm giving you lots of scriptural citations. Many of the prayers and prefaces were inspired by passages from the Bible. I'd like you to know where they come from. I hope this will enhance your work whether you are preaching, catechizing, planning a liturgy, or praying at home with the prayers of the Church. You can deepen your appreciation of these texts by looking up their biblical background.

I have included a section on the Lectionary. I'm using that to make connections between the readings of a particular Sunday with sections of the missal. In some cases, this may help a presider decide which preface and blessing to use on a particular weekend. It may help catechists explain the biblical roots of the parts of the Mass, for example when they see in the second reading a line that one of the Eucharistic Prayers includes. I decided not to force these connections. I'm including only the ones that are very clear. You will see more—for example, thematic relationships between certain prayers over the people and the readings of a particular day. I have not done that kind of work because you have the freedom to choose and the duty to apply your insights to our weekly prayer.

I've also written a suggested introduction and conclusion to the Prayer of the Faithful for each Sunday of the three-year cycle of readings. These imitate the style of the presidential prayers in the missal, and are meant as aids to the presider. You don't have to use these, but they are here if you are interested in them. Just a little gift.

The book you are holding now is only a guide, a pastoral companion to help you out Sunday by Sunday. The book you want to know best is the other one: *The Roman Missal*.

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Overview

Light all four candles of the wreath. Try to hold off singing Christmas carols just a few more days.

The O Antiphons were composed for the Magnificat at evening prayer during the final week of Advent. They have been given a place in the Eucharist for each day as the versicle for the Gospel acclamation. This is the best week to sing hymns based on the antiphons, such as “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.” The homily could draw attention to the antiphon of the day.

You may wish to highlight the images of Mary in your church. She figures prominently in the Gospel this weekend, and she is an important Advent figure. As Christmas draws near, Mary moves to center stage.

If you have a text or e-mail distribution list for the parish, let people know the Christmas Mass schedule today. If your office staff is printing up a participation aid for Christmas Mass, be sure to include the contact information for your parish, so visitors have a way of getting in touch later on.

Entrance Antiphon

The current missal adopted the same antiphon that has been here since at least the eighth century. The chant for this day, *Rorate caeli*, still appears in some hymnals. The words ask the heavens to rain justice down on the earth—or to rain “the Just One” down on the

earth. On the Sunday closest to Christmas Day, the antiphon commands the heavens to give us a Savior.

Collect

This is the same prayer that concludes the recitation of the Angelus. Many Catholics know it by heart.

LECTIONARY

Year A’s second reading helped inspire the line in the preface about the prophets who foresaw the birth of Jesus. The last line of this reading has been adopted as the second option for the greeting at the beginning of Mass (Order of Mass, 2). In the Gospel, Matthew quotes the passage from Isaiah found in the first reading and cited in the Communion antiphon. A reference also appears in the prayer over the offerings. The meaning of the word Emmanuel, “God is with us,” is related to the greeting, “The Lord be with you” (Order of Mass, 2, 15, 31, 143).

Year B’s responsorial psalm refers to God’s covenant with David in its second strophe. When Eucharistic Prayer IV says of God, “Time and again you offered them covenants,” it implies the inclusion of this one. Both the collect and the prayer over the offerings refer to today’s Gospel. Gabriel’s greeting to Mary is related to the liturgical greeting, “The Lord be with you” (Order of Mass, 2, 15, 31, 143). When the fourth Eucharistic Prayer says that Jesus was “incarnate by the Holy Spirit” (Order of Mass, 117), it refers to Luke 1:35. The Creeds (Order of Mass, 18, 19) make the same point.

When Eucharistic Prayer IV refers to the Body and Blood of Christ as “the sacrifice acceptable to you which brings salvation to the whole world,” it alludes to the passage from Hebrews that serves as the second reading in Year C.

The earliest version comes from the Hadrian Sacramentary, where it was assigned to the Feast of the Annunciation on March 25. That was also the date some people calculated for the original Good Friday, and the Annunciation may have settled on that day when Good Friday became a moveable celebration. There are still some years when the two fall on the same day. It happened during the lifetime of John Donne, whose poem “The Annunciation and the Passion” includes this line: “Th’ abridgement of Christ’s story, which makes one—/As in plain maps, the furthest west is east—/Of th’ angels *Ave*, and *Consummatum est*.” This prayer captures the same mystery. On the Sunday before Christmas, we recall the Passion.

Prayer over the Offerings

Some prayers in the missal come from sources outside the Roman Rite, and this is an example. It has appeared for many centuries in the Ambrosian Rite—still part of the Catholic Church, but centered in Milan, not Rome. Its members observe a six-week Advent, and this prayer comes on the Sunday before Christmas. It has previously been used in the Roman Rite for the Feast of the Annunciation, as the collect for today’s Mass was. Its placement in today’s liturgy helps unite the prayers of the global Catholic Church.

Preface

Today you use the Second Advent Preface. This was a new composition for the 1970 missal because the Mass before the reforms of the Second Vatican Council had no special Advent prefaces. The Old Testament prophets, Mary, and John the Baptist all appear here, giving a more historical thrust to this particular preface. The Gospels during the last week of Advent tell the story leading up to the birth of Christ, and this preface accents their message. In most years, this is the first Sunday that you use Advent Preface II. Several biblical passages inspired this text. John the Baptist proclaimed the coming of Christ in Matthew 3:11–12, Mark 1:7, and John 1:29 and 36. The testimony of the prophets is summarized in Matthew 11:13, Romans 1:3, and Hebrews 1:1–2. The

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Year A

The Lord provides signs of mercy even for those who do not request them. Let us make known our needs.

— *Intercessions* —

O God,
who showed your mighty power
when a virgin conceived and bore a son,
mercifully grant our needs.
Through Christ our Lord.

Year B

To God who has revealed the mystery kept secret for long ages, we lift our voice in prayer.

— *Intercessions* —

O God of the covenant,
who promised to maintain
your kindness forever,
be close to your people in all our needs.
Through Christ our Lord.

Year C

Jesus Christ came among us to do the will of God. Through him we present our prayers on high.

— *Intercessions* —

O God,
who spoke promises to your people,
fulfill your word and grant our prayers.
Through Christ our Lord.

community’s watchfulness in prayer appears in Luke 2:8, 12:37, 21:36; Philippians 4:6; and 1 Peter 4:7.

Communion Antiphon

As with all the other antiphons of the season, this one was in place at least by the eighth century. Isaiah’s prophecy sets the stage for the coming birth of Jesus.

Prayer after Communion

This prayer—new to the 1970 missal—was fashioned from two unlikely sources. The first part comes from a sixth-century prayer for the Feast of Saint Lawrence the martyr, and the rest is adapted from an eighth-century preface for the Fourth Sunday of Lent. The words for “paschal mystery” were changed to “the mystery of your Son’s Nativity.” This prayer replaces a more generic one from the pre-Vatican II missal. Together with the other prayers for this day, it sets the tone for the coming of Christmas.

Blessing

You may use the solemn blessing for Advent as provided in the missal. But take a look at the one in *Collection of Masses for the Blessed Virgin Mary* on p. 201. It will probably fit the readings and prayers a little better.

Fourth Sunday of Lent

Overview

Priest and deacon may wear rose vestments today, but it is not obligatory. Violet vesture is also appropriate. This day marks the midway point of Lent for those keeping the spirit of the fast, but for the elect, it is the day of the second scrutiny. This has more to do with their own spiritual preparation than with a mid-season respite.

The traditional location for the stationary liturgy on this day is Rome's Church of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem, which houses relics of the passion of Christ. Helena, the mother of Constantine, is credited with discovering the true cross in Jerusalem. She brought the relics back and placed them in her palace chapel, which Pope Sylvester I named "Jerusalem." The traditional antiphons for entrance and Communion both mention the Holy City by name.

Omit the Gloria today and on all the Sundays of Lent. But you may use floral decorations today (*GIRM*, 305 and 313; *Ceremonial of Bishops*, 252).

If you have elect preparing for their baptism at the Easter Vigil, conduct the second scrutiny today. See the prayers under Ritual Masses, Christian Initiation, Scrutinies. Those replace the usual ones for the Fourth Sunday of Lent. The Gospel from Year A is used. During the Eucharistic Prayer, mention is made of the godparents and those to be baptized. See the Third Sunday of Lent for comments.

Entrance Antiphon

The first word of this antiphon has given this day its traditional title since the eighth century: *Laetare*. The liturgy cites Isaiah's summons to rejoice, be joyful and exult. For him the exile is approaching its end, as Lent is for us.

Even so, if you are celebrating a scrutiny at this Mass a different antiphon is proposed in the ritual Mass section of the missal. With the man born blind we direct our eyes ever toward the Lord, begging for mercy.

Collect

Midway through Lent, we pray to hasten toward the solemn celebrations to come. The first part of this prayer is inspired by one for Wednesday of the Second Week of Lent in the Gelasian Sacramentary, but the rest of it was a completely new composition for the post-Vatican II missal. It intends to mark the bridge from one part of Lent to the next.

An alternative prayer is supplied when the second scrutiny is celebrated. You find it in

LECTIONARY

Because of the Gospel, the theme of light from the second reading of Year A reappears in many of the prayers and antiphons for this Mass. The Gospel's themes appear in the collect, prayer over the gifts, preface, prayer after Communion, and first Communion antiphon.

Eucharistic Prayer IV says that the Father sent the Son because "you so loved the world" (Order of Mass, 117), quoting John 3:16. It can be found in the Gospel of Year B.

In Year C, a verse from the Gospel is quoted in the second Communion antiphon.

the ritual Masses. It prays for an increase in spiritual joy as new members are reborn. It first appeared in the Gelasian Sacramentary as the collect for the second scrutiny on this day. It was restored here for the post-Vatican II missal.

Prayer over the Offerings

The gifts we bring we will soon revere and present for the salvation of the world. This prayer also comes from the scrutiny Mass on this day in the Gelasian Sacramentary. It appears intact in the ritual Mass for the second scrutiny, but it was lightly edited to fit celebrations where there are no elect (“for the salvation of all the world”); that is the version that appears on the main page of the Fourth Sunday of Lent.

Preface

The preface concerning the man born blind is to be used in Year A or any year you are celebrating a scrutiny at this Mass. It was newly composed for the post-Vatican II missal, primarily based upon the account from John 9:1–41. Also in John 8:12 and 12:35, Jesus scorns those who walk in darkness. The comparison between baptism and adoption can be found in Romans 8:15–17 and Galatians 4:4–7. See also Ephesians 1:5.

If this is Year B or C, and if you are not celebrating a scrutiny at this Mass, you choose one of the first two Lenten prefaces. See above for comments (*pp.* 32–33).

Communion Antiphon

Three options are given. The first is for Year A and during a scrutiny Mass in Years B and C. It is repeated in the texts for scrutinies in the back of the missal. The second option is for Year C when the Gospel of the prodigal son is read at a Mass where no scrutiny is taking place. The third option, which relates to none of the Gospels, is the antiphon that existed here since at least the eighth century. It directs our thoughts to Jerusalem, where Jesus heads toward his passion.

Prayer after Communion

We pray that this Communion will illuminate our hearts. The earliest version of this prayer, from the Gelasian Sacramentary, was offered on the Vigil of the Epiphany. The imagery of light made it a good candidate for this Mass, especially when hearing about the man born blind.

Predictably, the prayer after Communion for the second scrutiny Mass is taken from the Gelasian Mass of the same name, which supplied the other presidential prayers for this ritual celebration. The text prays for guidance; it is included here primarily because of its antiquity and for the integrity of the purpose of its composition.

Blessing

The prayer asks God to sustain the weak and help us all reach the highest good. It first appeared in the Verona Sacramentary among the prayers for the month of April, and was restored for this day in the post-Vatican II missal.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Year A

Even though we walk in the dark valley, we fear no evil, for the Good Shepherd will hear our prayers.

— *Intercessions* —

O God,
 who make your works visible
 even through the infirmities of your people,
 reveal your radiant kindness
 upon the needs we lift to you.
 Through Christ our Lord.

Year B

God did not send the Son to condemn the world, but that we might be saved through him. In confidence we present our needs.

— *Intercessions* —

O God,
 who send your light into the world,
 grant our prayers,
 and help us to live in truth
 that all may see the works you have done.
 Through Christ our Lord.

Year C

We are a new creation in Christ. The old things have passed away; new things have come. In God's presence we present our prayers.

— *Intercessions* —

Boundless is your compassion, O God,
 to those who repent and return to you.
 Grant our needs and restore us to life.
 Through Christ our Lord.

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Entrance Antiphon

The psalmist prays for God's fast assistance. This is the versicle that opens each session of the Liturgy of the Hours. From at least the eighth century until the pre-Vatican II missal, this antiphon started the Mass for the Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost.

Collect

We ask God to draw near and to answer our prayers, so that all creation may be restored and kept safe. The earliest version comes from the Verona Sacramentary prayers announcing a fast in September, perhaps during a sixth-century siege of Rome. The 2002 Latin edition of the missal corrected a small error in the spelling of one word in the previous editions. The prayer shows similarities to Psalm 104:30, which says God sends forth the spirit to renew the face of the earth, and to Romans 8:17, which says God frees creation from its slavery to corruption. A version of this prayer appeared in the 1985 Sacramentary among the prayers over the people, #8. The 2002 edition removed it.

Prayer over the Offerings

We ask God to sanctify the gifts, accept the oblation, and make us an eternal offering. This same prayer appears several times on weekdays in the Easter season, and a variation of it appears in the Mass for charity, located in the back

of the missal. It originated as a baptismal prayer on Pentecost in the Verona Sacramentary.

Preface

Any preface from Ordinary Time may be used. *See pp. 92–93.* The second option notes the compassion of Jesus, a theme found in the Gospel for Year A. The fourth option says that the birth of Jesus renewed humanity's old nature, and this theme is applied to the Christian life near the end of the second reading in Year C.

Communion Antiphon

The first option comes not from the book of Psalms, but from the book of Wisdom. It proclaims that God has given us bread from heaven. This versicle used to be part of Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. From the eighth century until prior to the Council, this was the antiphon for the Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost. From John's Gospel, Jesus says he is the bread of life, and all who come to him will not hunger. We are refreshed as we share this spiritual food. The line quotes the Gospel in Year B, and it is part of a series of Communion antiphons citing the "I AM" statements of Jesus. It was new to the post-Vatican II missal.

Prayer after Communion

Through this Communion we ask God's constant protection, that we may be worthy of eternal redemption. It comes from a Mass in a monastery in the Gelasian Sacramentary.

LECTIONARY

Referring to the last line of Year B's Gospel, Eucharistic Prayer I calls Christ "the holy Bread of eternal life" (Order of Mass, 92), and Eucharistic Prayer II says we offer "the Bread of life" (Order of Mass, 105). The priest's prayer at the start of the preparation of the gifts says, "it will become for us the bread of life" (Order of Mass, 23). The alternative Communion antiphon for today comes from this passage.

Year C's second reading is the last in the series from Paul's Letter to the Colossians. The third invocation of the third form of the penitential act addresses the Lord who is "seated at the right hand of the Father" (Order of Mass, 6). This reading opens with that image.

Blessing

Any solemn blessing from Ordinary Time may be used, or even a prayer over the people. See pp. 94–96.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Year A

Jesus satisfied the hungers of those who came to hear him speak. Having listened to his Gospel, we present our needs.

— *Intercessions* —

O God,
from whose love nothing can separate us,
help us conquer all things
through the love you show us in your Son.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Year B

God provided bread from heaven to those who wandered in the desert. In our times of anxiety, we turn to God for help.

— *Intercessions* —

O God,
who commanded that we believe
in the One you have sent,
look upon the prayers
of your faithful people,
and grant them.
Through Christ our Lord.

Year C

God has raised us up in Christ. We think of what is above, not of what is on earth, as we present our prayers.

— *Intercessions* —

O God,
for whom a thousand years
are as yesterday,
prosper the work of our hands
and graciously supply our needs.
Through Christ our Lord.