

Parishes get ready for new translation of Roman Missal

The way Father Gerard Francik sees it, there are two ways to approach the upcoming introduction of the new English translation of the Roman Missal.

“We can go kicking and screaming,” said the pastor of St. Mark in Fallston, “or we can see it as an opportunity to teach people about the Mass and delve deeper into what we believe.”

St. Mark is choosing the latter.

Young people from the parish have produced two videos on the Roman Missal that have been shared with the entire congregation during brief catechetical sessions held before Mass each week since Aug. 27.

Parish leaders distributed informational flyers and have provided other videos and materials from the U.S. bishops. Parishioners have “practiced” the new wording of some of the prayers and some have participated in a workshop offered by Catherine Combier-Donovan, director of the archdiocesan office of worship.

People in the pews have reacted positively, Father Francik said, and have especially enjoyed the videos by young people – YouTube creations that have garnered hundreds of views.

“It’s made it fun and creative for people to be introduced to what is coming,” said Father Francik, noting that staff members are working on a third video. “Instead of being afraid and pessimistic, they are actually enjoying it and looking forward to what’s coming up next.”

The Roman Missal is the book containing prayers and instructions for the celebration of Mass. The revised translation, which will be introduced in parishes throughout the United States Nov. 27, is a more literal rendering of the original Latin than the one Catholics have known for four decades.

The wording includes more reverential phrases when addressing God and the addition of words that had been taken out of the earlier translation after the Second Vatican Council. Among the most noticeable changes will be the use of the phrase, "And with your spirit" on the part of the congregation in response to the priest's "The Lord be with you."

St. Mark isn't alone in helping parishioners get ready for the changes. With the permission of Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien, some parishes have already begun using the new sung responses. Many are including information in their bulletins so it won't be a shock when the full translation is unveiled Nov. 27.

Father Mark Logue, pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows in Owensville, has distributed booklets with some of the translated responses. He and a deacon have preached about the parts of the Mass, why they exist and what the coming changes will mean. The parish website features an audio file so parishioners can listen to the new versions of the sung responses.

Father Logue has been practicing the new version of the eucharistic prayers.

"I'm beginning to figure out the rhythm," he said. "It's very much a Latin rhythm, with the verb coming at the end - 'For this, this and this, we pray...'"

Father Samuel Young, pastor of Our Lady of Grace in Parkton, invited Sulpician Father Robert Leavitt, former president-rector of St. Mary's Seminary and University in Roland Park to give a workshop for parish ministers. Father Leavitt also produced four bulletin inserts addressing the changes.

"I think the intention is to bring us more in accordance with the Latin translation, Father Young said. "It makes us more aware of the universality of the Church."