

# Parishes welcome new English translation of Roman Missal

By George P. Matysek Jr.

[gmatysek@CatholicReview.org](mailto:gmatysek@CatholicReview.org)

Father Matthew T. Buening looked out on his congregation Nov. 27 as he was concluding Mass at St. Paul in Ellicott City and spoke words he has offered throughout his priesthood.

"The Lord be with you," he said.

What came next probably happened across the country as Catholics prayed for the first time from the new English translation of the Roman Missal.

Half the congregation responded, "And also with you" – the familiar response of the last four decades, while the other said the words of the new translation, "And with your spirit."

Father Buening smiled and replied, "Pretty good."

It wasn't the first time the congregation relied on what it had prayed for decades. Earlier in the Mass, parishioners responded with, "And also with you" before the Gospel.

Father Buening looked at them and said, "One more time."

Parishioners giggled a bit and said, "And also with your spirit."

Father Buening again asked, "One more time."

Finally, they said, "And with your spirit."

Monsignor Richard Hilgartner, a Baltimore priest who serves as director of the U.S.

bishops' Secretariat for Divine Worship in Washington, D.C., said it will take time for people to grow accustomed to the new language, which is more literally translated from the original Latin than the earlier translation.

While there may be a short-term sense of entering uncharted waters, Monsignor Hilgartner said, in the longterm the new translation may provide opportunities to enrich prayer life.

"We'll have new words and new images in our prayer," he said, "so I hope that ultimately people will hear things that speak to their hearts."

For his Nov. 27 homily at St. Ignatius in Ijamsville, Monsignor Hilgartner drew from the collect, a prayer, in the new translation at the first Sunday of Advent. The prayer spoke of praying for the resolve to "run forth to meet" Christ.

"It's an image not just of awaiting Christ, but running to meet Christ," he explained. "There's a lot of rich imagery in the texts of the liturgy that can help guide your own reflection. I tried to point to the fact there's some richness to this and it's worth keeping an ear open for it."

In the Nicene Creed, the new translation replaces the phrase "one in being" with the Father, with the word, "consubstantial." Before receiving the Eucharist, worshippers now say, "Lord I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed" instead of "Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed."

During the Penitential Act, parishioners now say they have "greatly sinned...through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault."

After an early morning Mass at Our Lady of Hope in Dundalk Nov. 27, Therese Opitz, a cantor, noticed that parishioners seemed receptive to the new translation. She had introduced the new musical settings of the Mass prior to the liturgy's start. Parishioners used pew cards produced by Catholic Review Media and the archdiocese, that had been distributed in churches throughout the archdiocese.

"I have to say," Opitz said, "it made people more attentive. Sometimes we fall into a rut. We had to pay attention – which is not a bad thing at all."

Catherine Maxwell, an Our Lady of Hope parishioner, said she felt well prepared for the changes because the pew cards had been distributed in the church several weeks in advance of the new translation going into effect.

“It wasn’t a huge change because I knew what was coming,” she said. “The biggest challenge is not to respond automatically.”

At the end of a Nov. 26 vigil Mass, Conventual Franciscan Father Dennis Grumsey, pastor of St. Casimir in Canton, said he thought the congregation did well with the new translation.

“I think I only messed up once,” he said. “Mea Culpa.”

*Matt Palmer and Jennifer Williams contributed to this story.*