

# Pope reformulates Tridentine rite's prayer for Jews

VATICAN CITY - Pope Benedict XVI has reformulated a Good Friday prayer for the conversion of Jews, removing language about the "blindness" of the Jews but preserving a call for their conversion.

The new prayer replaces the one contained in the 1962 Roman Missal, sometimes called the Tridentine rite, which is no longer generally used by Catholics but which may be used by some church communities under recently revised norms.

The new formulation was published Feb. 5 on the front page of the Vatican newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano, along with a brief note from the Vatican Secretariat of State.

The text, made available only in Latin, begins: "Let us pray for the Jews. May the Lord Our God enlighten their hearts so that they may acknowledge Jesus Christ, the savior of all men."

It continues: "Almighty and everlasting God, you who want all men to be saved and to reach the awareness of the truth, graciously grant that, with the fullness of peoples entering into your church, all Israel may be saved."

The new wording removes language some Jewish leaders and groups found offensive, including a reference to "the blindness of that people" and appeals that Jews "be delivered from their darkness" and that God "may take the veil from their hearts."

Vatican officials have emphasized that the newly formulated Good Friday prayer applies only to the 1962 Missal and that its use would be exceptional, since the old rite is not generally allowed during the three days leading up to Easter.

Nevertheless, under papal norms released last summer, some particular Catholic communities devoted to the old rite could use it in Good Friday liturgies. That brought objections from Jewish representatives.

Shortly after the norms were issued last year, the chief rabbis of Israel sent a letter of concern about the prayer to the pope, and Abraham H. Foxman, U.S. director of the Anti-Defamation League, said it was disappointing and offensive to see “anti-Jewish language” return to the liturgy after its removal nearly 40 years ago.

The 1970 Roman Missal, revised after the Second Vatican Council, is the one generally used by Catholic churches around the world. It also contains a Good Friday prayer for Jews, which reads: “Let us pray for the Jewish people, the first to hear the word of God, that they may continue to grow in the love of his name and in faithfulness to his covenant. Almighty and eternal God, long ago you gave your promise to Abraham and his posterity. Listen to your church as we pray that the people you first made your own may arrive at the fullness of redemption.”