

Tom Booth says goodbye to his Mass settings arrangement

In the Catholic music world, Tom Booth is a modern legend and he has served as a mentor to several major stars, including Matt Maher. In the early 1990s, Booth wrote Mass settings and ritual music. Those arrangements, the “Mass of Life,” have been used across the country since 1993. Now that the new translation of the Roman Missal is being implemented next weekend, that means Booth’s long-used music is being shelved. I’m working on a story for The Catholic Review and Scott Miller, director of the Division of Youth and Young Adult Ministry, took me to Booth following the National Catholic Youth Conference finale Mass Nov. 19. Scott told him what I was working on and Booth smiled. Most kids didn’t realize they were participating in the swan song of “Mass of Life.” Listen to him prepare the youths here. Booth was still emotional. He just helped guide the worship of nearly 25,000 people inside Lucas Oil Stadium with the settings that would be retired that night. “I wrote it 20 years ago and it’s been published and sung for years,” Booth told me after the Mass. “I kind of waved goodbye to it when we sang the ‘Amen.’ I blew it a kiss.” At that moment, Booth grabbed his sheet music, signed it and gave it to me.

I asked: “It was that emotional, huh?” Booth shook his head and offered, “I don’t want to think about it.” What’s happening in America next weekend is a huge deal. Many adjustments will have to be made. While we welcome what’s coming, let’s cherish what has been so important in attracting millions to the faith during the last few decades. I know I won’t forget Tom Booth anytime soon.

UPDATE: Tom Booth is considering adapting his “Mass Of Life” for the new translation. 