

‘Tremendous amount of work’ ahead before new US missal is published

WASHINGTON - Even though the U.S. implementation date for the new Roman Missal has now been set, don't expect to find an English translation of the missal for sale at your local Catholic bookstore any time soon.

"There is a tremendous, tremendous, tremendous amount of work still ahead of us" before publication of the missal that will go into use on the first Sunday of Advent in 2011, said Monsignor Anthony Sherman, director of the U.S. bishops' Secretariat of Divine Worship.

As the final version of the missal received from the Vatican is laid out in galley form for publication, Monsignor Sherman and Father Richard Hilgartner, associate director, will have to go over each page to ensure that all of the U.S. sections are integrated with the universal text, that no sections are missing or repeated and that the translations from Latin in each section are consistent with the other sections.

At more than 1,000 pages, it will be the largest Roman Missal ever published in the United States.

"Even if we had a super-genius robot, people will still discover something missing," Monsignor Sherman said.

When discrepancies are found in the final editing process they will have to be resolved by the Committee on Divine Worship, headed by Bishop Arthur J. Serratelli of Paterson, N.J. There may even be a need to confer with the Vatican in some cases, Monsignor Sherman said.

Although the Vatican has provided guidelines for publication of the missal, questions might arise about artwork to be published with the text or other matters, he said.

Seven U.S. publishers "have expressed some interest" in publishing the new missal,

although none has committed to the work yet, he added.

Father Hilgartner said that in the current age of quick communication by e-mail and instant messaging, people might expect instantaneous publication of the missal would be possible.

“But it’s not that simple,” he said. “All of the parts aren’t together in one place.”

Mercy Sister Julia A. Upton, provost and liturgy professor at St. John’s University in New York and a consultant to the divine worship committee, praised Monsignor Sherman, Father Hilgartner and Bishop Serratelli for their years of work on the missal.

“It has been a monumental work, a monumental effort,” she said. “There was so much input that they have had to synthesize.”

But she said the period leading up to implementation of the missal in Advent of 2011 provides a unique opportunity for U.S. Catholics to renew their understanding “of what we do when we gather for liturgy.”

“I think sometimes we find ourselves on automatic pilot and not as attentive to the words as we should be,” she added. “This is a great opportunity for the church, and I hope it is an opportunity we seize.”