

Preparing for the New Translation The Liturgy of the Word



The introductory rites of the Mass conclude with the Collect (Opening Prayer). The Liturgy of the Word then proceeds. This part of the Mass concludes with the Prayers of the Faithful following the Creed and the homily.

The New Translation of the Third Typical Edition of the Roman Missal—scheduled to come into force the last Sunday in November, 2011—does NOT affect either the selections of the readings from Sacred Scripture at Mass or the translations that we currently use. The English Lectionary used in the United States was introduced in 1998 (Sunday readings) and in 2002 (weekday readings). Unfortunately, our current Lectionary corresponds to no one single English translation of the Bible. Most of the readings are taken from the Revised New American Bible (RNAB), but the book of Psalms from this translation were deemed deficient for use in the Sacred Liturgy. Likewise, the translation used in the Lectionary is not exactly the same as the one used in the Liturgy of the Hours, nor does it correspond consistently to the biblical references alluded to elsewhere in the Mass. In short, this hampers the drive to rekindle a common biblical language among the faithful. Someday we may see a different translation of the Lectionary that will address these deficiencies, but it certainly will not be in Advent of 2011.

General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) contains nearly all of the instructions that pertain to the celebration of the Eucharist. In paragraph 55 of this document one finds echoes paragraphs 33 and 7 of the Second Vatican Council's Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy (SC) when it says, "For in the readings, as explained by the homily, God speaks to his people, opening up to them the mystery of redemption and salvation, and offering them spiritual nourishment; and Christ himself is present in the midst of the faithful through his word. By their silence and singing the people make God's word their own, and they also affirm their adherence to it by means of the Profession of Faith. Finally, having been nourished by it, they pour out their petitions in the Prayers of the Faithful for the needs of the entire Church and for the salvation of the whole world."

From the Order of Mass

The instructions for the readings from Sacred Scripture are almost identical with those from our current translation.

Current Translation	New Translation
The reader goes to the <i>lectern</i> for the first reading. All sit and listen. To indicate the end, the reader <i>adds</i> .	The reader goes to the <i>ambo</i> for the first reading, <i>while</i> all sit and listen. To indicate the end <i>of the reading</i> , the reader <i>acclaims</i> .
The Word of the Lord.	The Word of the Lord.
All respond: Thanks be to God.	All respond: Thanks be to God.
The cantor <i>of the psalm</i> sings or <i>recites</i> the psalm, <i>and</i> the people <i>respond</i> . <i>When</i> there is a second reading, <i>it is read</i> at the <i>lectern</i> as before. To indicate the end, the reader <i>adds</i> .	The <i>psalmist</i> or cantor sings or <i>says</i> the Psalm, <i>with</i> the people <i>making the response</i> . <i>After this</i> , if there is to be a second reading, <i>a reader reads</i> it from the <i>ambo</i> , as above. To indicate the end <i>of the reading</i> , the reader <i>acclaims</i> .
The Word of the Lord.	The Word of the Lord.
All respond: Thanks be to God.	All respond: Thanks be to God.

Commentary

Apart from the use of the word *ambo* instead of *lectern*, there are no substantive changes to the instruction. They are the same structure although the word *ambo* is more clearly restricted to sacred use. *Lecterns* may be found in many different types of secular settings. Both the acclamation of the reader and the response of the people remain entirely as before.

The Gospel

The GIRM states that proclamation of the Gospel is "the high point of the Liturgy of the Word." Great reverence is to be shown to it by setting it off with marks of honor. Its minister (a deacon or priest) prepares himself with a blessing, the faithful stand to listen to Christ speaking to them. Since ancient times in the Roman liturgy, this reverence for the presence of Christ in the proclamation of the Gospel has been marked by a small procession with acolytes bearing candles and incense. In ancient Roman times, this was a sign used to signify the presence of the ruler, and since Christ is our King it is most fitting that this be done at the proclamation of the Gospel.

After the reading that immediately precedes the Gospel, the assembly stands, and the Alleluia (or the seasonal chant that replaces it in Lent) is intoned by the choir or cantor. This is a mark of reverence for the Gospel. While the Alleluia is being sung following the placement of incense in the thurible by the priest (if incense is to be used), the deacon approaches the main celebrant (priest or bishop) and asks for a blessing. If no deacon is present, the priest offers the prayer of blessing quietly.

Current Translation	New Translation
The deacon who is to proclaim the gospel <i>bows</i> before the priest and in a low voice asks the blessing: Father, give me your blessing.	The Deacon who is to proclaim the Gospel, <i>bowing profoundly</i> before the Priest, asks for the blessing, <i>saying</i> in a low voice: Your blessing, Father.
The priest says in a low voice: The Lord be in your heart and on your lips that you may worthily proclaim his gospel. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, ✠ and of the Holy Spirit.	The Priest says in a low voice: May the Lord be in your heart and on your lips that you may proclaim his Gospel worthily and well, in the name of the Father and of the Son ✠ and of the Holy Spirit.
The deacon <i>answers</i> : Amen.	The Deacon <i>signs himself with the Sign of the Cross and replies</i> : Amen.
Then the deacon <i>goes to the lectern</i> . He may be accompanied by ministers with incense and candles.	The Deacon then <i>proceeds</i> to the <i>ambo</i> , accompanied, <i>if appropriate</i> , by ministers with incense and candles.
He sings or says: The Lord be with you.	There he says: The Lord be with you.
The people answer: And also with you.	The people reply: And with your spirit.

The deacon sings or says: A reading from the holy gospel according to N. He makes the sign of the cross on the book, and <i>then</i> on his forehead, lips, and breast.	The Deacon: A reading from the holy Gospel according to N. <i>and, at the same time</i> , he makes the Sign of the Cross on the book and on his forehead, lips, and breast.
The people respond: Glory to you, Lord.	The people acclaim: Glory to you, O Lord.
Then, if incense is used, the deacon (or priest) incenses the book and proclaims the gospel.	Then the Deacon, or the Priest, incenses the book, if incense is used, and proclaims the Gospel.
At the end of the gospel, the deacon (or priest) <i>adds</i> :	At the end of the Gospel, the Deacon, or the Priest, <i>acclaims</i> :
The gospel of the Lord.	The Gospel of the Lord.
All respond: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.	All reply: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.
Then he kisses the book and says inaudibly: May the words of the gospel wipe away our sins.	Then he kisses the book, saying quietly: Through the words of the Gospel may our sins be wiped away.

Commentary:

The audible acclamations and responses do not change at this point with the sole exception of “And with your spirit”. With respect to those prayers said in a low voice, the priest now prays that the deacon, or he himself in the absence of a deacon, will proclaim the Gospel worthily and well. Likewise the deacon is instructed to bow profoundly, which is with one’s upper body and not simply a tilt of the head.

The use of incense and candles in this procession is an ancient sign that the one coming following is of great importance and authority.

