

# Beauty and the Beast: 2008 vs 2010, Page One

by Xavier Rindfleisch

## First Sunday of Advent

Prayer over the Offerings

Suscipe, quaesumus, Domine, munera  
quae de tuis offerimus collata beneficiis,  
et, quod nostrae devotioni concedis effici temporali,  
tuae nobis fiat praemium redemptionis aeternae.  
Per Christum Dominum nostrum.

2008	2010
Accept, we pray, O Lord, the gifts we offer, gathered from among your blessings, and as the fruit of our temporal offering grant us the reward of your eternal redemption. Through Christ our Lord.	Accept, we pray, O Lord, these offerings we make, gathered from among your gifts to us, and may what you grant us to celebrate devoutly here below, gain for us the prize of eternal redemption. Through Christ our Lord.

- 1) “the gifts we offer,” as in 2008, is the clear, straightforward way to translate *munera quae offerimus*.
- 2) *beneficiis tuis* is, again most straightforwardly, “your blessings.” Note, too, that *beneficiis* is not *donis*, which would be “gifts,” and the revisers have added (contrary to *Liturgiam authenticam*’s clear directive) “to us,” which simply does not appear in the Latin.
- 3) The lovely parallel in Latin *temporali / aeternae*, rendered in 2008 as modifying, respectively, offering and redemption, i.e., “temporal offering / eternal redemption,” is completely lost in 2010. It is replaced by the utterly hideous, if not faintly comical, “here below,” which itself comes at the end of a challenging tongue-twister, “and may what you grant us to celebrate devoutly.” So we’ve recaptured *devotioni concedis* by pretending that *celebrare* is in the Latin, but lost completely the really meaningful parallel of “temporal / eternal” which actually is in the Latin!
- 4) *fiat praemium* is, literally, “become the reward,” which 2008 delivers through the very pleasing construction “as the fruit of . . . grant us the reward.” 2010 transforms (for it is certainly not a translation!) into “gain for us the prize,” forgetting the *tuae* from the beginning of the sentence, which should be modifying *redemptionis aeternae*. The whole tone of that last mistranslated sentence in 2010 strikes the faint chords of Pelagianism for which the 1974 ICEL was so soundly condemned. “gaining a prize” sounds completely different from God letting what we are offering become a reward of something only he can give: “your (omitted in 2010) eternal redemption.”

## Prayer after Communion

Prosint nobis, quaesumus, Domine, frequentata mysteria,  
 quibus nos, inter praetereuntia ambulantes,  
 iam nunc instituis amare caelestia et inhaerere mansuris.  
 Per Christum.

2008	2010
May the mysteries we have celebrated profit us, we pray, O Lord, for even now, as we journey through this passing world, you teach us by them to love the things of heaven and hold fast to what will endure. Through Christ our Lord.	May these mysteries, O Lord, in which we have participated, profit us, we pray, for even now, as we walk amid passing things, you teach us by them to love the things of heaven and hold fast to what endures. Through Christ our Lord.

The 2010 version of this prayer is a grammatical train wreck. The Conferences of Bishops of the English-speaking world, having some pride in their ability to construct English sentences, will certainly not permit this to go to publication, much less to the altar of God!

- 1) There may be a legitimate difference of opinion, I suppose, on whether *frequentata mysteria* should be “we have celebrated” or “in which we have participated.” But however that phrase is translated, the Latin construction “quaesumus, Domine” is set forth in that order and as a two-word phrase **for a reason!** Just translate it straightforwardly “we pray, O Lord.” In fact, follow the Latin even more exactly, as LA directs and as 2008 obediently does, and leave the verb and dative with them. What were the revisers thinking, what possible grammatical principles or literary devices did they imagine themselves to be working with, when they began chopping these Latin phrases up and separating verbs from objects, subjects from verbs, etc.? For what conceivable reason would they drop “O Lord” between “these mysteries” and “in which we have participated,” and then leave “we pray” hanging out at the end of the sentence without the vocative as a kind of orphaned finale? An ear even slightly attuned to the least resonance of English grammar would have rendered this line: “May these mysteries in which we have participated profit us, we pray, O Lord.”
- 2) And 2010 only gets worse, eventually becoming incomprehensible. Notice how 2008, while translating the long Latin sentence as one English sentence, never lets us lose sight of the fact that it is “these mysteries” that are teaching us to love heavenly things. 2008 does so by rendering *praetereuntia* in a singular word, but a singular word which expresses a plurality of things, namely, “this passing world,” and *ambulantes inter* as “journeying through.” 2010, which had no trouble

sacrificing a literal translation in the Prayer over the Offerings and splitting up *quaesumus, Domine* in this prayer, suddenly decides to go literal and give us “as we walk amid” and the plural “passing things.” The only problem (and it’s a doozie) is that “by them” in the next line naturally seeks the nearest plural noun to modify. And that is not “these mysteries” way back in line 1, but the “passing things” of the line immediately preceding it. **That’s how English works!** The confusion is only compounded by using “things” twice, which unintentionally sets up an undesirable correlation between “passing things” and “heavenly things” by inserting “you teach us by them” in between the two “things.” You want “by them” to refer to “these mysteries” as *quibus* does *mysteria* by coming immediately after it in the Latin prayer. But what you have, in this 2010 revision, is a prayer that looks and sounds as if it is asserting that “by these passing things amid which we walk you teach us to love the things of heaven.” **That’s how English works!**

- 3) A final problem of rhythm and one last mistranslation finish off (in more ways than one) the 2010 revision of the perfectly lovely 2008 prayer. The revisers’ soon-to-be-renowned tone deafness, already established in our previous analysis, chops up 2008’s rhythmically pleasing “and hold fast to what will endure” into a clunker “and hold fast to what endures.” Since *mansuris* is the future participle from *maneo*, 2008 correctly translated this “will endure.”

And this is only page 1, folks – the First Sunday of Advent!

But, as is the case with the “Per ipsum” of the Eucharistic Prayers and the Preface conclusion for the Easter I Preface, these two prayers have an importance beyond the once-a-year recurring First Sunday of Advent because they are repeated on many Advent weekdays between the First Sunday of Advent and December 17.

Again I ask: how did this happen? And will somebody in authority please put the brakes on this 2010 “revision” and save themselves the embarrassment and the rest of us the loss of meaning that will result from all these mistranslations and grammatical errors? And please, **fire the revisers** who mutilated the 2008 texts after the bishops had approved them. Give us, at long last, an English translation of the Missale Romanum that is both **accurate** and **elegant**.