

Conceiving the Translating Task – Part One

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What I want to share is some of the rich experience I've had being involved now for some years in this new translation into English from the Latin of the Roman Missal. My involvement in the story goes way back and it's a bit complicated. It's not exactly the story itself that I want to share with you. What I want to share with you is expressed in the title that I could give these remarks, which would be "Conceiving the Translating Task."

This is not a workshop on how to do the missal – I'm not set up to do that. But I want to go way back and think with you about why it was even done in the first place. But in order to talk with you about "Conceiving the Translating Task," a few historical coordinates will show you where I've been involved, and where I've been situated in the whole question. So after I recount that briefly to you, then I'll talk about "Conceiving the Task."

It was in 1994 that I was appointed by Archbishop Wilton Gregory of Atlanta (who at that time was auxiliary bishop of Chicago and chair of the USCCB bishop's committee on the liturgy) to be an advisor to the U.S. bishops on the texts that ICEL was completing after nine years of work. In 1998 I gave an address to some 70 bishops* on the question in Washington and was locked in discussion with them for some three days. The bishops, you may remember, were sharply divided on that translation, but the ICEL text received just enough votes⁺ from the conference to move on to the next step, which was asking the Holy See for approval. But in the year 2000, the Holy See denied approval for that text. And I, along with many others, had predicted this. One bishop asked me why, and I did not find it hard to come directly to the point. I told him, "I think they rejected it because what's there in the Latin isn't really in the English and could be."

In 2001, the Congregation for Divine Worship, which is the Vatican congregation concerned with all the liturgical questions throughout the Roman Catholic Church,

* The audio track seems to say "seventy," but this likely refers a two-day forum with seventeen bishops sponsored by the U.S. bishops' conference on November 26-27, 1998, at which several panelists spoke. Fr. Driscoll presented the paper "Conceiving the Translating Task: The Roman Missal and the Vernacular." The papers are collected in *The Voice of the Church: A Forum on Liturgical Translation* (USCCB Publications). – Ed.

⁺ One segment of the missal received just over the 2/3 vote required; the other sections passed with much greater margins. – Ed.

promulgated an authoritative document called *Liturgiam authenticam*. This document gives principles of translation. And the document foresees the possibility of the congregation appointing an ad hoc committee of bishops to advise it on particular language groups. And so it was that for the English-speaking world, a committee called *Vox Clara* came into being in the year 2002. These bishop members were the cardinal-archbishops of Sydney, Westminster, Chicago, Philadelphia, Bombay, and archbishops of New Orleans, Ottawa, Mobile, Santa Lucia in the Caribbean, Kumasi in Ghana, and Raphoe in Ireland. Five theological advisors were appointed to these cardinals and archbishops – three from the United States and two from Great Britain. I was one of these advisors. So strictly speaking, *Vox Clara* are the bishop members and they have advisors. On April 29 of this year [2010], we had finished our work and we presented it in a meeting with Pope Benedict XVI.

That's years of stuff and all that's pretty interesting experience to say the least. I learned a lot about how the Church works and a lot about how the Vatican congregation works. I would have plenty of stories to tell. *[laughter]* For the most part I was edified, even if not always. And I certainly have a new take on what it means to say something "comes from Rome." I would want to say something positive about that phrase. In the present case, and probably in many others, the ministry of Peter is the only infrastructure that I could imagine that could bring together and have work together so many people from so many different parts of the Church around the world. Recall the names of the cities that I mentioned to you. But I don't really want to speak so much about the interesting personal insights or even the inner workings in the Vatican offices, except to suggest that they are not so out of touch as they are some time portrayed. But what I am supposed to share with you is the kind of thinking that guided this task, and also to indicate to you how complicated the question of liturgical translation is.

I propose organizing my reflections in four steps. First, I will try to describe how I conceive the task as I set out to translate a patristic text. Second, I will ask how much of this might or might not apply to translating the Roman Missal. Third, I will try to express what I think are the broad issues that a successful translator of the missal ought to identify. And fourth, on the basis of that, I will offer you a number of examples of big differences in the new translation that will come into use in the United States in Advent 2011. You will notice that I'm not exactly telling you stories about my involvement in the project all these years. Rather, I'm speaking about the kind of thinking that lay behind our work.

It's no secret that this translating project has been surrounded by controversy and politics in the church and I hope I can offer the kind of thinking here that will help those who are priests now in the Church somehow to rise above the fray and not let the implementation of the new translation become an occasion of division within the Church. I think it's a question of "conceiving the task" rightly. Indeed, I think and I hope

that the new translation will be a marvelous opportunity for catechesis on the liturgy in general. But priests will be a critical part of this project. Most of the changes in the prayers are in the prayers proclaimed by priests, and if this is not done well, the project will certainly fall flat.

So the first of my four parts, “Translating a Patristic Text.” I begin with patristics, the studies of the fathers of the Church, because I believe that I got involved with this task in the first place because back in 1994 when I was assigned to it I was deeply involved in translating patristic texts into English. Let me share with you a little of what this kind of translating involved. When I take up a patristic text, I am keenly aware that I am entering another world, a world considerably different from my own. I must try to understand it as completely as possible. There are large theological frameworks underlying the text, and I must be competent in these, understand them, and appreciate them. And that might be enough if I were only wanting to read the text myself, in the original tongue.

But if my task is translation, then I must go on to identify key vocabulary of this world I’m entering, noting especially how some words carry a special burden in building up the world. Behind the use of other words lie huge stories, doctrinal controversies, experiences of the church at large, or particular churches, important turning points in the history of the Christian community. As I try to build up a sensitivity to this vocabulary, I look for what could be called “echo” words – that is, words which echo ideas and understandings expressed also in other ways. Any world that is built up by words is full of nuance, connections, and associations, and I try as translator to become aware of as much of this as possible.

All this can be conceived as preliminary preparation for the translator. When I undertake to translate a particular text, I must be conscious of, and extremely sensitive to, this larger context. My first step is to be first certain that I understand the original text exactly. This takes a number of passes, for I am a foreigner in this world and I do not catch it all the first time through. If I am not humble and even nervous about my foreign status in this world, I might think I have understood it all when in fact my understanding is only partial. My goal of understanding exactly will include appreciating the way in which whatever is expressed has been rendered in the particular genius of the language I’m reading in, and there is a tone, a feeling, to the whole. This, too, is a part of what must be understood. Because it’s not a naked content that I’m translating, but a whole world of thought and feeling which are inextricably intertwined.

So far I am describing only what I must do to understand the text in its original language. Then as translator, I try – try – to translate all that. I employ, of course, my own language’s genius to do so. And for this, I need a set of sensitivities that parallel my sensitivities to the foreign tongue. But, if I am skilled in my own language, then I will

not be afraid to let the original language to suggest new possibilities in mine, pushing it to places it may not go of its own initiative. In any case, I am committed to using every conceivable device in my language to get three things right: the content, the tone, and the special vocabulary. We could call all this a “searching for the inner text,” or the inner voice, of the text. I study patristics and translate texts from this period because they are not like my world. It is their difference that I am interested in. But lo! – at some point, I discover that this difference is relevant to my present. For it frees me from my narrow and unexamined perspectives, and I could not have discovered this relevance had I not translated the difference.

So my second point. How could this apply to translating the Roman Missal? I told you just why I think I got involved—I never aspired to the task. But I was translating patristics at the time, and somebody knew about that. Does any of this apply to translating the Roman Missal?

First of all, I see some immediate differences. In patristics, history and difference have the greater weight, and should control and inspire the translation. One is dealing with a text that is written and read, the product of a single author. In liturgy, on the other hand, one is translating a text to be used in contemporary worship, and to some extent, history and difference create a gap that needs to be bridged. Also a difference is that the text is oral, and proclaimed, not written and read, and it is the product, not of one author, but it is an eclectic ext, produced during centuries. At the very least, this complicates the task.

Nonetheless, some of what I said about translating patristics might prove helpful here. For example, with the Roman Missal, a whole world is being entered, and it is a different world from, or at least more than, my own mundane and everyday world. The world of the Roman Missal is a bigger world than my own understanding of the Christian faith, or of my community’s particular understanding of that faith, even of my own culture’s understanding of it. This bigger world of the Roman Missal has a vocabulary that expresses it and builds it up. And so, in undertaking the translation of particular texts in the Missal, I would be inclined to conceive the task in a way similar to how I describe working in patristic translation. That is, I first make sure that I understand the text exactly, in its own language. This includes detecting the tone or feeling of the whole. I will want to note particular vocabulary – the words which carry special burdens, and those that echo other aspects of the liturgy, not explicitly expressed in the particular text I’m setting out to translate. It is, in short, as I said already, a search for the inner text, or the inner voice, of the missal.

So my third point. What are the translating issues in the world of the Roman Missal? I’ve spoken of a whole world into which the translator enters, a special vocabulary, echoes, tones, and feelings. Let me try to be more concrete now, as I attempt to identify

what I think some of these are in the Roman Missal, and thus what somehow needs to be translated. In this section, I will be representing, in my own terms, much of the thinking of the Vatican document which guided the translation, *Liturgiam authenticam*. I think that is a document often misrepresented and quoted out of context by its critics. I think even some critics seem not to have read it, or not to have read it carefully. And it's that thinking that I want to present to you now, in summary form.

The liturgy is a mysterious world, in the technical, theological sense of the word "mystery." As tradition has it – and this comes from Saint Paul himself, in his letters – the word "mystery" is a label for (this is my explanation of Paul, but it's fair to him) concrete somethings within which a divine reality is concealed. The mystery, Saint Paul says, hidden from ages past, and now revealed. The mystery of Christ crucified, in whom is hidden the Lord of Glory. The mystery of Christ in you, your hope of glory. The mystery that from all ages God planned to bring everything into one in heaven and on earth and under the earth into one, in Jesus Christ. The mystery – this is all Paul, and he uses the word mystery every time – that the Gentiles, too, are now co-heirs with the Jews of the promise.

As tradition has it, the liturgy is a mysterious world. It's a concrete something, within which a divine reality is contained. In the encounter with the mystery, the divine reality is in part revealed, and participated in, and thus the term "mystery" came to describe not only the material means of the revelation but also the otherwise imperceptible divine reality. In the fifth-century, in an Ascension homily, Leo the Great put this in a succinct phrase. He said, "Today," (referring to the Lord's vanishing from sight into the heavens) "what was history passes into mystery." Christology instructs us that the Lord's earthly life was itself a mystery, that is, a concrete something in which divine reality is concealed, and thus we speak of the mystery of his nativity, of his death, resurrection, and so forth. And we also name by the word mystery the ultimate divine reality which all these dimensions of the Lord's life reveal, namely, the mystery of the Trinity.

This is the different world into which I enter when I enter the liturgy. A mysterious world. Every piece of the liturgy, language included, builds up this mysterious world and reveals divine reality – realities in themselves not directly perceivable to the senses. If I am going to translate the Roman Missal, than I need to be aware that its language at every turn touches up against these mysteries. Indeed, language itself is a mystery. That is, a concrete something which mediates contact with divine reality. Thus everything in the liturgy is referential – referring to something – which refers to something – which refers to something -- which refers ultimately and always to the mystery of the Holy Trinity, and our participation in this divine communion.

There is a huge coherence – a *logos* – a huge *logos* which pervades the whole liturgy. Every structure and every mini-structure within the structures, every little *logos* refers

to the divine *logos*, the divine coherence. And for our present purposes of thinking about translation, we must try to name and identify as many of these structures as possible. They can be thought of as large frameworks, or patterns of thought. We could call them syntax – theological syntax – meaning syntax not yet in the sense of language, but calling it that so that the connection with language could eventually become evident. By syntax, I mean the way in which things are put together and held together, the particular genius of a particular tradition’s expression.

In the Roman Liturgy, some of these frameworks or patterns – I call them syntax – would be the following: Time and eternity in relation to each other. Heaven and earth held together in a gratuitous communion. An anthropology, a fallen and redeemed humanity. Past and future made present. The manifestation of, and participation in, the Trinitarian mystery. Communion in holy things, that is, communion with other particular churches across the world, and across time – communion with the saints and angels in heaven, communion with the dead. And more. A deep theological capacity is required to appreciate and recognize this world, and the translator is translating all of this.

Coming more directly to the question of translation, or of language out of the vision of its larger context, we can observe that in the Roman Missal a particular vocabulary and syntax build up and continually refer to these larger themes that I have tried in part to identify. What is needed in translation is a vernacular equivalent of this particular vocabulary. A vernacular equivalent of the syntax, a vernacular equivalent of the coherence that allows constant reference and cross-reference, permitting the mysteries to echo off of each other. And we’re not without guides in such an effort. The manner in which the Roman Missal accomplishes this can instruct us, for its own language and vocabulary are scriptural and patristic.

What scriptural means is obvious enough. But the translator must catch every citation, every phrase, every reference, every allusion that is in the liturgical text. For the deepest meaning of the text to be translated relies on all that is contained in the scriptural passages alluded to by the liturgical text. To describe the missal’s language as patristic is a little more complicated, and yet I think that a summary analysis of the dynamic of language in this period can suggest much about the translating task. The patristic tradition, to a large extent, is a particular way of reading scripture. The fathers wanted their language to be scriptural. They required this of themselves. And yet, in a culture different from that which gave rise to the scriptural task, such a requirement was not easily fulfilled. The rule of faith, a brief, somewhat fluid summary of the faith that came from the apostles, was an operative principle alive in all these churches. And with this principle, the canon of scripture and an orthodox way of reading it, were determined. This rule, as you know, is likewise the basis for the more fixed summaries, the creeds, of the councils and other conciliar formulae. But it is a principle which is through and

through scriptural. The rule of faith derives from scripture, is its summary and is used in turn to read the scripture. And it is only in the context of scripture and the rule of faith that we can adequately understand the liturgy and how language is used there. For scripture's most basic meaning is determined by the reality accomplished in its proclamation in the liturgical assembly. This is a key and essential idea. Let me repeat it. Scripture's most basic meaning is determined by the reality accomplished in its proclamation in the liturgical assembly. What this reality – we can call it “mystery” – and mystery are is fixed with precision by the language of the rule of faith. For scripture just by itself can mean too many things, as the early church's experience with Gnosticism is sufficient to show.

The liturgical context also indicates something crucial about the nature of the language of the rule of faith, and the nature of the language of the creeds, and doctrinal formulations which derive from them. Namely, that the foundation for the content of faith lies not in the formula of the dogmas themselves, but in the mysterious realities achieved in the believing assembly at worship where faith is professed and celebrated. In the liturgy happening is where what the dogmas talk about. It's *lex orandi, lex credendi*. Thus we find that the extra-scriptural language of patristic liturgies stands at an absolutely critical juncture between scriptural language and the more precise formulation of what the church believes expressed in creeds and dogmas. What the church believes is happening in the actual celebration of the liturgy, and it is ultimately nothing less than communion in divine Trinitarian life. Insofar as this expressed in language, it is a very delicate interplay of scriptural, liturgical and doctrinal language. In short, the language of the Roman Missal represents the synthesis of key ideas of biblical faith. This language is a *lex orandi*, upon which a *lex credendi* is formulated. This language is a rule of prayer on which a rule of believing is formulated. And of course it could not be translated adequately unless the translators understand how this language is used. The Christological, Trinitarian, Marian, ecclesial, anthropological, angelic realities and controversies and solutions are all reflected in the missal's language and they still matter for the Church today. All this must be translated.

There's but one further point I would add as I try to delineate the translating issues. I've said it already in how I describe how I work in patristics – namely, that a tone and feeling are created throughout the whole missal as its language participates in the task of building up the mysterious world of the liturgy. This tone is distinctive of the Roman Missal, distinguishable from other great liturgical traditions in other languages. We do not have time to attempt a lengthy description of this tone, but the kind of adjectives which are usually used to describe it can remind you what I'm talking about. Its tone is “noble,” “sober,” “elegant,” “lofty,” often restrained, but for that very reason sometimes noticeably exuberant. It is reverent, precise, concise, and so forth. In translating, I try to recreate this tone in my language. And as I said about translating patristics, I let this tone push my language in new directions. In my language, I will have to employ

rhetorical devices different from the original. But the goal thereby is to create the same tone.

My fourth point: examples of the differences in the new version. In this context, it is difficult to offer examples of what I am speaking about because virtually the whole new translation will be the example. There are thousands of texts involved. The content, tone, and vocabulary of these are considerably enriched. And the kind of thinking that I have been sharing with you does not stand behind the current English version we have been using. As I have already suggested, the present generation of priests will have the responsibility of ushering in these changes, hopefully in a peaceful way. Conceiving the translating task rightly will go a long way towards helping this to happen. But to get us started, let me offer you two examples of a big difference. One that has to do with theological content, and another that has to do with tone. After that, I suggest that we compare a number of different kinds of texts from the current version with the new version.

For theological content, I want to use as my example just one word: *Unigenitus*. In most instances in the present translation, this word is rendered as “only Son,” or sometimes simply “Son.” The same was true of the version in 1998, which the Vatican did not approve. The effect of translating *Unigenitus* as “Son,” or “only Son,” as opposed to the more-expected “only-begotten Son,” needs to be carefully measured from a theological point of view, as I described it. *Unigenitus* is a Christian neologism, that is, a newly-invented word. With it, Latin Christianity wanted to render with greater precision the Greek word from the Scriptures, *monogeneis*. The Latin term becomes a technical term for the mystery of the unique way in which Christ is the son of God. It is a word which occurs with noticeable frequency throughout Advent and the Christmas season, right through to Epiphany and the Baptism of the Lord, sounding again on the Solemnities of Saint Joseph and the Annunciation. Clearly there is some sort of connection among all the repeated uses of this title, in prayers which surround the mystery of the Lord’s human birth. It is a clue to the translator, to be sure, in every instance to understand its significance within the seasonal pattern, and to translate it in such a way that it echoes off the others. It would not be sufficient to argue, as some defenders of the present text have done, that contemporary biblical translations universally render *monogeneis* as “only Son.” Little is explained by this, for the exact meaning of the Biblical term was exactly what was hotly debated during the theological disputes which surrounded Nicaea in the 4th century. And the term comes to express for orthodox faith a precise theological position about the divine status of the Son, distinguishing his generation from that of the generation of all other creatures. The Arian controversy: is Christ truly God’s son, or God’s son by adoption? It all swirled around the word *monogeneis*, and in Latin, *Unigenitus*.

And so, for the theological ear, and this must be the ear of the translator, it should not be possible to hear the word *Unigenitus* without hearing at the same time Nicea's insistent *genitum, non factum, consubstantialem Patri* – “begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father.” This is precisely the reason why the term occurs so frequently in prayers surrounding the mystery of the Lord's human birth. It is a biblical term which has acquired a technical meaning. It is a liturgical expansion and digestion of the faith of Nicea and of other Christological and Trinitarian developments which are based on Nicea. In all the prayers where it is used, it is meant to stress the Son in his eternal divine reality, and then either explicitly, or by implication, throw into relief the contrast with his human birth.

This is a syntax – a syntax that needs to be translated. In the new version, it always is. In the present version, virtually never. In scores of prayers, we will hear the phrase “only-begotten Son,” where we have never heard it before. This will make an enormous difference if we take the difference seriously, and teach it.

One or two examples for the present will have to suffice for illustrating this. In the opening prayer for the sixth day in the Octave of Christmas, we have the phrase *ut nos Unigeniti tui nova pe carnem nativitas liberet*. In that phrase, the theological syntax relies on the contrast between *Unigenitus* and “something new,” namely, the birth in the flesh of the pre-existent begotten, not made, Son of the Father. Our present translation does not express this contrast. *Unigenitus* in the present translation of that prayer is rendered only by the word “Son”:

All-powerful God, may the human birth of your Son free us from our former slavery to sin and bring us to new life.

In the new version the contrast is clear, and the newness of the birth is also contrasted with our ancient bondage to sin, something that is not expressed at all in the text you just read. And it is not just vaguely a human birth that is in question, but to use the biblical language with its overtones, it is “birth in the flesh.” Here is the new version:

Grant we pray, Almighty God, that the newness of the Nativity in the flesh of your only-begotten Son may set us free, for ancient servitude holds us bound beneath the yoke of sin.

There's more there.

Another example is in the Advent prayer for December 18. In the phrase, *ut qui ... expectata Unigeniti tui nova nativitate liberemur*, the same contrast occurs. “A new nativity of the only-begotten Son.” The current translation speaks only vaguely of renewal at a coming feast. It says:

All-powerful God, renew us by the coming feast of your son, and free us from our slavery to sin.

This text, as it stands, expresses nothing of the pre-existence of the Son. It speaks vaguely of a “coming feast” of the Son. The new translation is much richer, expressing in eloquent language the ontological difference between the birth we are about to celebrate and the eternally-begotten Son. And we are saved by that ontological newness! This is the new version:

Grant we pray, Almighty God, that we who are weighed down from of old by slavery beneath the yoke of sin may be set free by the newness of the long-awaited nativity of your only-begotten Son.

The Advent and Christmas seasonal prayers again and again reveal something startling: namely, that the eternal *Unigenitus* should be born in time. And this contrast is always being drawn when the term is used. Latin can say “only Son” if it wants to, in the phrase *filius unicus*. If it says *Unigenitus* it wants to say something more.

Imagine the cumulative effect of differences like these in prayer after prayer, around a number of words, with a technological theological significance similar to this. Imagine that difference over the years – not just once, over the years. Imagine that difference, again and again, cumulatively adding up, and you will understand what is at stake in this new translation.

I’ve spoken about the importance of the translator getting the tone right. An example of this can be found in the ending of the Easter prefaces. These prefaces are heard again and again throughout the fifty days of Easter. There are eight of them. They all have the same ending in Latin, and are rendered with the same English in the translation we now use. The translation we now use says

The joy of the resurrection renews the whole world, while the choirs of heaven sing forever to your glory.

The new version is considerably more exuberant, reflecting the exuberance of the original Latin. It reads:

Therefore, overcome with Paschal joy, every land, every people exults in your praise, and even the heavenly powers with the angelic hosts sing together the unending hymn of your glory, as they acclaim...

I think this is a clear example of the translation getting the tone right.

In my general description of the translating task, I spoke of letting the original language inspire my use of my own language. This will result in a certain style that English would not have on its own. This deviation from the normal patterns of speech as

communication is common to the dynamic of what anthropologists label “sacred languages.” Contact with the divine draws us out of ordinary speech. And so, the translator should not hesitate to deviate from the ordinary in order to achieve religious or spiritual effects. It was precisely by letting his own Latin be influenced by the Hebrew that Saint Jerome raised the vulgar Latin of Christianity to the heights of great literature. And it was precisely by letting the Greek and Hebrew influence the translators of the King James Bible that raised and created new English in the history of our own language. In this new translation of the Roman Missal, the vernacular exhibits some sort of – I would call it “consanguinity” with the Latin, and it achieves a sacral tone comparable to the Latin. You will understand it because you understand English. But do not expect it to sound like English used in any other context. What we are doing at Mass is unique, and it requires a unique use of the language to express this.

More concretely, here are some of the kinds of differences that can be noted in the new translation. I will mention three categories. First, quite noticeable will be the length of sentences. The present English breaks up long Latin sentences into two or three independent clauses. This sacrifices much of the Latin’s subordinate clauses, which English can bear just as well as Latin. Beautiful and profound theological connections are expressed in this grammatical usage. I will give you later examples of this in a whole range of prayers – it happens everywhere. But one thing is sure: they will require understanding on the part of priests. They will require more careful proclamation on the part of priests, and they will require more careful listening by the assembly. Neither activity, I think, will hurt the church. But we’re coming up to a new level if we do it.

A second kind of difference would be that the texts of the new translation are in what we could call a higher linguistic register. They are slightly more formal than what we now have. The approach to God is more reverent, more frequently couched in phrases that take account that we are not worthy to approach his glory and majesty, but that we dare to do so anyway through Christ our Lord. Why this higher and more noble register? It is of a piece, I think, with the ethos expressed through all the artistic elements of the Roman rite. Think of the vestments, for example. Ancient clothing that priests still wear. One would talk a different way, dressed like that. Think of the enhanced architectural setting. Think of the sacred vessels. Think of the nobility of the altar, and its elegant clothing, around which these words are being uttered. Think of the art that surrounds us as we pray. One expects, I think, a higher register of language in this environment, in this mysterious environment, in which every piece builds up this world of mystery.

A third kind of difference is that the vocabulary of the new translation is much broader. The current translation employs a fairly narrow range of words to express what is in the Latin a richer variety of terms and expressions. That variety will be represented in a wider variety in the new English, and we will learn to use terms we haven’t used in the liturgy before, and this use and context will more and more establish their rich meaning.

As I have suggested, all of these changes will be more demanding on the priest-president. I can remember a meeting of *Vox Clara* once when one of the cardinals objected to a particular line from a preface that I was defending, and he was saying, “This is much too difficult for my priests to proclaim.” And I countered, knowing in part that I was speaking the ideal, “But priests are trained to proclaim sacred texts.” This is true in every religion. We can’t be writing texts in advance presuming that priests will not be at the level of their craft. Priests, I suggested to the cardinal, can do more than you think, if you ask. *[laughter]* And I think people can understand more than you think, if you give them more, and don’t set the level too low in advance.

We will turn next to more examples. But with this long preparation, we will read a number of different kinds of prayers, pointing out where the differences would be. In the end, this remains too abstract until we open the texts and start working with them. One of the things, though, that *Liturgiam authenticam* said is a principle of translation and that I know that translators observe closely, is that the particular genre of liturgical texts needs to be recognized and consistently represented. That is to say, there are rhetorical shapes to the opening prayers, to the prayer over the gifts, to the prayer after communion. Rhetorical shapes to the prefaces, to the Eucharistic prayer and its different parts. Becoming, as presidents, more keenly aware of what those rhetorical shapes are, and what their logic is, what their *logos* is, what their mystery is, and seeing how the language builds that up will be part of what we can appreciate in the new translation.

To summarize what I have said so far, here are four statements that reflect the kind of thinking that I’ve been trying to articulate for you here, that lay behind ICEL’s work, and *Vox Clara*’s work, in producing this new translation.

First, the translator must search for the inner voice of the text, which is heard in the delicate interplay between content, tone, and special vocabulary.

Second, the translator must be aware of the theological syntax that is operative in the zone surrounding a text to be translated, and identify how particular dimensions of the Latin express this syntax and rely on it.

Third, we need a vernacular equivalent to the specialized nature of liturgical language. Particular vocabulary and syntax, and a coherence that allows constant cross-reference, and layerings of meaning.

Fourth, we need a liturgical vernacular that expresses a digested and deepened insight, inspired by doctrine, of what the Biblical text says. In short, special language that echoes both scripture and doctrine, but is neither of these.

Thank you.