

We believe there are serious problems with the New Roman Missal...



CNWE

CATHOLIC NETWORK FOR WOMEN'S EQUALITY
RÉSEAU CATHOLIQUE POUR L'ÉGALITÉ DES FEMMES

Since Advent 2011 in Roman Catholic churches across Canada and the English-speaking world, the wording of the mass has changed significantly with the implementation of the New Roman Missal. After taking some time to experience these changes, to consider their implications for the church, and also to research how these changes came about, the Catholic Network for Women's Equality (CNWE) is compelled to express deep dissatisfaction with the New Roman Missal. We see these changes as much more than simply learning a few new responses and songs at mass. We are concerned about the harmful effects of the New Roman Missal on the life of the Catholic Church.¹

The dedicated work of many bishops and experts was ignored in the final version of the New Roman Missal.

Revising the Catholic Missal is no small project. In fact, the International Commission on English in the Liturgy spent 15 years working collaboratively on a draft that was widely approved by bishops in 1998. Through a second process, however, the Vatican basically rejected this draft, thereby ignoring the guidelines of Vatican II that gives bishops' conferences a central role in renewing the liturgy.²

Is the meaning of the mass getting 'lost in translation'?

The desire of the Church at Vatican II was that the Catholic people of the world would be able to celebrate mass in their own language, taking a "full, conscious and active" part in the liturgy.³ Translations from the Latin were expected to be clear and intelligible. Since 2001, however, the Vatican has made 'word for word' translation of its latest version of the Latin mass *the* priority.⁴ This has resulted in prayers that are long-winded (*one sentence in a Eucharistic prayer has 82 words!*), pointlessly complex, hard to proclaim, and difficult to understand.⁵ Liturgy experts have also found glaring linguistic and theological errors in translation. We will now proclaim, for example, that Christ died "for many", rather than the previous "for all". As Catholics we believe that Jesus gave his life for *all* of humanity and the words of the Eucharist should reflect that clearly. In normal English, "many" does not mean "all".

The New Roman Missal diminishes our understanding of God's boundless love for us and the goodness of Creation.

How we understand ourselves as humans has a significant impact on our relationship with God and others. The mass partly shapes this understanding for Catholics. The prayers of the New Roman Missal mark a return to a pre-Vatican II notion of humans as largely sinful and unworthy before God. In the revised Penitential Rite we are to claim that we have "greatly sinned" and to declare our fault three times ("through my fault, my fault, my grievous fault."). As any good parent or leader knows, affirming the goodness of people with acceptance and love, while gently guiding them to live more fully into that goodness, is a far more powerful language and theology for Eucharistic celebrations in our time.

Inclusive language in the liturgy – it is long past time!

The English-speaking world has made great progress in recognizing the fundamental equality of women and men and one aspect of this development is the adoption of inclusive language. It is common to use words such as "humanity" and "humankind" to more accurately reflect females and males together rather than the outmoded and exclusive terms "man" and "mankind". This lack of a commitment to inclusive language by the hierarchy of the Catholic church in the New Roman Missal is lamentable because it continues the sin of sexism in the Church.⁶

The New Roman Missal is a step backward on the journey toward Christian unity.

Great progress has been made in finding 'common ground' among Christian denominations since Vatican II. An important aspect of this greater unity has been the development, through Christian dialogue and collaboration, of some common forms of Christian prayer. Once the Vatican opted for the priority of literal translation from the Latin, however, that continued ecumenical conversation has been jeopardized. Lutheran liturgist Paul Westermeyer said in an open letter to Pope Benedict XVI, "With one stroke forty years of ecumenical good will are jeopardized, and it becomes more difficult than ever for those of us who are committed to support you and work with you."⁷ Clearly the changes in the New Roman Missal have more far reaching negative implications than might first be apparent.

What can we do if we are dissatisfied with the New Roman Missal?

**Please go to the online petition at CNWE.org
and join with others
to express your dissatisfaction with the New Roman Missal.**

The **Catholic Network for Women's Equality** hopes to gather 10,000 signatures and present the petition to the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops in spring 2012.

'Be the change you seek' in the Catholic church!

¹ "They (Christ's faithful) have the right, indeed at times the duty, in keeping with their knowledge, competence and position, to manifest to the sacred Pastors their views on matters which concern the good of the Church." *Code of Canon Law*, 212, 3.

² Liturgy professor Fr. Anthony Ruff, OSB resigned from the International Commission on English in the Liturgy. Fr. Ruff states: "The forthcoming missal is but a part of a larger pattern of top-down impositions by a central authority that does not consider itself accountable to the larger church. When I think of how secretive the translation process was, how little consultation was done with priests or laity, how the Holy See allowed a small group to hijack the translation at the final stage, how unsatisfactory the final text is, how this text was imposed on national conferences of bishops in violation of their legitimate episcopal authority, how much deception and mischief have marked this process—and then when I think of Our Lord's teachings on service and love and unity...I weep." Fr. Anthony Ruff, OSB "An Open Letter to the United States Catholic Bishops on the Forthcoming Missal." *America*, February 14, 2011. (Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Documents of the II Vatican Council, 36.)

³ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Documents of the II Vatican Council, 14. "The rites should radiate a noble simplicity". They should be short, clear, and free from useless repetition. They should be within the people's powers of comprehension, and normally should not require much explanation." *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Documents of the II Vatican Council, 34.

⁴ One of the main claims in the promotion of the New Roman Missal is that it is closer to the 'original' Latin. This is simply not true. The original Latin base text itself was considerably altered between 1970 and 2000, so the text on which the New Roman Missal is now based, is in fact only 11 years old! It is also important to remember that local languages other than Latin were used in the earliest Eucharistic celebrations.

⁵ Rita Ferrone, "The Trouble with the New Roman Missal: It Doesn't Sing", *Commonweal*, July 15, 2011. <http://commonwealmagazine.org/it-doesn't-sing>

⁶ Edward Foley, co-founder of the Academy for Catholic Liturgy states, "How hospitable are these texts to young adults, to long-suffering women worshippers who admittedly constitute well over 65% not only of worshippers, but of church volunteers and lay ecclesial ministers? How hospitable are these texts that do not accept inclusivity as a prevailing or determinative standard?" "Implementation of the New Roman missal." Panel of Catholic Academy for Liturgy, January 6, 2011. <http://www.praytelligblog.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Foley-CAL-presentation1.pdf>

⁷ "Misguided Missal: FAQ's Without the Spin". http://misguidedmissal.com/wp/?page_id=90

PETITION REGARDING THE NEW CATHOLIC ROMAN MISSAL

We, the undersigned, are deeply dissatisfied with the new Catholic Roman Missal. It serves to decrease the “full, conscious and active participation” of the people of God in the celebration of the mass¹.

Imposed on Catholics at Advent, the New Roman Missal is an awkward and confusing literal translation of a flawed, recent Latin version of the mass. It reflects a return to pre-Vatican II theology that hinders the flourishing of the Catholic Church in the new millennium.

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Send completed written petitions to:

**Catholic Network for Women’s Equality (CNWE)
Box 19594, 55 Bloor St. W. Toronto, ON M4W 3T9**

You may also sign online if you prefer at www.cnwe.org

Feel free to copy this petition and share with friends!

The gathered signatures will be presented
to the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Spring 2012.

‘Be the change you seek’ in the Catholic Church!

¹ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Documents of the II Vatican Council, 14.