



Welcoming the ROMAN MISSAL THIRD EDITION

Deepen, Nurture, Celebrate

Happy New Year!

It's November 28! Did you wish someone a happy new year? Today, the first Sunday in Advent, is the first day of the liturgical year of grace 2011. As the Church of the Diocese of Des Moines, we are celebrating our hundredth year as a faith community. You may have heard that this landmark year for our local Church is coinciding with a significant event for the entire English-speaking Roman Catholic world: the time of preparation for the third edition of the Roman Missal.

From now through Christmas, you're invited to follow this bulletin series, the first of three series in the next year, into the richness of our liturgy. During the season of Advent, we recall the Incarnation of Christ, God's Word become flesh—that God became a human being like us in all things but sin, so that we might become more like our creator. Today's installment features a quick overview of the Missal, and a broad look into our introductory rites.

What is the Roman Missal?

A "missal" is a book that contains the words necessary for the celebration of the Mass: prayers, rubrics (instructions), scripture readings, and chants. No doubt you've noticed (or carried!) the large red book used by the priest. It is titled, in Latin, *Missale Romanum*—the Roman Missal. After the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council increased the wealth of scripture in the liturgy, the book was split into two volumes: the *Lectionary for Mass* and the *Sacramentary*. The first edition of those texts was officially used in English in 1970. We are currently using the second edition; on November 27, 2011, the first Sunday in Advent, parishes in the dioceses of the United States will begin using the English translation of the third edition. We'll begin using the name "missal" with this third edition, to remind us that the liturgy is an integrated whole, scripture and prayers.

Why a new Missal? Is the Mass changing?

Pope John Paul II announced the third edition of the Roman Missal in 2000, to celebrate the international Jubilee year. The new Missal does not make significant changes to the structure of the Mass. It includes, among other new additions, prayers for the newly canonized saints, a new order for the vigil of Pentecost, a Mass in thanksgiving for the gift of human life, and additional Eucharistic prefaces. Most of these texts originated in Latin and, according to the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, they may be translated into vernacular languages, the local language of the people. This is done under the authority of the local conferences of bishops and the Holy See. In 2001, the Holy See issued new guidelines for translating liturgical texts from Latin to English.

A new period of renewal

It may surprise you to learn that the English texts we use today have been under revision for more than two decades. It was always a commitment of the bishops to assess the experience of using the vernacular in our worship, and to make adjustments when necessary. The time is right for revision! As we move toward the use of the new texts a year from this Advent season, we have the opportunity to learn from the wisdom of those who saw the Church into and through the period of liturgical renewal following Vatican II. This year, our centennial as a diocese, we have the opportunity to learn more about the liturgy—where we as individuals and as a community find our strength and our mission.



The Introductory Rites

“Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.”

First Sunday in Advent

Today’s refrain from Psalm 122:1 is a joyful way to open our new liturgical year. It’s also the attitude with which we hope to begin each liturgy. Whether we are happy or sad, we go to the Lord’s house filled with an abiding joy in the presence of Christ. Let’s take a look at the parts of Mass that help to cultivate joyful hearts in the midst of our daily ups and downs. The Introductory Rites help us to consecrate, or to set aside, our time in worship.

The Entrance Procession The assembling of the Church begins long before the moment the cross bearer starts down the aisle. When each of us, in response to God’s invitation, sets aside the time and prepares at home to come to the church, God’s gathering of the Church has begun. What we know of as the entrance procession—cross, candles, deacon, presiding minister—ritualizes the reality that God is the One who has gathered us together. The symbols of our faith are revered: the altar is bowed toward by all and kissed by the priest, the book of the Gospels is placed on the altar, connecting the Word Jesus Christ with his altar of banquet and sacrifice. Incense may be used as part of our setting aside this time for worship of God.

Invocation and Greeting When passing someone you know in a hallway or on the street, there’s often a brief exchange: “Hi!/How are you?/Have a great day!” After the entrance procession we open our ritual time “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,” to which the people respond, *Amen*. Then the priest greets the assembly, saying, “The Lord be with you,” reminding us of the Lord’s presence in this time and place. The people respond similarly. Next Advent the people’s response will be, “And with your spirit.” These two exchanges, whether in the newer or current translation, serve to consecrate, or make holy, our time to God. This is sacramental time, and so we use language that both echoes and elevates our usual speech patterns.

Penitential Act An early non-scriptural writing about Christian worship, *The Didache* (ca. 90-100 AD), instructs Christian communities: “On the Lord’s day gather together, break bread and give thanks after confessing your transgressions so that your sacrifice may be pure.” The Penitential Act is how we continue that pattern today. The Kyrie, “Lord, have mercy...”, is our first public acclamation of God’s mercy. Just as *The Didache* instructed nearly 2000 years ago, we as Christians confess that we are in great need of God’s mercy, and we acclaim that God has responded *with* that great mercy.

Glory to God After acknowledging God’s mercy in the Penitential Act, on Sundays outside of Advent and Lent and on solemnities, the assembly joins the angels and heavenly host in singing, “Glory to God in the highest,” sung at the birth of Jesus Christ. It is one of the most ancient Christian hymns, with its origins in Luke’s gospel. This is also one of the few times where the entire assembly *just sings*, without anything else going on. God’s people, with joyful hearts, sing of God’s glory, and how that glory has been shared with us in Christ.

Collect (“CALL-ect”) Then the priest says, “Let us pray,” which introduces the collect. The word “collect” might be confusing until learning that the pause after the invitation to pray is given for each person to call to mind his or her prayer intentions. After this pause, the priest says the collect, or the prayer of the day, which is connected to the feast, season, or the readings of the day. In this way we unite our personal prayers with the prayer of the Church, *collected* into one voice by the words of this opening prayer.

From Assembling to Assembly All of this is done standing, the usual posture for communal prayer in the Roman liturgy. Having responded to God’s invitation, having recognized our connectedness to one another in the entrance rite, having acknowledged our sinfulness and acclaimed God’s mercy, and having offered our prayers together to God, we know that we are the People of God brought together by God, ready to hear God’s Word. We are seated, that we may be receptive to Christ’s presence in the Word of God proclaimed in the midst of this sacred assembly.

Next week, the series continues with the Liturgy of the Word.