



THIRD EDITION OF THE ROMAN MISSAL

BULLETIN INSERT #1: What is the Roman Missal?

Written text helps the Church be consistent with liturgical practice. Each time we celebrate Mass, the priest prays from the red book that the server holds before him, or which is placed on the altar for the prayers at the eucharistic table. This red book is called the *Sacramentary*. The prayers found in the sacramentary along with the readings and psalms found in the lectionary make up the collection called the Roman Missal.

In the early Christian Church, many of the Mass prayers were memorized and handed down orally. Scribes eventually collected the prayers and recorded them. Other books were used for the scripture readings: lectionaries and a Book of the Gospels. Additional books were prepared for chants and antiphons. As manuscripts were passed on slight changes and additions developed. Eventually the chants, scripture readings, prayer texts, and instructions were compiled into a single volume as the complete missal. With the invention of the movable printing press in 1470, the Mass texts became standardized and widely available. In 1474, the first *Roman Missal* was printed in Latin. Over the next five centuries this *Missal* continued to evolve.

For many centuries up to the mid 1960's the Church celebrated the liturgy in Latin. After Vatican II the Latin texts were translated into the languages of the people. The first interim English Rite for Mass was made available in 1969. Translators set about working on all the texts of the *Missale Romanum* producing our First Edition of the Roman Missal for use in Canada in 1974. By 1983 a second edition of the Roman Missal in English was completed. This missal incorporated additional prayers and rites, and texts for the celebration of feasts of new saints. The translation process used in these first two editions aimed for a "spirit" of the texts rather than a strict translation from the Latin. One of the mandates of Vatican II was to ensure that the people understood and lived into a deeper love of the liturgy.

In 2001 the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments which is the liturgical commission of the Vatican in Rome, issued a document outlining the method and process for translating liturgical texts into the language of the people. This document called for a more literal translation of the original Latin, in order to preserve more of the scriptural references and the thinking of the Fathers of the early church. It was called *Liturgiam authenticam*.

Over the next weeks, these bulletin inserts will alert you to some of those changes in the Roman Missal. The inserts will also give more information about the various elements of the Mass, what they mean and how we might reflect upon the information. We hope that the information will instill a deeper love of the mystery that we celebrate in the Mass.

THINGS TO PONDER OR DO

- a) This week have a conversation with someone who remembers the Mass being celebrated in Latin.
- b) Your parish will be displaying the current sacramentary. Drop in and leaf through it, noting the various sections and types of prayers. Texts printed in red are rubrics. They indicate gestures, postures, and voice qualities. If your parish has copies of earlier sacramentaries and Missals these may also be on display.