

# A New Translation of the Mass into English

By Fr. Allen Moran, O.P., Province of St. Joseph

Adapted by Fr. Boniface Willard, O.P., Province of the Holy Name of Jesus

## Liturgy of the Eucharist: Eucharistic Prayer I



This week we continue our examination of the New Translation of Eucharistic Prayer I.

Current Translation	New Translation
<p><i>Then he continues:</i></p> <p>When supper was ended,</p> <p><i>He takes the chalice and, raising it a little above the altar, continues:</i></p> <p>he took the cup. Again he gave you thanks and praise, gave the cup to his disciples, and said:</p> <p><i>He bows slightly.</i></p> <p>Take this, all of you, and drink from it: this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven.</p> <p>Do this in memory of me.</p> <p><i>He shows the chalice to the people, places it on the corporal, and genuflects in adoration.</i></p>	<p><i>After this, the Priest continues:</i></p> <p>In a similar way, when supper was ended,</p> <p><i>He takes the chalice and, holding it slightly raised above the altar, continues:</i></p> <p>he took this precious chalice in his holy and venerable hands, and once more giving you thanks, he said the blessing and gave the chalice to his disciples, saying:</p> <p><i>He bends slightly.</i></p> <p>TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND DRINK FROM IT, FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD, THE BLOOD OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL COVENANT, WHICH WILL BE Poured OUT FOR YOU AND FOR MANY FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS. DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME.</p> <p><i>The Priest shows the chalice to the people, places it on the corporal, and genuflects in adoration.</i></p>

Commentary: The Current Translation lacks the exalted language of the institution narrative. Notice how “precious chalice” (a literal translation of the original Latin) replaces “cup,” and “in his holy and venerable hands” now appears. The New Translation intentionally chose the word chalice in lieu of cup (the Latin word here, *calix*, may be translated as either) to avoid a pedestrian or profane quality.

The word “for” that appears at this point carries the meaning “because,” and it hearkens back to the Bread of Life discourse from the Gospel of John: *Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you* (Jn. 6:53).

You will also notice that “everlasting” becomes “eternal” in the New Translation and that “shed” is translated “poured out.” The word eternal carries with it everything that everlasting means and more. Something that is everlasting can have a beginning (e.g. the human soul), but only that which is Divine is eternal—without beginning or end. This covenant, then, has always been a part of God’s plan for mankind.

Poured out is more graphic than shed, and the connection between the wine that was earlier poured into the chalice and the Blood of Christ that was poured out in the Passion is more vivid. It also reminds of St. Paul at the end of his life: “I am already being poured out like a libation” (2 Tim. 4:6). It conveys the sense of giving completely of oneself to the very last.

The most sensitive change in translation, perhaps in the entire *Roman Missal*, is the New Translation’s “for many” where the Current Translation reads “for all.” This change was specifically mandated by Pope Benedict XVI after consulting with Conferences of Bishops throughout the world. Certainly, the Church’s teaching has not changed here. The official Latin text was and continues to say *pro multis* (for many).

The same for many is in the institution narrative of the Gospels of Matthew (26:28) and Mark (14:24), and it is the Suffering Servant of Is. 53:12 who suffers in order to *take away the sins of many*. It is important to note that the wording “for many” here is being used in contrast to the notion of “for few” and not to “for all.” The emphasis falls on the vast multitudes who have their sins taken away. The biblical passages are not directly concerned here with the question of whether every man and woman who has ever lived will be saved or whether only a small minority (or any other percentage); it is a statement about the vast numbers. Even if the biblical texts in these passages do not directly answer the question, the constant teaching of the Church does.

In the *objective sense*, it is true that Christ died “for all” men and women (Jn. 11:52; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Titus 2:11, etc.). No one was or is excluded. He did not die only for the Jews or only for the Gentile or only for the people of his own day. Pope Innocent X in his Apostolic Constitution *Cum occasione* of May 31, 1653, teaches that Christ shed his blood for all human beings without exception. Likewise, the for you and for many means

that it is not simply the priest who consecrates the sacrament and the faithful who partake of it who benefit, but also those for whom the sacrifice of the Mass is offered (cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, III, 78, 3, 8). To understand that the words for many **indicate that Christ's blood was poured out for some but not for others** is heretical and must be rejected.

In the *subjective sense*, those who benefit from the work of **Christ's Passion**—those who receive its fruit—are those who willingly receive the faith (baptism), who persevere in it, and who live and grow in the bonds of charity (free from mortal sin). Salvation is made available to all, but not all necessarily avail themselves of it. According to the Council of Trent, the fruits of the pouring out of blood in **the Lord's Passion that pertain in a special way to this sacrament** are: 1) access to the eternal inheritance, 2) access to righteousness by the mystery of faith, and 3) the remission of sins. While only God can be the interior judge **of such things, we can see that the Church's teaching** with regard to who may receive Holy Communion corresponds to this teaching from at least an external sense: one who professes the fullness of the Catholic faith, who is practicing that same faith, and who is free from mortal sin.

The final phrase in the formula for the consecration of the wine is also reworded in the New Translation: for the forgiveness of sins. Here, for has the sense of intention or purpose. Christ poured out his blood in order that we might be forgiven. This change, then, is simply a more concise restating of what the Current Translation says, but now more fully patterned after the structure and word usage of the Latin text.

Current Translation	New Translation
<i>Then he sings or says:</i> Let us proclaim the mystery of faith. <i>People with celebrant and concelebrants:</i> Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again. <i>Or:</i> Dying you destroyed our death, rising you restored our life. Lord Jesus, come in glory. <i>Or:</i> When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, Lord Jesus, until you come in glory. <i>Or:</i> Lord, by your cross and resurrection you have set us free. You are the Savior of the world.	<i>Then the Priest says:</i> The mystery of faith. <i>And the people continue, acclaiming:</i> We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again. <i>Or:</i> When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again. <i>Or:</i> Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.

Commentary: The Latin words *mysterium fidei*, standing as they do by themselves in the Latin text, are an abrupt and powerful declaration. So, the **Current Translation's** Let us proclaim has been dropped in the New Translation. The memorial **acclamation is less a response to the priest's words** than an acclamation of and meditation upon what has just transpired – the Word of God has become present in his full reality under the appearance of bread and wine. What has happened fulfills in a radical way the promise the Lord made to his **disciples: "Behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age"** (Mt. 28:20)

The often-used acclamation **Christ has died...** is absent from the New Translation. This popular response was an invention of the translating committee back in the 1970s. All of the other acclamations are addressed to Christ personally; this one simply states a tenet of belief. Of the remaining three memorial acclamations, you will notice that the first one changes rather drastically, the second and third acclamations, only slightly. The first and second acclamations remind us of the command to **"Do this in memory of me" until he comes again** and brings about the new heavens and the new earth. The second makes a specific connection between the Eucharist and the death of Christ on the cross, and it **hearkens back to St. Paul's affirmation in 1 Cor. 11:26: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes."** Finally, the third acclamation restores the plea, **"Save us."** There is a double reality at work in our faith. By his death and resurrection, Christ redeemed us, restored us to our relationship with our



Creator, and opened the gates of heaven to us. However, as St. Paul reminds us again and again, our salvation is not yet accomplished and is still being worked out until the moment we leave this world and stand before the Just Judge.

*These articles are part of a series of articles adapted from the work of Fr. Allen Moran, OP, of the Eastern Dominican Province. They explain the coming changes in the liturgical texts, and will be published here each week, for the next few months. They are also now available on our website, at [blessed-sacrament.org](http://blessed-sacrament.org), in a printable .pdf format.*

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## Liturgy of the Eucharist: Eucharistic Prayer I



This week we continue our examination of the New Translation of Eucharistic Prayer I.

Current Translation	New Translation
<p><i>Then, with hands extended, the priest says:</i></p> <p>Father, we celebrate the memory of Christ, your Son. We, your people and your ministers, recall his passion, his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension into glory: and from the many gifts you have given us we offer to you, God of glory and majesty, this holy and perfect sacrifice: the bread of life and the cup of eternal salvation.</p>	<p><i>Then the Priest, with hands extended, says:</i></p> <p>Therefore, O Lord, as we celebrate the memorial of the blessed Passion, the Resurrection from the dead, and the glorious Ascension into heaven of Christ, your Son, our Lord, we, your servants and your holy people, offer to your glorious majesty from the gifts that you have given us, this pure victim, this holy victim, this spotless victim, the holy Bread of eternal life and the Chalice of everlasting salvation.</p>

Commentary: Many of the modifiers found in the Latin text and that were omitted in the Current Translation appear in the New Translation: blessed, glorious majesty, eternal, and everlasting. The return of these modifiers and the replacing of cup with chalice signify that this is not simply an everyday affair. The elevated language reflects the sacred nature of the great act of worship.

At this point, the Current Translation is basically a paraphrase of the official text. It breaks up this one, long sentence in the Latin into smaller parts; in doing so, it opens itself up to possible false interpretations. The Current Translation might lead some to think that we are simply thinking about an historic event and *then* offering gifts to God, as if the two were only

incidentally following one another. In the New Translation, the word **“Therefore”** reminds us that what follows is essentially linked with what came before, both in the text and historically: the institution narrative (THIS IS MY BODY . . .).

We dare to believe that we can celebrate the Eucharist now *because* of what Christ accomplished in the Paschal **Mystery (Christ’s Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension)** and his command to DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME. The recalling of the Paschal Mystery happens as the pure victim is being offered to the Father and not as a separate event. The **“Therefore”** also pushes the historical event into the present – our own day. For the Hebrew people, the act of memory is not a simple matter of recalling a past event. When they remember the Exodus from Egypt, it is as though those sacred events are being lived in the present moment in the Passover. Similarly, and in an even more literal sense, the one sacrifice of the cross is made present in the Eucharist, albeit in an unbloody manner. In that moment of sacrifice, we are standing with Mary at the foot of the cross, witnesses of that one, great act of salvation. This is possible and happens only because it has been commanded by Christ, who alone possesses the divine power to make it possible.

In the Vatican II’s Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium (SC)*, the council fathers called for the simplification of rites **“unencumbered by useless repetition”** (SC 34). This reform, however, took place with the Latin texts and called for no further editing by translators. The Current Translation omits any mention of victim at this point and in so doing obscures the belief that Christ perfectly fulfills what the animal victims of the Old Testament sacrifices only foreshadowed. In Hebrew, repeating something three times is a way of expressing the superlative (e.g. **“Holy, Holy, Holy”** means the holiest one). Here, the repeating of victim three times is a linguistic way of indicating the perfect nature of our offering, the Paschal Lamb, who is Christ the Lord. Jesus, the Lamb of God, is the pure, holy, spotless Passover victim, and his is the **blood that saves us, “the precious blood as of a spotless, unblemished lamb”** (1 Pt. 1:17).

Previously, we noted the distinction between **“eternal”** and **“everlasting”**, namely that something everlasting can have a beginning (e.g. the human soul), but only that which is divine is eternal. The life spoken of here is divine life, which is uncreated and therefore eternal. **Salvation, however, is an act of God’s power breaking into time and history, an act with never-ending effects.**

From the perspective of men and women, participation in the life of God is an offer of everlasting life because they have not always shared in that life; but from the perspective of God, this divine life is his very being and **transcends time itself.** While the **Current Translation's** use of bread of life calls to mind the Bread of Life discourse in the sixth chapter of the Gospel of John where Jesus says, **"I am the bread of life"** (cf. Jn. 6:35, 48, 51), the New Translation is a literal translation of the Latin text, which succinctly summarizes Jn. 6:51: *I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I give is my flesh for the life of the world.* Common bread, the bread of our daily life, is what supports us. But this bread that Jesus gives us is more than common bread. It is now holy bread, and it itself communicates the life of God to us. Where common bread becomes part of us, it is we who are assimilated and transformed by the Eucharistic bread.

Current Translation	New Translation
Look with favor on these offerings and accept them as once you accepted the gifts of your servant Abel, the sacrifice of Abraham, our father in faith, and the bread and wine offered by your priest Melchizedek.	Be pleased to look upon these offerings with a serene and kindly countenance, and to accept them, as once you were pleased to accept the gifts of your servant Abel the just, the sacrifice of Abraham, our father in faith, and the offering of your high priest Melchizedek, a holy sacrifice, a spotless victim.

Commentary: At this point in the Eucharistic Prayer, we continue to refer to the offering to God of the perfect oblation of his Son and the spiritual sacrifice of ourselves in union with Christ our head. The New Translation again restores a more fitting language, even if the meaning is the same. **"A pleasant and kindly countenance,"** mentioned in the New Translation, is an anthropomorphism (attributing human qualities to God) and has a fuller meaning than favor. It gives the sense of something that is pleasing, and so we ask that the appearance of his face would reveal that kind and pleasant acceptance of our offering.

In reference to the Old Testament figures mentioned immediately following (Abel, Abraham, and Melchizedek), it is worth noting that in older English translations of the Bible Cain (Abel's brother) is described as having a **"fallen countenance"** (Gen. 4:5) when his sacrifice was not accepted. Even in modern translations, God is said to have looked with regard or favor upon Abel and his offering.

Abel is described as **"the just"** in the New Translation because it is the just who render unto others that which is their due. Abel sacrifices the first of his flock (the best) to God; it is the first religious act of attempting to render to God something of the goodness that he has freely bestowed upon us. It is the first sacrifice accepted by God in the Bible. As was mentioned elsewhere, religion is a virtue related to justice. Unlike justice, however, we are incapable on our own of fully giving **God all that is owed to him.** Abel's offering of the first of his flock and his succumbing to the hatred of his brother foreshadows Jesus, who is the Lamb of God (Jn. 1:29, 36) who suffers death at the hands of his own people and whose death becomes a sacrifice of redemption. He is the perfect, spotless sacrifice of which all Old Testament sacrifices were only a prefigurement. Abraham is the father of faith (Rom. 4:12, 16) who was willing to sacrifice his only beloved son (Gen. 22:2), but received him back alive (Heb. 11:19). Christ was obedient unto death and was raised from the dead.

Finally, Melchizedek is the mysterious priest and king of Salem (Gen. 14:18-20; Ps. 109 [110]:4), a man of unknown origin who appears on the scene to offer sacrifice to God after Abraham defeats the surrounding kings, and he disappears just as quickly as he appears. There is a sense of the eternal about Melchizedek in that he has no beginning or end, and so it is fitting that he be seen as an image of Christ, our king and priest. For this reason, he becomes a model of the priesthood both in the Letter to the Hebrews and in the rite of **ordination of priests, where it says, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."** While it is true that Melchizedek offered bread and wine, as the Current Translation states, the Latin text and the New Translation rightly point out that these are understood **to be "bloodless sacrifices" pointing to the unbloody sacrifice of the new covenant, i.e. the Eucharistic sacrifice of the Mass.**



In the offering of bread and wine, the wheat and the grapes have, in a sense, been sacrificed in order to make these gifts, these offerings. Our eyes do not see the blood of Christ on the altar the way the blood of the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament was seen, yet they signify that full gift of self which Christ made of himself and to which we unite ourselves. Commenting on this passage in Eucharistic Prayer I, the influential liturgist Joseph Jungmann, S.J., **noted, "That prayer of ours will be fulfilled if the oblation proceeds from an intention pure as theirs, and if the temper of our own hearts accords in some measure with the incomparable holiness of our sacrifice"** (*The Mass of the Roman Rite*, Vol. II, Christian Classics: Westminster, MD, 1992, p. 229).

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This week we continue our examination of the New Translation of Eucharistic Prayer I.

Current Translation	New Translation
<p><i>Bowing, with hands joined, he continues:</i></p> <p>Almighty God, we pray that your angel may take this sacrifice to your altar in heaven. Then, as we receive from this altar the sacred body and blood of your Son,</p> <p><i>He stands up straight and makes the sign of the cross, saying:</i></p> <p>let us be filled with every grace and blessing.</p> <p><i>He joins his hands.</i></p> <p>(Through Christ our Lord. Amen.)</p>	<p><i>Bowing, with hands joined, he continues:</i></p> <p>In humble prayer we ask you, almighty God: command that these gifts be borne by the hands of your holy Angel to your altar on high in the sight of your divine majesty, so that all of us who through this participation at the altar receive the most holy Body and Blood of your Son,</p> <p><i>He stands upright again and signs himself with the Sign of the Cross, saying:</i></p> <p>may be filled with every grace and heavenly blessing.</p> <p><i>He joins his hands.</i></p> <p>(Through Christ our Lord. Amen.)</p>

Commentary: Here, again, it is evident that the Current Translation is more of a paraphrase of the Latin text, and along the way it loses the more poetic language. However, aside from all of the modifiers (e.g. in humble, holy, heavenly) that lend themselves to a more sacral tone, the most significant change in this part of the New Translation are the words **“so that”**, which have replaced the **“Then”** found in the Current Translation. Referring to the role of the angel in our prayer, Revelation says: *“The smoke of the incense along with the prayers of the holy ones went up before God from the*

*hand of the angel* (Rev. 8:4). The image in this part of the prayer is concrete and, perhaps, even daring. Not only do angels bring messages that come from God to us, but in the most sacred moments of our life of prayer – and there is none more sacred than the Eucharist – the angels take our offering from the altar here on earth into the presence of God in the heavenly Eucharistic banquet, from which grace flows out to us. It is **reminiscent of Jacob’s ladder upon which the angels** were seen ascending and descending.

The use of so that, then, reveals the causal relationship **between the angel’s bringing of the gifts into God’s** presence and the grace and heavenly blessings that flow from receiving the most holy Body and Blood of **Christ. The Current Translation’s division of this** sentence into smaller sections weakens the sense of causality between one action and the other. It also better illustrates the link between participating at the altar (joining in the sacrifice through the spiritual offering of ourselves in union with Christ) and receiving his most holy Body and Blood.

Current Translation	New Translation
<p><i>Commemoration of the Dead.</i></p> <p><i>With hands extended, he says:</i></p> <p>Remember, Lord, those who have died and have gone before us marked with the sign of faith especially those for whom we now pray, N. and N.</p> <p><i>The priest prays for them briefly with joined hands. Then, with hands extended, he continues:</i></p> <p>May these, and all who sleep in Christ, find in your presence light, happiness, and peace.</p> <p><i>He joins his hands.</i></p> <p>(Through Christ our Lord. Amen.)</p>	<p><i>Commemoration of the Dead.</i></p> <p><i>With hands extended, the Priest says:</i></p> <p>Remember also, Lord, your servants N. and N., who have gone before us with the sign of faith and rest in the sleep of peace.</p> <p><i>He joins his hands and prays briefly for those who have died and for whom he intends to pray. Then, with hands extended, he continues:</i></p> <p>Grant them, O Lord, we pray, and all who sleep in Christ, a place of refreshment, light, and peace.</p> <p><i>He joins his hands.</i></p> <p>(Through Christ our Lord. Amen.)</p>

Commentary: Before the consecration, there was a place to remember the living, particularly those for whom the sacrifice of the Mass is being offered. We now come to the point in Eucharistic Prayer I where mention of the faithful departed, particularly those for whom the Mass is offered, may be made. The priest usually says the names silently during the moment of silence.

In baptism, Christ gives to those reborn by water and the Spirit a seal, stamp or *sign* that indicates that they belong to him. It is this sign of belonging to Christ that assures entrance into everlasting life for those who have preserved it inviolate. All who die *in Christ*, in a state of sanctifying grace, are connected to the living through the bonds of charity. These same bonds of charity make it possible to intercede for the faithful departed, that they might be loosed from any temporary punishment due to sins committed in this life. The tradition of praying for the faithful departed has biblical roots in 2 Mac. 12:38-46, and may be found in the writings of the early Church, particularly in the *Martyrdom of Sts. Perpetua and Felicity* (a late second-century document) and in the request made to St. Augustine by his **mother St. Monica to “remember me at the altar of the Lord, wherever you may be”** (cf. *The Confessions*, IX.11).

The New Translation’s use of **“rest in the sleep of peace”** to describe those who have died reflects not only the Latin text, **but also alludes to St. Paul’s letters:** *For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, so too will God, through Jesus, bring with him those who have fallen asleep* (1 Thess. 4:14; cf. 1 Cor. 15:18).

The petition for the faithful departed uses more *hieratic* (or priestly) language in the New Translation, although the substance of the petition is largely the same, with one exception. The word **“happiness”** is replaced with **“refreshment”**. Refreshment is what the Psalmist seeks in Ps. 23: *The Lord is my shepherd . . . he refreshes my soul* (NAB, 1970).

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Current Translation	New Translation
<p><i>With hands extended, he continues:</i></p> <p>For ourselves, too, we ask some share in the fellowship of your apostles and martyrs, with John the Baptist, Stephen, Matthias, Barnabas, (Ignatius, Alexander, Marcellinus, Peter, Felicity, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucy, Agnes, Cecilia, Anastasia) and all the saints.</p> <p><i>The priest strikes his breast with the right hand, saying:</i></p> <p>Though we are sinners, we trust in your mercy and love.</p> <p><i>With hands extended as before, he continues:</i></p> <p>Do not consider what we truly deserve, but grant us your forgiveness.</p> <p><i>He joins his hands.</i></p> <p>Through Christ our Lord.</p>	<p><i>He strikes his breast with his right hand, saying:</i></p> <p>To us, also, your servants, who, though sinners,</p> <p><i>And, with hands extended, he says:</i></p> <p>hope in your abundant mercies, graciously grant some share and fellowship with your holy Apostles and Martyrs: with John the Baptist, Stephen, Matthias, Barnabas, (Ignatius, Alexander, Marcellinus, Peter, Felicity, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucy, Agnes, Cecilia, Anastasia) and all your Saints: admit us, we beseech you, into their company, not weighing our merits, but granting us your pardon,</p> <p><i>He joins his hands.</i></p> <p>through Christ our Lord.</p>

Commentary: After praying for the deceased, Eucharistic Prayer I includes petitions for us, that we might share eternal bliss with the saints after our offenses have been pardoned. A casual reading of this section reveals not only a change in translation between the Current and New Translations, but the order of the prayer has also been changed. For unknown reasons, the Current Translation reordered this part of the prayer; the Latin original has undergone no change during this period, and the New Translation shows the intended structure of the prayer. This prayer specifies what we mean when we pray for every grace and heavenly blessing.

The priest – **God’s servant and yet still a sinner** – must hope in the mercy of God before he can hope to share in the fellowship of the saints. The same may be said of all Christians. The granting of pardon is a prerequisite for sharing in the fellowship of the saints, and not an unconnected act, as the Current Translation might mistakenly lead some to conclude.

In this prayer, we find the second list of saints who were especially venerated by the ancient Church of Rome. Adding these 15 names to the 25 from the first half of Eucharistic Prayer I (excluding St. Joseph whose name was only added in 1962), one comes to a total of 40, symbolizing the fullness of the communion of saints. This fullness is likewise symbolized by the different categories of saints represented. Nearly all are believed to have been martyrs, but we find apostles, popes, deacons, virgins, and laymen all included among these martyrs. The martyrs, as the name suggests, *bear witness* to Christ by shedding their blood. In the early Church, and with the exception of the Virgin Mary and St. John (who was nearly martyred on various occasions), only those who had shed their blood for Christ were venerated as saints because it was they who were thought to be most closely conformed to Christ in his life, death and resurrection. To pray for a share in their fellowship is to petition for the grace to also *bear witness* to Christ in our daily lives.

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## Liturgy of the Eucharist: EPI and Communion



This week we continue our examination of the New Translation of the rite of Communion

Current Translation	New Translation
<p><i>Then the priest, with hands extended, says aloud:</i></p> <p>Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles: I leave you peace, my peace I give you. Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and grant us the peace and unity of your kingdom.</p> <p><i>He joins his hands:</i></p> <p>where you live for ever and ever.</p> <p><i>The people respond:</i></p> <p>Amen.</p> <p><i>The people extending and joining his hands, adds:</i></p> <p>The peace of the Lord be with you always.</p> <p><i>The people respond:</i></p> <p>And also with you.</p> <p><i>The deacon (or priest) may add:</i></p> <p>Let us offer each other the sign of peace.</p> <p><i>All make an appropriate sign of peace, according to local custom. The priest gives the sign of peace to the deacon or minister.</i></p>	<p><i>Then the Priest, with hands extended, says aloud:</i></p> <p>Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your Apostles, Peace I leave you, my peace I give you, look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will.</p> <p><i>He joins his hands.</i></p> <p>Who live and reign for ever and ever.</p> <p><i>The people reply:</i></p> <p>Amen.</p> <p><i>The Priest, turned towards the people, extending and then joining his hands, adds:</i></p> <p>The peace of the Lord be with you always.</p> <p><i>The people reply:</i></p> <p>And with your spirit.</p> <p><i>Then, if appropriate, the Deacon, or the Priest, adds:</i></p> <p>Let us offer each other the sign of peace.</p> <p><i>And all offer one another a sign, in keeping with local customs, that expresses peace, communion, and charity. The Priest gives the sign of peace to a Deacon or minister.</i></p>

Commentary: In the Rite of Peace, which is how the General Instruction to the Roman Missal (GIRM) refers to this section, the Church asks for peace and unity in accordance with the will of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The Current Translation expresses its misgivings towards relative clauses (e.g. clauses that begin with who) **by using “you” at this point. The New Translation uses “who”,** following the official Latin text. However, no change in meaning is conveyed. The same may be said for the re-ordering of “I leave you peace” in the New Translation.

As we have seen many times before, the Current Translation omits words like “graciously” and avoids referring to the Church with feminine pronouns. The one Church founded by Christ and formed out of the blood and water that flowed from his side as he slept on the Cross, however, is the bride of Christ and our holy mother. So, in keeping with the immemorial custom and the typical Latin text, the New Translation once again **employs “her” when referring to the Church.**

In this part of the rite, we pray not only for peace for ourselves, but for the whole Church, its members and the institution. The Current Translation replaces the phrase that the New Translation renders as “in accordance with your will” **with the words “of your kingdom.” Christ’s kingdom is, of course, in accord with his will, but there seems to be no advantage to using “of your kingdom” at this point. Further, by adding the caveat, “in accordance with your will”, we repeat the petition of the Our Father that our will might be subject to the will of God. The Current Translation likewise omits any mention of the “reign” of Christ, which he could be said to do in his kingdom. Reference to Christ’s “reign” signifies his power to grant the peace and unity for which the Church prays.**

In the rubric of the New Translation that follows, **the priest is instructed to be “turned towards the people” to extend them the peace of the Lord. This** does not represent a change in the typical Latin text. Instead, it is a faithful translation of what was already there. This rubric, the instruction at the

Preparation of the Gifts, where the priest says, **“Pray brothers and sisters...”**, and the **instruction of the priest at the “Behold the Lamb of God”** all seem to indicate the priest might not be facing the people just prior to these actions. In other words, the option of the priest offering Mass facing the same direction as the people, leading them in the holy sacrifice, is still a valid option even if Mass is usually said facing the people.

The New Translation also clarifies what has gone unchanged in the typical Latin text concerning the offering of the Sign of Peace. The *GIRM* indicates that it is up to individual Conferences of Bishops **“in accordance with the customs and cultures of the people”** to establish a common gesture for the Sign of Peace. Regardless of the gesture established, the *GIRM* in paragraph 82 indicates that it is **“appropriate that each person offer the sign of peace only to those who are nearest and in a sober manner.”** While we seek to express our peace and charity with those with whom we will be joined in Holy Communion, our attention should not unduly be distracted from his abiding presence in the Eucharistic species.

Current Translation	New Translation
<p><i>Then the following is sung or said:</i></p> <p>Lamb or God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.</p> <p><i>This may be repeated until the breaking of the bread is finished, but the last phrase is always Grant us peace.</i></p> <p><i>Meanwhile, he takes the host and breaks it over the paten. He places a small piece in the chalice, saying inaudibly:</i></p> <p>May this mingling of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it.</p>	<p><i>Then he takes the host, breaks it over the paten, and places a small piece in the chalice, saying quietly:</i></p> <p>May this mingling of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it.</p> <p><i>Meanwhile the following is sung or said:</i></p> <p>Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.</p> <p><i>The invocation may even be repeated several times if the fraction is prolonged. Only the final time, however, is grant us peace said.</i></p>

Commentary: The text of the **“Fraction Rite”** undergoes no change in the New Translation. The only noticeable change is the ordering. In the typical Latin text, in the actual breaking of the Bread [the action of Christ at the Last Supper used to describe the entire Eucharistic action in apostolic times (cf. Acts 2:42)], this rubric has always preceded the *Agnus Dei* (Lamb of God). Since, as a rule, the *Agnus Dei* is to be sung by the choir (or cantor) and congregation (or at least recited by them) while the priest is doing the fraction rite and distributing the hosts to the vessels that will be used for the distribution of Holy Communion, the two in practice overlap one another.

The small piece of the host broken off and dropped into the chalice has the spiritual significance of the unity of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in the work of salvation. If the separate consecration of the bread (the Body) and the wine (the Blood) signifies the separation of the two and thereby the death of the Lord, the reuniting of the two at this **point signifies the Resurrection and Christ’s victory over death.**

The phrase *Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world*, which is what the Latin literally says, is taken directly from the words of St. John the Baptist in the Gospel of John (Jn. 1:29), and recalls the oft-repeated image of the Lamb throughout the book of Revelation, e.g. *and they cried out in a loud voice: “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, wisdom and strength, honor and glory and blessing”* (Rev. 5:12). The Paschal Lamb that was slain for our salvation, who has defeated death, and who offers his very life-giving Body and Blood is the same Lord Jesus Christ.



*These articles are part of a series of articles adapted from the work of Fr. Allen Moran, OP, of the Eastern Dominican Province. They are now available on our website, at [blessed-sacrament.org](http://blessed-sacrament.org), in a printable .pdf format.*

# A New Translation of the Mass into English

By Fr. Allen Moran, O.P., Province of St. Joseph

Adapted by Fr. Boniface Willard, O.P., Province of the Holy Name of Jesus

## Liturgy of the Eucharist: EPI and Communion



This week we continue our examination of the New Translation of the rite of Communion.

Current Translation	New Translation
<p><i>Then the priest joins his hands and says inaudibly:</i></p> <p>Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, by the will of the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit your death brought life to the world. By your holy body and blood free me from all my sins and from every evil. Keep me faithful to your teaching, and never let me be parted from you.</p> <p><i>Or:</i></p> <p>Lord Jesus Christ, with faith in your love and mercy I eat your body and drink your blood. Let it not bring me to con-damnation, but health in mind and body.</p>	<p><i>Then the Priest, with hands joined, says quietly:</i></p> <p>Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who by the will of the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit, through your Death gave life to the world; free me by this, your most holy Body and Blood, from all my sins and from every evil; keep me always faithful to your commandments, and never let me be parted from you.</p> <p><i>Or:</i></p> <p>May the receiving of your Body and Blood, Lord Jesus Christ, not bring me to judgment and condemnation, but through your loving mercy be for me protection in mind and body, and a healing remedy.</p>

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Commentary: This is the point where the people prayerfully prepare themselves for Holy Communion (in some places, the people kneel once again). The priest also prepares himself to receive Holy Communion as he stands at the altar with hands joined, saying one of these prayers. These prayers are to be said quietly by the priest, so most of the faithful will not notice the change in these translations unless they are following along in a missal or are familiar with the Current Translation.

With respect to the first of these prayers, most of the differences between the two translations are a **result of the Current Translation's preference for shorter sentences and avoidance of relative clauses that begin with the word "who."** **The two exceptions are the omission of the word "always" and the choice of the word "teaching" in place of the word "commandments".** Teachings, which concern truth, are the object of the intellect, properly speaking, while commands are more properly the object of the will. In God, there is no real distinction between intellect and will on account of his perfect unity, but there is with us. The petition of the priest is that through the power of the Body and Blood of Christ his will might always be conformity with the commands, and therefore the will, of Christ.

The second option shows more noticeable changes between the two translations. The Current Translation is more of a paraphrase that divides the one long Latin sentence into two shorter English ones. Missing from the Current Translation is the priest's petition concerning the possibility of condemnation for unworthily receiving Christ's Body and Blood. This petition calls to mind the words of St. Paul: *For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself* (1 Cor. 11:29). The New Translation also petitions for "protection" of mind and body and that the Body and Blood of Christ be "a healing remedy" which better describes the power of the Eucharist as both spiritually preventative of falling into mortal sin and curative with respect to daily faults.

Current Translation	New Translation
<p><i>The priest genuflects. Taking the host, he raises it slightly over the paten and, facing the people, says aloud:</i></p> <p>This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are those called to his supper.</p> <p><i>The He adds, once only, with the people:</i></p> <p>Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed.</p> <p><i>Facing the altar, the priest says inaudibly:</i> May the body of Christ bring me to everlasting life.</p> <p><i>He reverently consumes the body of Christ. Then he takes the chalice and says inaudibly:</i></p> <p>May the blood of Christ bring me to everlasting life. <i>He reverently drinks the blood of Christ.</i></p>	<p><i>The Priest genuflects, takes the host and, holding it slightly raised above the paten or above the chalice, while facing the people, says aloud:</i></p> <p>Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.</p> <p><i>And together with the people he adds once:</i></p> <p>Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.</p> <p><i>The Priest, facing the altar, says quietly:</i></p> <p>May the Body of Christ keep me safe for eternal life.</p> <p><i>And he reverently consumes the Body of Christ. Then he takes the chalice and says quietly:</i></p> <p>May the Blood of Christ keep me safe for eternal life. <i>And he reverently consumes the Blood of Christ.</i></p>

Commentary: During the “Fraction Rite”, the faithful sing (or say) the *Agnus Dei* (Lamb of God). At the showing of the host, this title is again invoked. In the New Translation, the priest’s words are a more complete reference to the words of John the Baptist in Jn. 1:29, with the inclusion of the word “Behold” (Latin *Ecce*) as found in the New Translation. The use of the same vocabulary helps foster the development of the biblical language that should permeate and inform our entire spiritual lives. Likewise the Current Translation’s use of “his” in lieu of “the supper of the Lamb” obscures the allusions to the paschal lamb of Exodus 12, whose blood saved Israel, and to all of the references to the Lamb in the Book of Revelation, which concludes with the bride of the

Lamb [the Church] being united to her spouse (cf. Rev. 21:9; 22:17). Specifically, the words of John the Baptist are linked to the world of the angel in Rev. 19:9: “**Blessed are those** who have been called to the wedding feast **of the Lamb.**”

The use of “Behold” also reminds us of Pontius Pilate as he presents Jesus to the crowds, say, “Behold the man”, or “Ecce homo” (Jn. 19:5). The double call to behold does more than call attention to the fact that the bread and wine have now become the Body and Blood of the Lord. It calls us to contemplate the mystery, to gaze lovingly upon it, to consider with gratitude what God has done for us: Behold this man, this innocent, this spotless lamb who is made to be the spotless victim for us all.

The instruction governing the showing of the Eucharistic species by the priest while he says these words has changed in the Latin typical edition. The priest now has the option of holding the host over the chalice while saying these words. Previously the rubrics had only mentioned doing so over the paten.

With respect to the response, the New Translation is more recognizably the words of the centurion from the Gospel of Matthew than is the Current Translation. “*The centurion said in reply, ‘Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof; only say the word and my servant will be healed’*” (Matt. 8:8). We express the humility of the centurion and his faith in Jesus’ power to heal as our own. In receiving Holy Communion, we receive Christ in the form of food, and he comes “under my roof” and into my soul. The New Translation’s use of the words “my soul” in lieu of “I” is a more accurate rendering of the Latin (Roman) text.

The words said by the priest as he receives the Body and Blood of Christ change between the two translations with “eternal” replacing “everlasting” and the petition “keep me safe for” replacing “bring me to.” We’ve mentioned before that the word “eternal” more clearly points to the uncreated or the Divine whereas “everlasting” may indicate something that has a beginning in time, although it does not end. The petition is for persevering grace, so that the priest may spend all of eternity rejoicing in the beatific vision—a certain share in the Divine, eternal life.

# A New Translation of the Mass into English

By Fr. Allen Moran, O.P., Province of St. Joseph

Adapted by Fr. Boniface Willard, O.P., Province of the Holy Name of Jesus

## Liturgy of the Eucharist: Concluding Rites



This week we continue our examination of the New Translation of the concluding rites.

Current Translation	New Translation
<i>The rite of dismissal takes place. Facing the people, the priest extends his hands and sings or says:</i>	<i>Then the dismissal takes place. The Priest, facing the people and extending his hands, says:</i>
The Lord be with you.	The Lord be with you.
<i>The people reply:</i>	<i>The people reply:</i>
And also with you.	And with your spirit.
<i>The priest blesses the people with these words:</i>	<i>The Priest blesses the people, saying:</i>
May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.	May almighty God bless you: the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.
<i>The people answer:</i>	<i>The people reply:</i>
Amen.	Amen.

Commentary: The Concluding Rites of the Eucharist include the final blessings, occasional prayers over the people, and the dismissal. At this point, the formal prayers of the celebration have concluded, so brief announcements, if they are necessary, should be done at this time.

With the conclusion of the announcements, the priest, facing the people with hands extended, says **for the final time**, "The Lord be with you." **Once again, the people's reply is:** "And with your spirit." **As we said before, this is a recognition on**

the part of the People of God that the Holy Spirit is with the one giving the blessing by virtue of his ordination into the ministerial priesthood of Jesus Christ in such a manner that what he is about to do is indeed possible.

Throughout the Mass, you may have noticed that **the words "sings or says" have consistently been replaced by "says" in the New Translation.** This does not indicate a restriction in singing the various prayers of the Mass on the part of the priest. In fact, the New Translation goes to great lengths to set more texts to chant notation and encourage greater singing of various parts of the Mass, and the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* carries with it important instruction with regard to singing parts of the Mass. Using only the **word "says" is a faithful translation of the Latin word *dicit*.**

The final blessing, fittingly, is the sign of the Cross (the sign of our redemption) and the invocation of the Blessed Trinity (its power and its cause). There is no substantive difference between the **Current Translation's use of "with these words" and the New Translation's use of "saying".** The New Translation simply tries to be consistent with how it translates given words from Latin into English while the Current Translation was more disposed to variations.

In addition to the simple form of blessing, the *Roman Missal* also includes options and instructions for "**Solemn Blessings**" and "**Prayers Over the People**". **The introduction for these, said by the deacon (or priest), remains the same:** "Bow **your head and pray for God's blessing.**" The final blessing in both of these forms is the same as that of the simple blessing. The New Translation also includes the acclamations and responses for a "**Pontifical Mass**", i.e., when the celebrant is a bishop or the Pope. With the exception of the **response "And with your spirit", these are the acclamations and responses currently in use.** If you have attended a Mass celebrated by a bishop, these acclamations and responses may already be **familiar to you. For brevity's sake, we will omit their inclusion in this column.**

Current Translation	New Translation
<i>The dismissal sends each member of the congregation to do good works, praising, and blessing the Lord.</i>	<i>Then the Deacon, or the Priest himself, with hands joined and facing the people, says:</i>
<i>The deacon (or priest), with hands joined, sings or says:</i>	Go forth, the Mass is ended.
Go in the peace of Christ.	<i>Or:</i>
<i>Or:</i>	Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.
The Mass is ended, go in peace.	<i>Or:</i>
<i>Or:</i>	Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.	<i>Or:</i>
<i>The people answer:</i>	Go in peace.
Thanks be to God.	<i>The people reply:</i>
	Thanks be to God.

Commentary: The New Translation, following the changes in the typical Latin text, instructs the deacon or priest to be facing the people with hands joined to give the dismissal.

This is the one instance in the New Translation where there are actually MORE options than in the Current Translation. That being said, none of these are literal translations of the Latin dismissal because of how awkward it sounds in English: Go, it is sent (*Ite, missa est*). What is sent? Is it the Gospel? The sacrifice of the Mass? The Word of God? The People of God? The Latin word *missa* is a late Latin form of the word *missio*, which conveys the sense of mission and being sent, and it is from *missio* that we derive *dismissal*. This is the word from which we get the English word for the celebration of the Eucharist: the Mass. There is evidence that this phrase was a courtly formula to signify that an audience was finished. Our formal audience for the worship of God in the Eucharistic sacrifice is now complete; and having completed

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that act of worship and having the saving grace of Christ, we are not so much dismissed from Mass as sent forth to proclaim what we have just heard **and witnessed**. **“Mass” does not simply signify** what has transpired within the walls of the church building. In the Mass, we are made into disciples and apostles, sent forth to fulfill the great commission given to us at the end of the gospel of St. Matthew: **“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”** (28:19).

English vocabulary and sentence structure do not allow for a literal translation that still conveys the meaning of this command. In this instance, the translators have opted for expressions that are *dynamically equivalent* translations. *Dynamic Equivalence*, again, is the attempt to render the concept into the recipient tongue by departing from the literal words because a literal translation would not convey the meaning. In most places in the liturgy, literal translations communicate the message quite well, but this is not always the case when idiomatic expressions are used, as we stated towards the beginning of this series.

**“The new Missal is a challenge that demands our time, practice, and patience”** (Fr. Bernard Mulcahy, OP). It will take time to learn to sing and recite this new translation of the Mass with one voice. This will be helped, though, if we can pray together with one heart and one mind, moving from our interior disposition or attitude of prayer to the exterior or vocal manifestation of that same prayer. This series of articles has been intended to aid all of us in this sometimes difficult but most important endeavor. A better understanding of the texts of the Mass, the rubrics, the responses, and so forth, help dispose us to better participate in the Mass, both internally and externally, a true active participation, so that we might offer ourselves, cleansed of all sin and united to our head, Jesus Christ the Lord, as a perfect sacrifice to Our Heavenly Father.

