

PREPARING FOR THE NEW TRANSLATION

INTRODUCTORY RITES—GREETINGS



The rubrics (instructions) of the Roman Missal state that when the people are gathered, the priest approaches the altar with the ministers while the Entrance Chant is sung. After making the requisite sign of reverence towards the altar (profound bow and venerating with a kiss) [if the Blessed Sacrament is reserved in the sanctuary of the church behind the altar a genuflection towards the tabernacle replaces the bow to the altar] and after incensing the altar and cross when appropriate, the priest goes to his chair. At the conclusion of the Entrance Chant, the congregation, the ministers, and the priest are all standing. They sign themselves as the priest facing the people says:

Current Translation	New Translation
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.	In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

The people respond:

Current Translation	New Translation
Amen.	Amen.

COMMENTARY

As you can see, nothing has changed here, but why do we begin the Mass with the sign of the Cross?

The divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, in which perfect praise is given to the Father, by the Son, through the power of the Holy Spirit rightly begins with an invocation of the Holy Trinity. The Church, the body of Christ, is united with Christ her head in this one perfect act of worship.

The Second Vatican Council's *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* chapter seven teaches, "The liturgy is considered as an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ. In the liturgy the sanctification of the man is signified by signs perceptible to the senses, and is effected in a way which corresponds with each of these signs; in the liturgy the whole public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and His members."

This sacred action that surpasses all others, then, begins with that name that marks us as Christians. Jesus commanded that the Apostles to baptize in this name (Matthew 28:19-20 *Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And be-*

bold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.)

Following the sign of the Cross, the priest continues extending his hands saying any one of three specific greetings:

Current Translation	New Translation
A. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.	E. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
B. The grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.	F. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
C. The Lord be with you.	G. The Lord be with you.
D. (Bishops only) Peace be with you.	H. (Bishops only) Peace be with you.

The people respond:

Current Translation	New Translation
And also with you.	And with your spirit .

COMMENTARY

Of all the forthcoming changes, the change in this response will attract the most attention simply because it is said at five times during the Mass: the introduction, at opening of the Gospel, the beginning of the Preface to the Eucharistic Prayer, just before the sign of peace, and at the final blessing.

Option A is taken word for word from 2 Cor. 13:13. While both "communion" and "fellowship" are legitimate translations of the Greek word *koinania* found in this Biblical passage both denoting a shared participation, "fellowship" seems to assume a greater level of equality between those involved than "communion" does. In any event, the official texts for the Mass is in Latin. Here the word is *communicatio*, and the English word "communion" is obviously derived from it.

Option B is another greeting of St. Paul's here taken from Gal 1:3 with the new translation now matching word for word the Biblical verse.

Option C is a greeting found many places in the Old Testament and in 2 Thess. 3:16. This greeting is found in liturgies of the Church in both East and West dating back at least to the early 200s (about as early as any records go).

An additional option is available for bishops that invokes the words of the Risen Jesus from the Gospel of John (Jn. 20:19, 21, 26) spoken three times to his disciples on Easter Sunday; it is a greeting that St. Paul also uses in Rom. 15:33.

One of the objectives of the Second Vatican Council was to renew the Church's familiarity with and knowledge of Sacred Scripture. The Council specifically called for an expansion of the Biblical texts read at Mass, and this was not only for the purposes of instruction. The language of the Bible is the language of God's revelation of Himself to His people. There are no better words with which to worship God and to grow in knowledge and love of God than those of Sacred Scripture. One of the benefits of having at least certain parts of the Mass in the vernacular was to aid in the renewal of Biblical language for the faithful.

The new translation makes a greater effort to mirror the underlying Biblical passages although we may notice certain departures from the New American Bible, which is the translation used most often in the readings we hear at Mass. Other English speaking countries do not use the New American Bible. While the translation of the Roman Missal will be the same for all English speaking countries, the Lectionary has not yet been standardized, and there is no timetable for doing so.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GREETING AND THE RESPONSE:

In liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church, the greeting "The Lord be with you," is always given by an ordained minister (deacon, priest, or bishop). Each of these greetings express-

es the desire that the power of the Spirit of God may be given to the People of God that they may enter into worship as one and be enabled to do what God has entrusted them to do. Each time we hear the words, "The Lord be with you," we should call to mind that we need the presence of God or the power of the Holy Spirit to be able to worship God fittingly, to hear what Sacred Scripture has to teach us, to offer our sacrifices and ourselves in union with Christ's one perfect sacrifice of Himself on the Cross to the

Father, and to take the graces that we receive in the Mass into the world.

Et cum spiritu tuo: "And with your spirit" is certainly not common street language, and apart from the fact that it is a more literal translation it also carries more theological significance than "And also with you." As opposed to a mere wish that the deacon, priest, or bishop might have the same good thing wished on the congregation, saying **And with your spirit** is the faithful's way of assuring the minister that the gift of the Spirit given to him at his ordination, through which he has just extended this gift to

the People of God, is also assisting the deacon, priest, or bishop to fulfill those sacred duties entrusted to them.

St. John Chrysostom in a homily given on the Feast of Pentecost said, "If the Holy Spirit were not in our Bishop [referring to Bishop Flavian of Antioch] when he gave the peace to all shortly before ascending to his holy sanctuary, you would not have replied to him all together, And with your spirit. This is why you reply with this expression... reminding yourselves by this reply that he who is here does nothing of his own power, nor are the offered gifts the work of human nature, but is it the grace of the Spirit present and hovering over all things which prepared that mystic sacrifice."

Following this greeting, the Roman Missal allows for the bishop, priest, or "another minister" to introduce briefly the Mass of the day. No specific words are given.

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SACROSANCTUM CONCILIUM, 7

