



## THE ARCHBISHOP OF REGINA

### PASTORAL LETTER ON WELCOMING THE NEW ROMAN MISSAL

Dear Friends and Faithful of the Archdiocese of Regina,

St Peter, in his first Letter, wrote these striking words about us, the people who follow Jesus in our journey through life: *"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."* These are wonderful words of hope and dignity and promise. Because we share in Christ's priesthood through our baptism, the Mass is something that is very important to us.

This weekend we join with "God's own people" in the English speaking world as we begin to use the new translation of the Roman Missal for the celebration of the Most Holy Eucharist. For God's people, the Eucharist is the source and the summit of our Christian life. The Eucharist is the action of the whole church, and within this celebration, we, the royal priesthood of the baptized, offer to God ourselves, our lives and indeed the world in which we live as a spiritual sacrifice. This spiritual sacrifice, which all of us offer together as one people in the Mass, is brought to completion through the ministry of the ordained priest in union with the Sacrifice of Christ.

We now have this new translation of the Roman Missal which was undertaken in order to provide us with a translation that is more faithful to the texts of the original Latin in which the Missal is written. This rite that is used in Roman Catholic Churches throughout the world is renowned for its noble simplicity and beauty both in its ritual and in its prayers. This new translation is meant to help us, God's priestly people, to more effectively enter into the Mass and to take our part fully and actively in this one, perfect Sacrifice of Praise.

It is especially in the celebration of the Eucharist that we are "the People of God, purchased by Christ's Blood, gathered together by the Lord, nourished by his word, the people called to present to God the prayers of the entire human family, a people that gives thanks in Christ for the mystery of salvation by offering his Sacrifice, a people, finally, that is brought together in unity by Communion in the Body and Blood of Christ." (GIRM 5)

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Throughout the past several weeks, workshops have been held throughout the Archdiocese to help us all understand what changes we see as the new Missal is put into use. And I am particularly grateful to the members of the Liturgy Commission who have planned and carried out these workshops. Your pastors will now lead you through the process of becoming familiar and at home with this new translation of the Mass.

As we begin the use of the new Missal, we note that there are not many changes that affect the faithful of the Archdiocese. I would like to comment however on the posture that will now be observed in all Masses throughout our local church. For many years now, in travelling to different parish churches in the diocese, one would notice differences in posture during the Mass, particular during the Eucharistic Prayer. The introduction of the new Missal allows us an opportunity to more faithfully observe the direction given in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal on the posture that is to be observed during the Mass.

I know that this matter of posture is one of fervent interest and devotion for many people. People have different understandings of what is truly the way to show reverence and respect for Our Lord Jesus Christ who is present in the Eucharist. When we talk about this matter of posture during Mass, it is very important to remember the teaching of our Church that the celebration of the Eucharist is the action of the whole Church, that is of Christ and the People of God. It is not the place where any one of us can simply do what we think best but rather we are called to do what the Church determines to be the proper way.

Many people might ask: Can't I just do what I think is best for me? Well, the Church teaches that "no other person, even if he be a priest, may add, remove, or change anything in the liturgy on his own authority." (SC 22.3) Indeed, we are instructed that a common bodily posture is to be observed by all those taking part in the Mass. This common posture is a sign of the unity of the members of the community gathered together for the Sacred Liturgy for it expresses the intentions and spiritual attitude of the participants and also fosters them. (GIRM 42)

Therefore I ask all the faithful now to observe this common posture during the Mass and particularly during the Eucharistic Prayer. In our diocese we will observe the posture indicated in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, that is:

**the Community will stand from the invitation, *Pray, brethren*, before the Prayer over the Offerings until the end of Mass, except that the faithful will kneel at the Consecration and sit during the time of silence following Communion. (GIRM 43)**

The time for the faithful to kneel will be at the Epiclesis, when the priest extends his hands over the bread and wine and says the prayer invoking the Holy Spirit. The people will be invited to kneel at that time by word or by a recognizable signal such as the ringing of the bell. All will remain kneeling until the Memorial Acclamation following the words of Consecration, at which point all will stand.

Another change is that we are all asked to remain standing while all the community receives Holy Communion. Again, in this way, we affirm our unity with one another in the Communion

Procession as each approaches and receives Holy Communion and is brought into deep union with Christ our risen Lord. It is very fitting that all sing the Communion Hymn as the community receives the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. When all have received, there will be a time of silent prayer when all will sit. This time of silence allows us to meditate on the marvel of our being brought into communion with Christ our Risen Lord and, in this time of personal prayer, to praise God for giving us so wondrous a gift.

You will note that there are more times of silence with the new Missal: such as after the Readings of God's Word and after the homily. As we stand here in the presence of God who is love, these times of silence allow us to let our heart speak to God and God, in the heart of Jesus, to speak to us. These times of silence are times of intimate and personal communion with God and will be a great blessing for us.

Over the months and times ahead, I ask that the parish liturgy committees study and become familiar with the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, particularly the second chapter on "the Structure of the Mass, its Elements and its Parts" and use this document to help the parish celebrate the Sacred Liturgy properly and with dignity.

This new edition is the sole English translation and version of the Roman Missal that is approved for use in the dioceses of Canada whenever the liturgy is celebrated in English, effective the First Sunday of Advent, November 27, 2011.

My dear sisters and brothers, may the sacred liturgy of our Church continue to build all of us who celebrate it into a holy temple of the Lord. May we, heart and mind, body and soul, become the place where God in the Spirit dwells. May our celebrations of the Eucharist strengthen us with the Bread come down from Heaven so that we may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "+ D J Bohan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Rev. Daniel J. Bohan  
Archbishop of Regina

First Sunday of Advent  
November 27, 2011