

Dear Parishioners,

There are only 133 days remaining before we begin using a new English translation of the prayers we pray at Sunday Eucharist! Never heard of the Third Edition of the Roman Missal? You are probably not alone. This is the third such revision of the prayers we use at Sunday Eucharist since the Second Vatican Council. This work of editing and translating has been going on for almost a decade.

Shortly after New Years we invited several speakers to address the coming changes in presentations at both Saint Stephen the Martyr as well as Saint Katharine Drexel. We also ran a series of weekly articles in the Sunday bulletin providing an overview of the changes and their rationale. I hope these efforts proved helpful to you and to your family. Through the summer and into the fall we will continue to provide information in the Sunday bulletin.

The changes in the new missal involve only the prayers we use at Mass. In many cases only a phrase or a word or two have been changed. New musical settings have been composed for the responses we sing. What we do – our gestures and our ritual actions – however will remain the same.

As with previous changes, this reception of the third edition of the Roman Missal provides an opportunity to reflect on how well we as individuals and as a community celebrate Sunday Eucharist. There are the perennial questions such as do I arrive on time and prepared to pray? Am I appropriately dressed? Would my mother agree with my assessment? Is my cell phone turned off? Did I remove my gum? Do I remain and participate in the entire liturgy or do I leave early?

On another level we can think of the quality of the signs we make, whether it be our initial sign of the cross with holy water, our reverent bow or genuflection upon entering, the sign of peace we exchange with one another, the silence we keep that allows us and others to center ourselves in prayer.

We build on our strengths. And music and singing has a central place in our liturgical celebrations. Likewise reverential silence finds a place as well. Listen, if you will, for the quiet that accompanies the Liturgy of the Word, or the hush that follows the beginning of the Eucharistic prayer.

Even as I write this I am increasingly aware of the need not only to review these things for myself, but the need to find ways to consciously share them with our younger generation. A helpful website for more information is www.usccb.org/romanmissal.

With kind regards,

Fr. Bill