

Roman Missal¹

I. Introduction

With the new Missal, the Roman Catholic Church is showing how and for what to pray. According to standard American English, the prayers are so difficult to understand that I refer to the “2011 illiterate Missal.” The revised prayers are my translation of the Bible-babble in the Missal into standard American English as heard, for example, on EWTN (Eternal Word Television Network), the Weather Channel, and the evening news. In the spirit of doing more than complain about nonsense, I offer suggestions for remedying the current situation.

Stanley Fish in his How to Write a Sentence, recommends three websites for examples of outstanding sentences: Best Sentences Ever, Sentences We Love, Best First Sentences, Best Last Sentences. The lack of due diligence and academic integrity is an appalling disgrace, an impairment to the Church. The Faithful deserve best-practices flowing out of the Missal. Catholic priests are too highly educated to sound as illiterate as the Missal makes them sound.

National Catholic Reporter describes what was happening the first day the Faithful used the new illiterate Missal.²

If the majority of Catholics made it through the first live use of the new language relatively unaffected by the changes, some were unwilling to concede the issue quietly . . . a small group, including members of the Sisters of Loretto, was holding a Sunday prayer vigil outside the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Denver to protest the changes. Loretto Sr. Mary Ann Cunningham, a vigil organizer, called the new translation

¹ n.a., The Roman Missal: Renewed by Decree of the Most Holy Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Promulgated by Authority of Pope Paul VI and Revised at the Direction of Pope John Paul II: English Translation According to the Third Typical Edition: For Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America: Approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Confirmed by the Apostolic See (Washington, DC, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011) 216-219.

My manner is to place what I expect readers to read in the main body of the text. The problem with these essays is that some readers may begin at any point. For these readers, I include material previously included in the text. This is particularly important for the practical details of grammatical nonsense.

² Tom Roberts with NCR Staff, “With some giggles and retakes, missal debuts,” National Catholic Reporter: The Independent News Source, Vol. 48, No. 4 (December 9-22, 2011), page 6, column 1, below the fold.

“clumsy and very stilted.” As a former Latin teacher, she noted that a word-for-word literal translation of the Latin doesn’t necessarily lead to greater fidelity to the overarching meaning of a text.

“Jesus didn’t speak Latin,” she noted.

Details for some of what the Missal offers this Sunday follow.

II. Prayer before reading Sacred Scripture (Collect)³

A. Missal: **O God**, author of every mercy and of all goodness, **who** in **fasting, prayer and almsgiving have shown us** a remedy for sin, look graciously on this confession of our lowliness, **that** we, who are bowed down by our conscience, may always be lifted up by your mercy. **Through** our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever [sic] and ever.

B. Italian Latin:⁴ Deus, ómniúm misericordiárum et totiús bonitátis auctor, qui peccatórum remédia in ieiúniis, oratió nibus et eleemósynis demonstrásti, hanc humilitátis nostrae confessi ónem propítius intuére, ut, qui inclinámur consciéntia nostra, tua semper misericórdia sublevémur. Per Dóminum.

C. Revised: **God, you are the author of mercy and goodness. We confess that we have sinned. When we are depressed, let your mercy improve our lives. Seeking forgiveness of sins through prayer uplifts our hearts and gives us some joy. Look upon us with your love. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your**

³ *Collect* is the technical term for this prayer.

⁴ The Missal translates this Latin Missale into English. I name the Missale Italian Latin, because of the accent marks, which do not appear elsewhere. Pagina 227 at <http://www.clerus.org/bibliaclerusonline/en/exw.htm#bsr> The Holy See, Congregation for the Clergy runs this website. (accessed December 6, 2011).

**Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy
Spirit, one God, forever.**

D. Comment: The Missal Collect has an off-the-charts 20.9 Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readability in a fifty word first sentence. It is a fused sentence.⁵ The second sentence of 26 Words has a 9.5 Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readability. The revised Collect has a 5.5 Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readability.

The Latin omits the **O** in the Missal **O God**.⁶

O God . . . who . . . have shown us . . . is a form of African American Language (AAL).⁷ The Little, Brown Handbook handles so-called *Black English vernacular* or *Ebonics* delicately as “non-standard.”⁸

If your first language or dialect is not standard American English, subject-verb agreement may be problematic, especially for these reasons: Some English dialects follow different rules for subject-verb agreement, such as omitting the –s ending for singular verbs or using the –s ending for plural verbs.

As written, the series, *fasting, prayer and almsgiving*, is needlessly unclear. The Little, Brown Handbook explains, “Some writers omit the comma before the coordinating conjunction in a series (*Breakfast consisted of coffee, eggs and kippers* [fish]). But the

⁵ See Chapter 18, “Comma Splices, Fused Sentences,” H. Ramsey Fowler and Jane E. Aaron, Eleventh Edition: The Little, Brown Handbook (New York: Longman, 2010) 339-444.

⁶ The argument that the English is to stay close to the Latin does not hold up. The English has **O Lord**. The Latin has only *Dómine*, without the **O**. **O** is a Latin word. Cassell’s Latin Dictionary: Latin-English and English-Latin, revised by J. R. V. Marchant, M.A. and Joseph F. Charles, B.A. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1952) 371.

⁷ Geneva Smitherman, Word from the Mother: Language and African Americans (New York: Routledge, 2006) 3.

⁸ H. Ramsey Fowler and Jane E. Aaron, Eleventh Edition: The Little, Brown Handbook (New York: Longman, 2010) 302.

final comma is never wrong, and it always helps the reader see the last two items as separate . . . ”⁹

Through . . . is a sentence fragment the Missal uses throughout the book.¹⁰

III. Prayer after Communion

A. Missal: As we receive the pledge of things yet hidden in heaven and are nourished while still on earth with the Bread that comes from on high, we humbly entreat you, O Lord, **that** what is being brought

⁹ H. Ramsey Fowler and Jane E. Aaron, Eleventh Edition: The Little, Brown Handbook (New York: Longman, 2010) 433.

¹⁰ The Little, Brown Handbook explains,

A prepositional phrase is a modifier consisting of a proposition (such as *in*, *on*, *to*, or *with* [including *through*] together with its object and any modifiers (see pp. 242-43). A prepositional phrase cannot stand alone as a complete sentence . . .

At the end of the prayer, *the unity* is confusing. A dictionary definition for the word *the*: “1 c:-- used as a function word to indicate that a following noun or noun equivalent refers to someone or something that is unique or is thought of as unique or exists as only one at a time <the Lord><the Messiah> . . . ”¹⁰ *Unity* is a noun meaning “1a: the quality of stage of being or consisting of one.”¹⁰ Does *the unity* mean that the Holy Spirit belongs to a union, like a labor union? Does *unity* in the Collect mean that the Holy Spirit, unlike Jesus, has only one nature, Divine? Does *unity* mean the trinitarian unity? In the same vein, does *unity* mean that it is the Holy Spirit, which is the relationship between the Father and Son, thereby causing a triune unity? The last is how the revision would resolve the matter, substituting *Divine Trinitarian nature* for *unity*. Because the Faithful have not challenged *the unity* since Vatican II, the now traditional silly phraseology remains.

See Part 4, “Clear Sentences,” Chapter 17 c, “Sentence Fragments: Verbal or prepositional phrase,” H. Ramsey Fowler and Jane E. Aaron, Eleventh Edition: The Little, Brown Handbook (New York: Longman, 2010) 335. <http://unabridged.merriam-webster.com/cgi-bin/unabridged?va=the&x=0&y=0> (accessed December 4, 2011). <http://unabridged.merriam-webster.com/cgi-bin/unabridged?va=unity&x=0&y=0> (assessed December 4, 2011).

about in us in mystery may come to true completion. Through **Christ our Lord**.

B. Italian Latin:¹¹ Suméntes pignus caeléstis arcáni, et in terra pósiti iam supérno pane satiáti, te, Dómine, súpplices deprecámur, ut, quod in nobis mystério géritur, **ópere impleátur**. Per Christum.

C. Revised: **Heavenly Father, we embrace your pledge for glory. We embrace the Eucharistic Bread as a prayer for that glory. Heavenly Father, we pray that the Eucharistic promise of love, mercy, and charity will be fulfilled in the days to come. We pray through Christ, our Lord.**

D. Comment: The Missal Prayer after Communion has a graduate school 18.2 Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readability in a forty-nine word first sentence. It is a fused sentence.¹² The revised Prayer after Communion has a 6.4 Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readability.

. . . that what is being brought about in us in mystery may come to true completion, makes no sense and exemplifies why the 2011 Missal is illiterate. What would be a *false completion*? What is *being brought about in us in mystery . . .* To what does *what* refer? Philosophically, Americans in the United States are pragmatic. The Latin, *ópere impleátur* looks like an endorsement of pragmatism to me, in the sense of *may the Eucharistic Mystery work*.

In the final fragment, *our Lord* is in apposition to *Christ*.¹³

¹¹ The Missal translates this Latin Missale into English. I name the Missale *Italian Latin*, because of the accent marks, which do not appear elsewhere. Pagina 229 at <http://www.clerus.org/bibliaclerusonline/en/exw.htm#bsr> The Holy See, Congregation for the Clergy runs this website. (accessed December 6, 2011).

¹² See Chapter 18, "Comma Splices, Fused Sentences," H. Ramsey Fowler and Jane E. Aaron, Eleventh Edition: The Little, Brown Handbook (New York: Longman, 2010) 339-444.

¹³ The Little, Brown Handbook has a "using appositives" subsection.

IV. Prayer over the People

- A. Missal: Direct, **O Lord**, we pray, the hearts of your faithful, and in your kindness grant your servants this grace: that, abiding in the love of you and their **neighbor**, they may fulfill the whole of your commands. Through Christ our Lord.
- B. Italian Latin:¹⁴ Rege, **Dómine**, quaesumus, tuórum corda fidélium, et servis tuis hanc grátiam largíre propítius, ut in tui et **próxim**i dilectióne manéntes plenitúdinem mandatórum tuórum adímpleant. Per Christum.
- C. Revised: **Lord, give the hearts of your people grace for mercy, whereby to receive your holy love.**

An appositive is usually a noun that renames another noun nearby [in this case *ever-Virgin*], most often the noun just before the appositive. (the word *appositive* derives from a Latin word that means “placed near to” or “applied to.”) An appositive phrase includes modifiers as well All appositives can replace the words they refer to: [*ever-Virgin/Mary*] . . . Appositives are economical alternatives to adjective clauses containing a form of *be* . . . [*Lord [who is] our God* . . .] you can usually connect the appositive to the main clause containing the word referred to . . . An appositive is *not* set off with punctuation when it is essential to the meaning of the word it refers to [in the United States of America, which has no secular lords, *Lord* is not essential to *our God*] . . . When an appositive is not essential to the meaning of the word it refers to, it *is* set off with punctuation, usually a comma or commas [as is the case here, *O Lord, our God,*] . . .

H. Ramsey Fowler and Jane E. Aaron, Eleventh Edition: The Little, Brown Handbook (New York: Longman, 2010) 254-255.

¹⁴ The Missal translates this Latin Missale into English. I name the Missale Italian Latin, because of the accent marks, which do not appear elsewhere. Pagina 229 at <http://www.clerus.org/bibliaclerusonline/en/exw.htm#bsr> The Holy See, Congregation for the Clergy runs this website. (accessed December 6, 2011).

D. Comment: The Missal Blessing by the priest has a 7.3 Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readability. The revised Blessing has a 5.8 Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readability.

The O in *O Lord* is not in the Latin. See above.

The Latin, *próximí* is the superlative of *proprius*. The Latin for *neighbor* is *vicinus*. Were *próximí* the word for *neighbor* in Latin, it would be plural, *neighbors*, rather than the 2011 illiterate Missal, singular, *neighbor*.¹⁵

V. ICEL

Whether to include or exclude the 1998 ICEL translation is difficult. The reason to include ICEL is: this is the best the American bishops could do, before the Vatican rejected the translation. The ICEL translation also deals with some of the vocabulary and grammatical problems with which the revisions deal. The reason to exclude ICEL is: the ICEL translation is not significantly better than the Missal.

ICEL:¹⁷ Prayer before reading Sacred Scripture (Collect)¹⁶
O God, source of all mercy and goodness, in almsgiving, fasting, and prayer you have shown us a remedy for sin. Listen with love as we confess our weakness, and, when we are bowed down by the knowledge of our guilt, lift up our hearts with the assurance of your mercy.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever [*forever* is one word] and ever.

¹⁵ D. P. Simpson, M.A., Cassell's Latin Dictionary: Latin-English English-Latin, (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publishing, Inc., (fifth edition) 1968) 482, 485, 771.

¹⁶ *Collect* is the technical term for this prayer.

¹⁷ All ICEL prayers are from International Commission on English in the Liturgy: A Joint Commission of Catholics Bishops' Conferences, *The Sacramentary: Volume One—Sundays and Feasts* (Washington, D.C.: International Commission on English in the Liturgy, 1998), page 228, downloaded from https://rs895dt.rapidshare.com/#!download|895|35|387089704|ICEL_Sacramentary_1998.zip|6767|R~00A3D4012C6FE19956DB84F71E5405F6|0|0 at http://misguidedmissal.com/wp/?page_id=23 (accessed December 8, 2011).

Personal Notes
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Prayer after Communion

ICEL:¹⁸ Lord our God, you feed us in this life with bread from heaven, the pledge and foreshadowing of future glory; grant that the working of this sacrament within us may bear fruit in our daily lives.

We ask this in the name of Jesus, the Lord.

The respective ICEL Collect and Prayer after Communion have 7.8, and 5.8 Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readabilities.

VI. Rationale¹⁹

Clarity is not a prerequisite for prayer. The search for clarity can be a means to prayer. As part of catechesis, these Personal Notes set up what the Church needs to explain to enable the Faithful to pray with *faith seeking understanding*, as Saint Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) puts it.²⁰

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¹⁹ In an attempt to use the prayers the anti-Vatican-II, Vatican, is now setting forth, these Personal Notes took on a new focus. These Notes had already prepared the Lectionary all the way to Lent, because the hierarchy withheld the U.S. Missal until October. This new focus began November 27, 2011, the First Sunday in Advent. From the First Sunday in Advent until just before the First Sunday of Lent, February 26, 2012, these Notes had a double focus, including both the Lectionary and the Missal. From the First Sunday in Lent forward, these Notes only focus on the 2011 illiterate Missal.

²⁰ <http://www.google.com/search?q=faith+seeking+understanding&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&aq=t&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a> (accessed November 28, 2011) and <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/anselm/> (accessed November 28, 2011).

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Heavenly Father, we embrace your pledge for glory. We embrace the Eucharistic Bread as a prayer for that glory. Heavenly Father, we pray that the Eucharistic promise of love, mercy, and charity will be fulfilled in the days to come. We pray through Christ, our Lord.

Lord, give the hearts of your people grace for mercy, whereby to receive your holy love.