

Roman Missal¹

I. Introduction

Illiterate, anti-intellectual, anti-Vatican II, and dysfunctional: these four adjectives describe the 2011 Missal, designed to teach the faithful how to pray. These four adjectives also describe the March 1 letter of Timothy Cardinal Dolin, designed to teach Barack Obama how to run the U.S. Government. For example, Dolin can expect his “brother bishops” [sic lower case] and the rest of the Faithful to accept the following sentence as fanciful nonsense.

Some, like *America* magazine, want us to cave-in and stop fighting, saying this is simply a policy issue; some want us to close everything down rather than comply (In an excellent article, Cardinal Francis George wrote that the administration apparently wants us to “give up for Lent” our schools, hospitals, and charitable ministries); some, like Bishop Robert Lynch wisely noted, wonder whether we might have to engage in civil disobedience and risk steep fines; some worry that we’ll have to face a decision between two ethically repugnant choices: subsidizing immoral services or no longer offering insurance coverage, a road none of us wants to travel.

That illiterate sentence is 105 words long. My word processor advises, “Long Sentence: Your sentence may be too long to be effective and may be hard to follow. For clarity and conciseness, consider rewording your sentence or splitting it into two sentences.”

The Roman Catholic Church recognizes Dolan with a doctorate from administration of The Catholic University of America, which the American Association of University Professors has kept on its censured list since 1990. Catholic University

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) 256, 259.

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.

Personal Notes

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awarded Dolan his history doctorate in 1983. After that, from 1994 to 2001, Dolan influenced the Pontifical North American College in Rome as its Rector. Dolan Writing his March 1 letter exemplifies and explains the illiterate 2011 Missal.

At this rate, the faithful can expect Dolan neither to explain away the charges of misogyny leveled against the hierarchy nor to support solving health problems for women. In his dissertation, Dolan studied Archbishop Edwin O'Hara of Oregon. As Michael Sean Winters puts it,

. . . in the 1920s [O'Hara] had to contend with a Ku Klux Klan-backed proposal that all children attend public schools, effectively closing Catholic schools. O'Hara understood that if he denounced the measure as anti-Catholic, many would take it as a compliment. So, instead, he called it an un-American attack on religious freedom. Sound familiar?

Now Dolan is also trying to denounce a political proposal, but this time changing the denunciation from a matter of the health care of women to a matter of freedom of religion.

Father Charles Morris of Detroit, in the National Catholic Reporter, questions the illiterate, anti-intellectual, anti-Vatican II, dysfunctional 2011 Missal.² "If the translators really wanted to enhance the sense of the sacred in the liturgy, why did they strip English of its power?" Morris compared the new translation's attempt at a word-for-word exchange from the Latin to electronic translating programs "in which reliance on word-for-word translation often results in stilted gobbledygook."

Despite the example Dolan has set, what follows attempts to explain and remedy the illiteracy of the 2011 Missal.

II. Prayer before reading Sacred Scripture (Collect)³

A. Missal: By your help, we beseech you, Lord our God, may we walk eagerly in that same charity with which, out of love for the world, your Son handed himself over to death. **Through our Lord Jesus Christ,**

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 2, above the fold.

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

Personal Notes

0350 Missal: Fifth Sunday of Lent_A Catholic Bible Study (120325)

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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 Quaesumus, Dómine Deus noster, ut in illa caritáte, qua Fílius tuus díligens mundum morti se trádedit, inveniámur ipsi, te opitulánte, alácritér ambulánte. **Per Dóminum.**

C. Revised: **Heavenly Father we commemorate Jesus Christ freely accepting death for humanity. Enable us to walk with Jesus in the way of love and hope for all people. We ask your help to live for you. We ask this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever.**

D. Comment:⁵ The first three lines of the Missal contain a fused sentence.⁶

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 255 at <http://www.clerus.org/bibliaclerusonline/en/exw.htm#bsr> The Holy See, Congregation for the Clergy runs this website. (accessed December 6, 2011).

⁵ Because the following information is technical, I have decided to hide it here for those with the time and interest to follow along. These statistics help keep me conscious of writing within the capacity of the Faithful in the pews to hear.

The Missal Collect has an 11.0 Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readability. The first sentence of this prayer contains thirty-four words, with a 12.5 (or college level) Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readability.

The revised **Collect** has a 7.2 Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readability.

⁶ 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.

Personal Notes

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Jesus Christ is in apposition to *our Lord* and in English should be set off with commas.⁷

Through . . . is a sentence fragment the Missal uses throughout the book.⁸

⁷ The Little, Brown Handbook has a "using appositives" subsection.

An appositive is usually a noun that renames another noun nearby [in this case *Jesus Christ*], 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: [*our Lord/Jesus Christ*] . . . Appositives are economical alternatives to adjective clauses containing a form of *be* . . . [*our Lord* [who is] *Jesus Christ*. . .] 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, *our Lord* is not essential to *Jesus Christ*] 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, *our Lord, Jesus Christ,*]

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

⁸ 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>" ⁸ *Unity* is a noun meaning "1a: the quality of stage of being or consisting of one." ⁸ 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

III. Prayer after Communion

- A. Missal: We pray, almighty God, that we may **always be counted** among the members of Christ, in whose body and Blood we have communion. Who lives and reigns for ever [sic] and ever.
- B. Italian Latin:⁹ Quaesumus, omnipotens Deus, ut inter eius membra **semper numerémur**, cuius Córpori comunicámus et Sánguini. Qui vivit et regnat in saecula saeculórum.
- C. Revised: **Almighty God, we pray to become one with Christ, whose Body and Blood we have just received in Holy Communion. Christ lives and reigns, now and forever.**

D. Comment: The Missal **Prayer after Communion** has a 7.2 Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readability. The first sentence of this prayer contains twenty-five words. It is a fused sentence.¹⁰ The revised **Prayer after Communion** has a 7.4 Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readability.

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> (accessed December 4, 2011).

⁹ This is the Latin Missale that the Missal translates into English. I name the Missale *Italian Latin*, because of the accent marks, which do not appear elsewhere. Pagina 256 at <http://www.clerus.org/bibliaclerusonline/en/exw.htm#bsr> The Holy See, Congregation for the Clergy runs this website. (accessed December 6, 2011).

¹⁰ 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.

Personal Notes

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Section 3 Grammatical Sentences, #14 Verbs, Voice J. Active (*She wrote it*) vs. Passive (*It was written*) in The Little Brown Handbook explains the difference between active and passive voice with the following large letter sentence. “Generally, prefer the active voice. Use the passive voice when the actor is unknown or unimportant.”¹¹ *That we may always be counted* is in the passive voice. The active voice would be, *that you might always count us*.

IV. Prayer over the People

A. Missal: Bless, **O Lord**, your people, who long for the gift of your mercy, and grant that what, at your prompting, they **desire** they may receive by your generous gift. Through Christ our Lord.

B. Italian Latin:¹² Bénedic, **Dómine**, plebem tuam, quae munus tuae miseratiónis **expéctat**, et concéde, ut, quod, te inspiránte, desíderat, te largiénte percípiat. Per Christum.

C. Revised: **Lord, bless your people, who ask for your mercy and good graces. Hear their prayer, through Christ, our Lord.**

D. Comment:¹³ The Latin omits the **O** in the Missal **O Lord**.¹⁴

¹¹ H. Ramsey Fowler and Jane E. Aaron, Eleventh Edition: The Little, Brown Handbook (New York: Longman, 2010) 299.

¹² 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 606 at <http://www.clerus.org/bibliaclerusonline/en/exw.htm#bsr> The Holy See, Congregation for the Clergy runs this website. (accessed December 6, 2011).

¹³ Because the following information is technical, I have decided to place it here for those with the time and interest to follow along. These statistics help keep me conscious of writing within the capacity of the Faithful in the pews to hear. The Missal Prayer over the People has an 11.3 Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readability in the first sentence of thirty-one words. The revised Prayer over the People has a 2.1 Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readability.

¹⁴ 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.

The Latin, *expéctat* connotes expectation, *waiting*, even *waiting with desire*, but not unmodified *desire*.

V. ICEL¹⁵

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.

Prayer before reading Sacred Scripture (Collect)¹⁶

ICEL:¹⁷ Come to our aid, Lord God, that we may walk courageously in that love of which your Son gave proof when he handed himself over to death out of love for the world.

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 [sic] and ever.

Prayer after Communion

ICEL:¹⁸ We ask, almighty God, to be numbered always among the members of Christ, whose body and blood we share in this sacrament of unity.

¹⁵ The respective ICEL **Collect** and **Prayer after Communion** have 11.1 and 7.2 Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readabilities.

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

¹⁷ International Commission on English in the Liturgy: A Joint Commission of Catholics Bishops' Conferences (ICEL), The Sacramentary: Volume One—Sundays and Feasts (Washington, D.C.: International Commission on English in the Liturgy, 1998), page 232, 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).

¹⁸ International Commission on English in the Liturgy: A Joint Commission of Catholics Bishops' Conferences (ICEL), The Sacramentary: Volume One—Sundays and Feasts

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayer over the People

ICEL:¹⁹ Unavailable.

VI. Rationale

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

The Misguided Missal website, comments on the 2011 Illiterate Missal,²¹

The result is a text with a number of changes in the words the people say, and considerable changes in the priests' texts. In an effort to create an elevated, sacred-sounding text the translators used a writing style similar to 19th-century upper-class British discourse, with antiquated vocabulary, highly complex sentence structure, and the use of "man" as a generic. Sentences are broken into small phrases set off with commas

(Washington, D.C.: International Commission on English in the Liturgy, 1998), page 187, 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).

¹⁹ International Commission on English in the Liturgy: A Joint Commission of Catholics Bishops' Conferences (ICEL), The Sacramentary: Volume One—Sundays and Feasts (Washington, D.C.: International Commission on English in the Liturgy, 1998), page unavailable, 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).

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).

²¹ http://misguidedmissal.com/wp/?page_id=383 (accessed December 29, 2011).

Personal Notes

0350 Missal: Fifth Sunday of Lent_A Catholic Bible Study (120325)

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that give a breathless, choppy feel. Flowery expressions replace the noble simplicity of the present [ICEL] text, for example, “When supper was ended he took the cup” becomes “In a similar way, after supper he took this precious chalice in his holy and venerable hands . . .”

Personal Notes

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**Heavenly Father we commemorate Jesus Christ freely accepting death for
humanity. Enable us to walk with Jesus in the way of love and
hope for all people. We ask your help to live for you. We ask
this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and
reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God,
forever.**

**Almighty God, we pray to become one with Christ, whose Body and Blood
we have just received in Holy Communion. Christ lives and
reigns, now and forever.**

**Lord, bless your people, who ask for your mercy and good graces. Hear
their prayer, through Christ, our Lord.**