

Personal Notes

0800 Missal: Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time A Catholic Bible Study (February 19, 2012)

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Raymond J. Jirran, Ph.D.

Roman Missal¹

I. Introduction

Translating Christian Sacred Scripture into native languages practically began in modern times with the Sixteenth Century Protestant Revolutionary, Martin Luther (1483-1546). Four hundred years later, in 1963, the Roman Catholic Church, at the Vatican II Council, opened the way to use native languages at liturgical prayer. Ten years later, the 1973 Missal resulted.¹ The International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) finished another translation in 1998. That translation was never used in the liturgy. In the Twenty-first Century, with the 2011 Missal, the administration of the Roman Catholic Church is attempting to revert to a non-existent pre-Vatican II era. The result is a major mess.

The new 2011 Missal would be comedic if the administration were not insisting that pile of words constitutes a translation of the Latin. Such insistence makes the entire translation production a tragedy. Personal Notes work to unscramble the mess.

These Personal Notes are neither as concerned about the dead language of Latin nor about false pious nonsensical gibberish. Personal Notes use a dynamic equivalent type of translation; certainly not a formal equivalent translation. The focus is on the living language of the Faithful in the pews.

Personal Notes systematically explain three of the prayers used during many Sunday liturgies: (1) the prayer said before readings from Sacred Scripture; (2) the prayer said after Communion; and (3) the final blessing, when available. These Personal Notes present four versions of each of the above prayers: (1) the Missal gibberish; (2) the Latin that the Missal is supposed to translate; (3) my reduction into standard American English, with a corresponding explanation, and (4) the 1998 ICEL translation.

In his book, How to Write a Sentence, Stanley Fish asks the following rhetorical question.²

. . . just piling up words, one after the other, won't do much of anything until something else has been added. . . . And the words slide into the

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.

² Stanley Fish, How to Write a Sentence and How to Read One (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2011) 2.

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slots ordained by syntax, and glitter as with atmospheric dust with those impurities which we call meaning.”

Because the 2011 Missal tends to “pile up words” without meaning, I name the 2011 Missal illiterate.

In reaction to the first use of the new Missal, the National Catholic Reporter found that the Word did not matter.³ The Word does matter. These Personal Notes continue to struggle with letting the Words of Sacred Scripture speak for themselves in standard American English.

II. Prayer before reading Sacred Scripture (Collect)⁴

A. Missal: **Grant**, we pray, almighty God, that, always pondering spiritual things, we may carry out in both word and deed that which is pleasing to you.

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:⁵ Praesta, quaesumus, omnipotens Deus, ut, semper rationabilia meditantés, quae tibi sunt placita, et dictis exsequámur et factis. Per Dóminum.

C. Revised: **Almighty God, we pray for grace to understand Sacred Scripture and for the grace to please you, in both word and deed. We pray for this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your**

³ 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, just below the fold.

⁴ *Collect* is the technical term for this prayer.

⁵ The Missal translates this Latin Missale into English. I name the Missale Italian Latin, because of the long (but not the short) vowel accent marks. This type of Latin does not appear elsewhere. Pagina 457 at <http://www.clerus.org/bibliaclerusonline/en/exw.htm#bsr> The Holy See, Congregation for the Clergy runs this website. (accessed December 6, 2011).

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Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit.

D. Comment:⁶ The Missal Collect presents a fused sentence.⁷

By placing the verb, *grant*, first, the Missal does not follow either Latin (subject-object-verb)⁸ or standard American English (subject-verb-object) word order.

As written, the Collect uses three commas in the first five words, almost a comma per word. This is not standard American English.

Jesus Christ is in apposition to *our Lord* and in English should be set off with commas.⁹

⁶ The Missal Collect has a 10.4 Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readability. The revised Collect has a 6.2 Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readability. Readability is a measure of literacy.

⁷ 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.

⁸

http://www.google.com/search?q=Does+the+verb+come+last+in+Latin+word+oorder%3F&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&aq=t&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a#hl=en&client=firefox-a&hs=IXc&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&sa=X&ei=iKzVTogRPKLx0gHWxdDrAQ&ved=0CBkQvwUoAQ&q=Does+the+verb+come+last+in+Latin+word+order%3F&spell=1&bav=on.2,or.r_gc.r_pw.,cf.osb&fp=c5f9ab36cd8b91fa&biw=1472&bih=754 (accessed November 30, 2011)

⁹ The Little, Brown Handbook has a "using appositives" subsection.

An appositive is usually a noun that renames another noun nearby [in this case *our Lord*], 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 Chris* . . .] you can usually connect the appositive to the main clause containing the word referred to . . . An appositive is *not* setoff with punctuation when it is

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

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. Since the United States of America does not have Lords, *Lord*, is not part of the name of *Jesus Christ*. *Jesus Christ* and *Lord* are in apposition to one another.

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).

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III. Prayer after Communion

- A. Missal: Grant, we pray, almighty God, that we may experience the effects of the **salvation which** is pledged to us by these mysteries. Through Christ our Lord.
- B. Italian Latin:¹¹ Praesta, quaesumus, omnipotens Deus, ut illius **capiámus** effectum, cuius per haec mysteria pignus accépimus. Per Christum.
- C. Revised: **Almighty God, these Eucharistic mysteries pledge salvation to us. We pray that you will save us from evil for a place in heaven with you. We ask for this through Christ, our Lord.**

D. Comment:¹² . . . *the salvation which* is not standard American English. . . . *the* limits *salvation*; but there is only one salvation; *salvation* is not a plural count noun. . . . *which*, without a comma, means that *which is pledged to us by these mysteries* is essential to the meaning of *the salvation*, which is not the case here.

The Little, Brown Handbook explains and offers a remedy.¹³

Native speakers of standard American English can rely on their intuition when using determiners [such as *the*], but speakers of other languages and dialects often have difficulty with them. In standard English, the use of determiners depends on the context they appear in and the kind of noun they precede . . .

¹¹ The Missal translates this Latin Missale into English. I name the Missale Italian Latin, because of the long (but not the short) vowel accent marks. This type of Latin does not appear elsewhere. Pagina 457 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 The Missal Prayer after Communion has a 12.5 Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readability. The revised Prayer after Communion has a 7.3 Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readability. Readability is a measure of literacy.

¹³ H. Ramsey Fowler and Jane E. Aaron, Eleventh Edition: The Little, Brown Handbook (New York: Longman, 2010) 234, 322-326, 513.

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A dictionary of English as a second language will tell you whether a noun is a count noun, a noncount noun, or both. (See p. 513 for recommended dictionaries.)

If English is not your native language, you probably should have a dictionary prepared especially for students using English as a second language (ESL). Such a dictionary contains special information on prepositions, count versus noncount nouns, and many other matters. Reliable ESL dictionaries include COBUILD English Language Dictionary, Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, and Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary.

In addition, my Word 2010 offers the following explanation:

"That" or "Which"

If these words are not essential to the meaning of your sentence, use "which" and separate the words with a comma.

- Instead of: I have a great [book which](#) you can borrow for your vacation.
- Consider: I have a great book, which you can borrow for your vacation.
- Or consider: I have a great book that you can borrow for your vacation.

- Instead of: We want to buy the [photo which](#) Harry took.
- Consider: We want to buy the photo, which Harry took.
- Or consider: We want to buy the photo that Harry took.

The 2011 illiterate Missal mistranslates *capiámus* as *experience*, even though dictionaries do not offer that meaning.¹⁴

IV. Prayer over the People or Blessings¹⁵

¹⁴ D. P. Simpson, M.A., Cassell's Latin Dictionary: Latin-English English-Latin, (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publishing, Inc., (fifth edition) 1968) 89-90; R. P. Leverett (ed.) Enlarged and Improved Edition. A New and Copious Lexicon of the Latin Language: compiled chiefly from the Magnum Totius Latinitatis Lexicon of Facciolati and Forcellini, and the German Works of Scheller and Luenemann Edited by F. P. Leverett. A New Edition, Embracing the Classical Distinctions of words, and the Etymological Index of Freund's Lexicon (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1850)119, 96.

¹⁵ The full heading is: **Blessings at the End of Mass and Prayers over the People
Solemn Blessings**

I. For Celebrations in the Different Liturgical Times

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A. Missal: The English Missal has no final blessing.

B. Italian Latin:¹⁶ The Latin Missale has no final blessing.¹⁷

V. 1998 ICEL¹⁸

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:²⁰ **Prayer before reading Sacred Scripture (Collect)**¹⁹
Almighty God, fix our hearts on what is right and true, that we may please you always by observing your will in both word and deed.

1. Advent

¹⁶ The Missal translates this Latin Missale into English. I name the Missale *Italian Latin*, because of the long (but not the short) vowel accent marks. This type of Latin does 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).

¹⁷ <http://www.clerus.org/bibliaclerusonline/en/t4.htm> (accessed December 27, 2011).

¹⁸ The respective ICEL Collect, Prayer after Communion, and Blessing have 9.7, 11.2, and 5.8 Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readabilities. Readability is a measure of literacy.

¹⁹ *Collect* is the technical term for this prayer.

²⁰ 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 878, 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).

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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:²¹ All-powerful God, grant that we may come to the fullness of salvation, which is pledged to us through this eucharistic [sic] mystery.

We make our prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Blessing at the End of Mass

ICEL:²² May the God of peace sanctify you completely and keep you sound and blameless in spirit, soul, and body, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

R. Amen.

²¹ 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 879, 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).

²² 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 812, 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). In an attempt to use the prayers the anti-Vatican-II, Vatican, is now setting forth, these Personal Notes are taking on a new focus. This new focus begins 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 will have a double focus, including both the Lectionary and the Missal.

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May the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit, come upon you and remain with you for ever [sic].
R. Amen.

This final blessing is in neither the English Missal nor the Latin Missale.

The Misguided Missal web site offers an explanation:²³

The English text of the Roman Missal [sic] was translated from the most recent Latin base text of the Order of Mass [sic], published in 2000. This Latin text shows numerous changes from the 1970 version that was used for the words of the Mass we have been using up to now. The 2000 Latin text replaced words and rearranged phrases in a way that often shifts the emphasis to our human sinfulness and need for God's mercy, the glory of almighty God, and the sacrifice of the Mass.

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.²⁴

²³ http://misguidedmissal.com/wp/?page_id=383 (accessed December 26, 2011).

²⁴ <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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**Almighty God, we pray for the grace to understand Sacred Scripture and
for the grace to please you, in both word and deed. We pray
for this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives
and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit.**

**Almighty God, these Eucharistic mysteries pledge salvation to us. We pray
that you will save us from evil for a place in heaven with you.
We ask for this through Christ, our Lord.**

ⁱ http://misguidedmissal.com/wp/?page_id=1 (accessed January 6, 2011).