



The New Roman Missal

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Mass has evolved and yet remained the same. In fact, a study of the history of the Mass can clear up a lot of misconceptions people have about it. For those who believe that the present Mass is invalid because it represents a

Brother Knights.

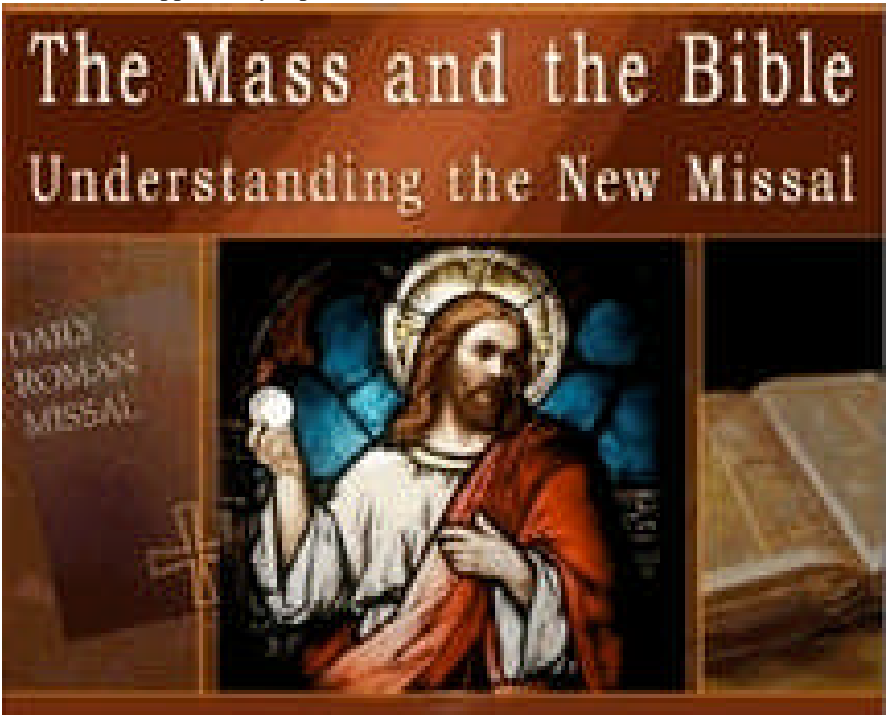
I am taking a break from my series on Spiritual Classics to write about an important upcoming event for us Catholics in the English-speaking world. I am referring to the new English language translation of the Mass prayers. This will be the most significant development in the way we celebrate Mass since the Vatican II reforms of the liturgy almost 50 years ago. While the Mass will look the same – there has been no change to the rubrics – it will sound different. The words spoken, chanted and prayed at Mass will sound more formal, less colloquial. This is a result of a more formal translation of the Latin, the original language of the Mass prayers.

So why the new translation? Simply put, because the people have requested it. In the 1980s, the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) put out a survey to ascertain what people generally thought of the present English translation of the Mass prayers. The dominant response expressed a desire to have a more formal translation of the Mass texts, expressed in a more elevated language than that found in the present translation. Members themselves admitted, upon completing the present translation, that their work would have to be revised eventually. Forty years on, that day has arrived.

The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* was passed in 1963 and ICEL was formed shortly after to begin work on a new English language translation of the Mass. of proper preparation for the people in anticipation of the reformed Mass.

While most people embraced the vernacular translation, many people responded with confusion and anger. They felt the new translation was unnecessary, a complete break with the past, and even questioned its validity. This animosity felt towards the *Novus Ordo* (New Mass) exists amongst some pockets of Catholics to this day.

In light of the mixed response to the *Novus Ordo*, steps have been taken today by various Bishops' Conferences in Englishspeaking countries to insure that adequate catechesis is provided in anticipation of the new translation. The happy by-product of this catechetical initiative is the opportunity it provides



Catholics to re-visit their liturgical heritage and to re-appreciate how their

complete severance with our past and tradition, an examination of its history will show that this argument is simply