

At the end of today's gospel passage Jesus tells us that "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them." (Mt. 18:20)

In the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* of the Second Vatican Council, which met in Rome from October 1962 through December 1965, the church teaches us that we experience the truth of these words of Jesus when we assemble for the celebration of the liturgy, especially the Mass. The Holy Eucharist, the Council teaches us, is the "source and summit" (Art. 14) of our life as the church. To it all of our activity is directed, from it all of our activity (our mission) flows.

Throughout the history of the church, the Mass has been its center. However, the outward forms, the language and the ritual acts that give expression to the presence of Christ in it, have changed. Beginning on the First Sunday of Advent this coming November 27<sup>th</sup>, we will be experiencing some change in the way we celebrate the Mass. On that date we will begin using the recently translated English speaking edition of the Third Edition of the Roman Missal, the ritual book containing the Scripture readings and the prayers of the Mass. Over the course of these past months the Sunday Bulletin has published a short article each week on the forthcoming changes. Also several of our Wednesday evening "Church Chat and Chow" sessions have addressed these changes. For some of us (me included) the forthcoming changes will mark the fourth set of revisions to the celebration of Mass in our lifetime. For those of you forty years old and younger, the upcoming changes will be the first to the celebration of the Mass that you have experienced. Why the changes and why now?

In reaffirming the Church's constant teaching on the Holy Eucharist, the Mass, as the "source and summit" of our faith, the bishops at the Second Vatican Council also called for the the outward ritual as well as the language of the Mass to change in order to help all the people present more actively take their rightful role in its celebration. For those of us old enough to remember, the switch from Mass being celebrated entirely in the Latin language to English was monumental. In order that this mandate for more active participation could be realized as soon as possible, permission was given for

interim use of translations of the Latin Mass prayers until a definitive, (in our case English) translation could be completed. Such work involving scholars from various academic disciplines, takes, at times, decades. For the past forty years the translation we have used in the Mass has been a provisional one. In June of 2010 the Vatican, following the pope's approval, issued the official English translation of the Roman Missal and directed that November 27<sup>th</sup> of this year to be the date it is to begin being used.

In terms of changes, some of the responses you as the assembly proclaim will be slightly modified. The rest of the changes are in the prayers that I as the presider proclaim. To many of our ears at first the revised texts will sound different. This is because they will now more closely correspond to a literal English translation of the original Latin prayers and Latin language syntax (phrasing). But, with time, we will grow accustomed to them as we have to the translation we have used for the last forty years. To assist in the transition, Archbishop Hanus has given permission to begin teaching and using the new responses in sung form this month.

Along with the changes to the Mass, Pope Benedict XVI, like previous popes, notes that a natural fruit flowing from the celebration of the Mass is time spent privately, or with others, in Eucharistic adoration. Such prayer not only re-enforces and prolongs our experience of Jesus' presence with us at Mass, but also, ideally, creates in us an even greater hunger and longing in our relation with Jesus, leading us back to the celebration of the Mass as well as living the Christian life in the demands of our daily life. Our parish is blessed with the opportunity to spend time in personal, family, or group prayer before the exposed Blessed Sacrament in the Burke Chapel. Thank you to everyone who has committed to an hour a week of Eucharistic adoration. I invite and encourage others to join this powerful prayer network. We are especially in need of people willing to make the sacrifice to be present in the chapel between the hours of 2 and 5 a.m. daily. Next weekend prior to the start of Mass, the opportunity will be given to sign up for an hour of Eucharistic Adoration. Again today, here at Mass, as well as in the quiet of Eucharistic Adoration, in our assembling in his name, we rejoice in knowing Jesus is with us.