

POSSIBLE DATE FOR NEW MISSAL TRANSLATION

Readers may have noticed an announcement that the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales approved the final sections of the new translation of the Roman Missal at their November meeting. This is what is supposed to happen next.

The Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments in Rome has to give its formal approval to the new texts. Before it does that, a committee called Vox Clara, which has been overseeing the translation work of the English-speaking Bishops around the world, has to make a recommendation to the Congregation. Vox Clara is not scheduled to meet to discuss this until March-April next year, so the formal approval from the Congregation will not be forthcoming until some time after that. Additionally, it is not known if Vox Clara will make any changes to the texts as they exist at the moment. For example, the acclamation "Christ has died" does not appear in the new Order of Mass, but it is possible that it will be put back.

It will take publishers a year from the formal approval being issued in Rome to having new missals, people's mass books and music settings printed and distributed, ready for purchase and use. Some countries including ours might be ready earlier than that, but the Congregation ideally wants all English-speaking countries to make the changeover at the same time. This means that the earliest implementation date is probably Advent 2011, which is what the USA and other countries are working towards. Some have spoken of Lent or Easter 2011 as possibility, but that would leave some publishers with out-of-date materials in the middle of a liturgical year, which they would obviously not be happy about.

Having said all that, it is possible that we may start using the new Order of Mass ahead of the entire Missal. Once again, that is fraught with uncertainties and problems. We might end up with Mass cards again for a while (as in the late 1960s and early 70s).

We'll try to keep you posted as things develop.

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