

Tridentine Community News

June 27, 2010

Beyond the New English Ordinary Form Missal: Other Issues With Approved Translations – Part 6

A Possible Meeting of the Minds

Our reader who favors modern Biblical translations argues that accuracy is essential, and so does the Holy See. No question can be raised there. However, the language of prayer surrounding the Extraordinary Form is hierarchical in nature. That is, in fact, one of the appealing aspects of the EF. Countless prayer books, many of which are being republished today, have a Douay-like ring to the ear. Fortunately, the two concepts are not mutually exclusive.

It would be possible to embark on an entirely new translation of the Bible that incorporates hierarchical language. This writer acknowledges that some of the sentence constructs in the Douay are hard on modern ears. We cannot expect to be frozen in time with the Douay forever, though it is pastorally understandable why Church authorities might want to leave things alone for a few years. Many of those who love the traditional liturgy of the Church don't believe it is time for substantial changes to the Tridentine Mass any time soon. Excessive change in the liturgy of the Church has already presented many pastoral problems; a time of stability will heal wounds. A new translation with more traditional wording, however, could address all concerns.

Ordinary vs. Extraordinary Form Perspective in the Official Books of the Church

There is one other issue to point out with regards to the successive English editions of the Church's book of private prayer, the *Manual of Indulgences*: The current 2006 edition is written exclusively from the perspective of the Ordinary Form.

Language is used such as "the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of our Lord". In the Extraordinary Form, there is no such thing as a "Solemnity". The equivalent concept is a "First Class Feast". Corpus Christi, however, may be celebrated as a First Class Feast on a Thursday, or as an "External Solemnity" (a transferred Feast...not the same thing as a "Solemnity") on the next Sunday. In such a case, on what day would an indulgence attached to the Feast apply? Presumably to the day on which the Feast is celebrated, but what if it is celebrated twice at the same parish, once on the Thursday, and once on the Sunday? Could one earn the indulgence twice?

Similarly, occasional indulgences are granted to Feasts which only exist in the Ordinary Form. The first that comes to mind is "Divine Mercy Sunday". While Divine Mercy Sunday devotions are often celebrated at Extraordinary Form Masses, the name of that Feast Day in the EF Calendar remains unchanged as "Low Sunday". There is no "Feast of Divine Mercy" in the EF. Should not then the announcement of the indulgence for that day state that one can gain it on "the Feast of Divine Mercy" in the OF or on "Low Sunday" in the EF? In this post-*Summorum Pontificum* world, it is incumbent upon Church leaders to consider such questions.

We point this out simply to suggest that there are differences between the Ordinary and Extraordinary Forms that may take years or decades to work out. Clarifications will be needed for questions that have not yet been pondered. While not strictly a matter of the vernacular, it is a subject which one discovers upon delving into the contents of prayer books and announcements.

Perhaps these are some of the areas in which our Holy Father hopes that the Ordinary Form and Extraordinary Form can inform one another. As issues concerning the vernacular, the liturgical Calendar, Holy Days, and certain assumptions in the *Manual of Indulgences* are considered, there can only be two long-term outcomes: Either the two Forms of the liturgy fuse in certain ways, or they separate in more clearly defined ways. They could proceed according to the Fiat-Chrysler model, in which certain new Chryslers may be built on Fiat platforms, and vice-versa; or they could follow the Warren Buffet model, where subsidiary companies operates independently.

English Bishops Take the Lead

It is encouraging to note that matters pertaining to the Extraordinary Form are starting to pop up on the radar screen of some National Bishops' Conferences. The Bishops of England and Wales have long been at the forefront of EF-OF coexistence, having obtained the first Tridentine Mass Indult in 1971, barely two years after the promulgation of the *Novus Ordo*. Today, the Liturgy Office of the Bishops of England and Wales devotes a substantial portion of their web site, www.liturgyoffice.org.uk, to the Extraordinary Form. It is a model for other Bishops' Conferences to emulate. While their conclusions on one particular subject, that of EF Holy Day transferrance to Sundays, are debatable, we must applaud the fact that they have given the matter consideration. It is refreshing to see both forms of the Roman Liturgy given attention on such a well-visited web site.

A Way Forward

The mainstreaming of the Extraordinary Form by the Motu Proprio *Summorum Pontificum* has created a need for a new area of study, scholarship, and action in the Church: Starting with issues concerning the vernacular, and continuing through Calendar and Indulgence matters, there is a need to determine which practices should be brought closer in line between the EF and the OF, and which need to be separated but fleshed out. Perhaps there should be an EF-oriented *Manual of Indulgences*, employing hierarchical language, for example.

Though we cannot speak for any language other than English, it seems that for English-speaking lands, a body akin to ICEL, but with experience in, and sensitivity to, the customs of the Extraordinary Form, could be created to address some of these issues, in conjunction with the appropriate authorities from Rome. Unlike ICEL, the vernacular would not be its sole concern. Its leader and members should have acknowledged expertise in the Extraordinary Form. Royalties on English texts should not be charged, to give incentive for publication of the texts. And ideally, the body should be one of advocacy and not just regulation.