

*The First Sunday of Advent  
Homily ~ November 27, 2011*

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Blessed Sacrament*

One of the things that I love about our home in Michigan is the change of seasons—each season has something to offer. Just think, spring is only **114** days away!

Researchers report that the more we welcome change into our lives, the healthier our brains remain and the younger we feel. That's not surprising. Enthusiasm about new things is a characteristic of the young and the young at heart.

Sometimes we love change. Sometimes we don't. But whether it's welcome and expected, whether it is sudden and unasked for, change is a reality of life. It's the one thing we can count on.

Nature teaches us that everything in this world is constantly changing. Everything God has created is constantly in the process of either growing or dying. Change is a part of life. Just think how our world has changed since 9/11. We are also not the same Catholic people we were only a few years ago. I am hoping that both you and I have grown in holiness and in our faith and understanding of God.

But there are things that never change. Truth does not change; the supernatural realities of faith, hope and love do not change; and God does not change.

I speak about change because beginning today, we begin to use the revised translation of the Roman Missal in our parish and in all the English-speaking parts of the world. This translation will not change the structure of the Mass, but does change some of the words we proclaim at Mass.

Words affect our lives. How we say and hear words makes a difference in how we live, pray and believe.

The words that I pray at Mass will sound different to you. Your prayers and responses also will be different. These new prayers for both you and me should help us to pray more consciously, since we will be thinking more about what we

are praying and not just saying the words by rote, which many of us admit we often do now.

Think of the way we say the Our Father. Do we really think about what we say when we pray *forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us...*?

Why is this change in the prayers of the Mass necessary? The revised translation will reflect the current Latin edition that was introduced in 2000. Our present English translation does not do this accurately as in the case of other languages in the world. Although this translation will sound more formal, it is scripturally richer in its meanings and images. Instead of hearing in the Sunday Eucharistic prayer, “from east to west a perfect offering may be made,” we will hear, “from the rising of the sun to its setting, a pure sacrifice may be offered.” This text presents a richer Biblical image for us to picture and actually comes from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah that we heard this past October.

Since some of the words of the prayers we sing have been changed, the Mass parts will have new musical settings. The sung Mass prayers that will change are the Gloria, the Creed, the Holy, Holy, Holy, and Memorial Acclamations.

Other changes you will notice are the responses to the Confiteor, The Lord be with you, and Lord, I am not worthy. After the Advent Season, cards will be in the pews for us to follow.

I have mixed feelings about the new translation, since all the prayers have a new twist to them. But the hope that all this will make us more conscious of what we pray at Mass is what is giving me great hope. We need to be aware that the same prayers that we begin today are now being prayed word for word in the thirteen English-speaking countries of the world. I don't know about you, but it makes me feel in solidarity with others. As a parish, we can grow spiritually from this experience. My prayer is that it will deepen our love for the Mass as well as strengthen the unity of the Church. We're called to be a mutual support society—one for all, all for one.

As with all changes, it will take time to adapt. During this time of transition, we all need to put on our patience hats. Just think of the other changes we have made over the years and how we see them as “always having been done that way.”

I pray as you pastor and fellow worshipper that the revised translation for the Roman Missal may assist us in lifting our minds and hearts to God as we learn to pray the Mass more consciously, fully, and actively, giving praise and thanks to God.

*St. John the Evangelist*  
*∞140<sup>th</sup> Jubilee ∞*

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