he English translation of the third edition of the Roman Missal — which guides the practice of Mass celebration — more closely preserves the ancient prayers of the Church.

The translation will be implemented across the United States Nov. 27, the first Sunday of Advent. Blessed Pope John Paul II introduced the Latin text of The Roman Missal, Third Edition, in 2002.

“I truly believe that the new English translation of the Missal will bring us many graces as we begin to worship God with these new English texts,” Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted said, “so much richer in language and theology than the previous translation.”

Thousands of Catholics collaborated over the last several years to ensure that the translation of this revision reflects the sacredness of the Mass as a Holy Sacrifice.

“If people hear what this new translation is really about, they’re going to hear Christ and have an experience of encountering the sacred,” said Fr. John Muir, associate director of the Office of Worship.

The translation, by more closely mirroring the Latin text, is more formal and appropriate for the Mass. The previous missals — issued in the 1970s and ’80s — utilized a dynamic equivalency method and stopped short of a word-for-word translation.

“This approach builds on previous efforts and better connects the words of the Mass to the passages of the Bible to which they allude. Sentences are also going to be longer, again, because they’re longer in Latin. But translators believe the longer sentences capture more nuances in meaning.

This recovery of the meaning of in the Latin text, though, does not signal a general moving away from the vernacular language all together. It is instead a reexamination of the Latin, giving more attention to the beauty of the Church’s language, to enrich the English.

“We encounter the sacred in and through Jesus Christ. He’s the one that brings us to the heavenly Jerusalem,” Fr. Muir said. “In the new word, our excitement is that we’re going to encounter Christ and His transforming power and His ability to unite us to His Passover and bring us to the heavenly Jerusalem.”
FROM THE ALTAR

Months ago, the diocesan Office of Worship and Liturgy began working with local priests and parish leaders on the ins and outs of the new Roman Missal. They attended one of five "train the trainer" workshops offered in a 12-week period.

Fr. Rob Clements, director of the All Saints Catholic Newman Center in Tempe, attended one of them. Most of it he already heard or read before as he has anticipated the Roman Missal's third edition for years. He admitted there are "a number" of priests who aren't too eager to use the new edition at Mass. They have a host of changes.

On the other hand, Fr. Clements quickly pointed to Cardinal Roger M. Mahony, retired archbishop of Los Angeles, as a champion of the revised Missal. The cardinal wrote in America Magazine in May that while he is not satisfied with every change in word or phrase, he knows the English-language missal must serve many countries and account for subtle differences.

"The transition to the new translation will be a logistical challenge" with both priest and parishioner requiring worship aids, he wrote, "but we need to welcome the Roman Missal, in a sense, as a new friend."

Fr. Clements hopes the third edition of the Roman Missal brings a "definite, more cognizant role of ourselves as priests, as men who are after Christi"e.

Fr. Rick Hilgartner, who is now executive director of the U.S. Bishops' Committee on Divine Worship, discussed the new Roman Missal in Scottsdale last September during a Life Teen conference for priests and youth ministers nationwide.

Appealing to a crowd of priests and youth leaders, Fr. Hilgartner said, "You know what word appears a lot in the new missal? Awesome."

The Eucharistic Prayers are beautiful! The Collects and Propers are a vast improvement over the Missal we're leaving behind, although personally, there's maybe 3-4 of them I think sound kind of cheesy. I think I'm most excited about the Creed, and placing it in the first person, "I believe." Obviously it's a direct translation from the original, but I'm hopeful it may call upon individual Catholics to consider what they stand for in making a public profession of faith.

— Fr. Rob Clements, director, All Saints Catholic Newman Center in Tempe

FROM WITHIN THE CHURCH

The Nov. 27 liturgy will mark the first time English-speaking Catholics throughout the world will use the revised wording found in the The Roman Missal, Third Edition. Phrases of some prayers along with complete responses are changing to more closely match their Latin roots.

Catholics shouldn't be blindsided though. Priests in the Phoenix Diocese explained the major changes during an eight-part series of Sunday homilies beginning Sept. 25. Some were traditional with others multimedia presentations in hopes of bringing a more dynamic and consistent message.

The homily series followed a nine-part series of Catholic Sun columns from Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted on the matter, local Catholic radio and TV air time — including a PBS program — aided in catechetics.

Parishes did their part too. Our Lady of the Angels Conventual Church at the Franciscan Renewal Center in Scottsdale published a 20-page resource for community members. Sacred Heart Parish in Prescott offered a mini-mission earlier this year plus a nine-week series of bulletin handouts starting on Easter.

Claretian Father Daryl Olds, parochial vicar, said he has also attended eight meetings for various ministries to discuss the topic. "If we see it as an opportunity for a more conscientious and deeper prayer, our community will really benefit from it," he told parishioners after Mass last month.

That's the same lesson found in dozens of books, brochures, DVDs, audio-tapes and web resources dedicated to understanding the Roman Missal's third edition. For Catholics who were active churchgoers pre-Vatican II, the revised language in the new Roman Missal might be easy to grasp.

There was a lot of, "Well, that's what we used to say" and "That's what I learned, but I learned it in Latin" when 55,700 parishioners studied the New Missal this summer. It was part of a five-week "A Biblical Walk Through the Mass" series at St. Elizabeth Seton in Sun City. The parish offered a condensed format last month.

Next week, St. Elizabeth Seton will be one of many parishes easing the transition for Massgoers. Pew cards will provide the new language for responses and prayers.

That includes at the All Saints Catholic Newman Center in Tempe where there's widespread acceptance, especially among students. Regardless of age, Tom McKay, a young adult parishioner at both Blessed Sacrament in Scottsdale and St. Paul in Phoenix, knows there will be an adjustment period. He remains confident that praying the new words will soon be "old hat."

FROM THE CHOIR LOFT

If the Church says we need to change something, then I agree with them. [On the creed] Some of the words are changing in that I don't know what they mean off hand. Non Catholics who I bring to Mass are more confused about it. [During the consecration] The words felt more right. It sounded more authentic. The whole thing is going back to what the rest of the world is doing.

— Erika Wehrly, parishioner, St. Thomas the Apostle Parish

This is what I grew up with. It's going back in time. The change from "we" to "I" in the creed makes it more personal. It's like you and the Lord only know it before the Christmas Masses."

“The Gloria has the most changes, so I introduced that first," Whisler said. "During Advent we don't sing the Gloria anyway and we wanted to make sure people knew it before the Christmas Masses." Adam Bartlett, music director at St. Joan of Arc Parish, has written two new Mass settings using the new translation of the Roman Missal.

They are soon to be released as part of the Lumen Christi Missal, which is a publication that I'm currently editing," Bartlett said. "It's a book for the pew that will be available to Catholic parishes in the spring or summer of 2012."

Bartlett said the book will include the new translation of the Order of Mass and various Mass settings, including a few that he has composed. Lumen Christi will have other features as well. "We will also have in the book several of the simplest, traditional settings and Gregorian chant," Bartlett said.

Any new settings of Mass must be approved by the USCCB office of Divine Worship through a formal approval process. Both melody and words must be approved.

"The USCCB wants to make sure the text is used properly that there is no undue repetition or distortion of the text," Bartlett said. "They want to make sure the text is utilized properly and then they are also reviewing the musical setting for its fitness for the liturgy."

— Adam Bartlett, music director at St. Simon and Jude Cathedral. "Like everything else, they're a closer translation of the Latin."

In order for people to have time to learn the new responses, Whisler said the bishop gave permission to teach the new sung responses prior to implementation.

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drawing closer to Christ through revised words

some Catholics may be asking themselves why the Church, after so many years using the current translation, is changing the words used during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

The Church spent so much time and effort on the English translation of The Roman Missal, Third Edition, because it deals with the celebration of the Mass, the whole direction of our entire lives. It’s like going to the moon. It’s one of the most ancient and venerable prayers, prayed by the likes of St. Augustine and St. Ambrose, underwent “the most noticeable facelift.”

Before the new translation, the prayer began, “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof.” Now it reads “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter through my door.”

It makes clear the whole direction of the eucharistic prayer, the whole direction of the Mass; the whole direction of our entire lives is “To you, Father’ and that’s clear and so strong,” Fr. Muir said.

After the consecration, Catholics will now pray, “Lord, we are not worthy that you should enter into our midst.” This change makes a more direct connection to the Gospels of the High Priest, Jesus, who asks the Father, “To you, Father…”

Consistently, the word used by the early church councils to articulate Christ’s divinity, Christ is “of the same substance” as the Father, something which is more fundamental that “one in Being.”

“There’s no such thing as a perfect translation,” Fr. Muir said. “Words have certain meanings that can’t be translated. Who knows? Maybe 100 years from now we’ll have an even better translation.”

Building on the strength of the earlier translations, which served the Church well for so many years, this revision is an improvement.

“We do the best we can,” Fr. Muir said. “We remember that Latin is still the language in the Church. It keeps us grounded in the truth.”

moving from second to third

bishop Thomas J. Olmsted sent official word to fellow priests about an implementation plan for The Roman Missal, Third Edition, 14 months ago.

He reminded them that it’s about more than just new words, though. The new translation offers ongoing liturgical renewal proclaimed in the Second Vatican Council, the bishop wrote.

The first part of that renewal period spanned 12 weeks when priests and other parish leaders attended one of five regional workshops hosted by the diocesan Office of Worship. They reviewed the missal’s development — promulgated in 1969, the same year the Phoenix Diocese was established — the revised language and took home suggestions of how to bring it to the parish level.

The diocesan Office of Worship offered workshops for liturgical musicians too.

The following month, Msgr. James P. Moroney, a consultor to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, discussed “Leading Liturgical Development” during the annual priest convocation.

The deacon Congress four months earlier also focused on the revised missal in August.

The office encouraged an eight-week series of homilies on the revised Roman Missal in August.

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The Introductory Rites

Priest: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

Priest: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Priest: The Lord be with you.

People: And with your spirit.

Penitential Act

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; (We strike our breast during the next two lines):

Priest: Have mercy on us, O Lord.
People: For we have sinned against You.
Priest: Show us, O Lord, Your mercy.
People: And grant us Your salvation.

Priest: Lord have mercy. (2x)
People: Christ have mercy. (2x)
Priest: Lord have mercy. (2x)

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through Him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation He came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate, He suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and His kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, and the world to come. Amen.

Gloria

Priest: The peace of the Lord be with you always.
People: And with your spirit.

Priest: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to N.
People: Glory to you, O Lord.

The Eucharistic Prayer

Priest: Pray, brethren (brothers and sisters), that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father:

The people rise and reply:

People: May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of His name, for our good and the good of all His holy Church.

The Priest continues the Preface. At the end he concludes with the people:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Then the Priest continues the Eucharistic Prayer. Then the Priest says:

The mystery of faith.

Priest: We proclaim your death, O Lord, and profess Your resurrection until You come again.

Priest: When we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim Your death, O Lord, until You come again.

Priest: Save us, Savior of the world, for by Your cross and resurrection You have set us free.

Communion Rite

Sign of Peace

Priest: The peace of the Lord be with you always.
People: And with your spirit.

Lamb of God, You take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God, You take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God, You take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

Priest: Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who takes away the sins of the world.
People: Lord, I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

The Concluding Rites

Priest: The Lord be with you.
People: And with your spirit.