

PREPARING FOR THE NEW TRANSLATION

THE PREFACE



With the end of the Prayer over the Offerings, the Mass enters the Eucharistic Prayer, which the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* describes as “the center and summit of the entire celebration.” The Eucharistic Prayer begins with a Preface. There are many different Prefaces depending upon the liturgical day, but they each begin with the same dialogue between the Priest and the Faithful, and they each end with the singing of the *Sanctus* (Holy, Holy, Holy). Here we will limit our consideration to the dialogue and the *Sanctus*.

COMMENTARY:

The instructions for the Priest and his acclamations have not changed between the Current and the New Translations, but you will notice two changes with respect to the responses of the faithful. The first regards the re-occurring “**And with your spirit,**” which will be replacing all of the “**And also with you**” responses. As noted in earlier bulletin, the acclamation by the Priest expresses the desire that the power of the Spirit of God may be given to the People of God that they may enter into worship as one and be enabled to do what God has entrusted them to do—here, to offer themselves and their sacrifices. The response of the faithful likewise acknowledges that the Priest also requires the power of the Holy Spirit to carry out what is entrusted to him—namely offering Christ’s one sacrifice—and the Church’s firm belief that this has been given to him at his ordination.

The third response of the people also changes. We now find a much shorter and succinct response: **It is right and just.** Even those who know not a word of Latin can see that this must be closer to *Dignum et iustum est* than the wordy response of the Current Translation. That we are still giving thanks to God is understood from the words the Priest addresses to the people. What is missing from the Current Translation is any mention that our giving thanks to God is actually something that is **just**. As St. Thomas Aquinas reminds us, justice is giving the other his or her due. With respect to God, we can never fully repay Him for all the good that we have received from Him: our very existence, our life, all the goods of this world, the supreme gift of His Son, the Church, the faith, the hope of eternal salvation, etc. The virtue of religion concerns our returning to God what we owe Him, and although we can never give Him back more than He has first given us, we can in thanksgiving our Him our very selves in union with that perfect offering of His Son, our Head and Savior. Our *thanksgiving*, which is a translation of the Greek work *eucharistia*, is perfected when it is offered by He who is capable of perfectly offering it: Christ alone. Our thanksgiving and offering is united with that of Christ’s through the power of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharistic Prayer as the Priest offers Christ’s perfect offering.

The Preface ends with the singing/saying of the *Sanctus* (Holy, Holy, Holy). The New Translation will have the Latin original next to the English translation.

Current Translation	New Translation
<i>The priest begins the Eucharistic prayer. With hands extended, he sings or says:</i>	<i>Then the Priest begins the Eucharistic Prayer. Extending his hands, he says:</i>
The Lord be with you.	The Lord be with you.
<i>The people answer:</i>	<i>The people reply:</i>
And also with you.	And with your spirit.
<i>He lifts up his hands and continues:</i>	<i>The Priest, raising his hands, continues:</i>
Lift up your hearts.	Lift up your hearts.
<i>The people:</i>	<i>The people:</i>
We lift them up to the Lord.	We lift them up to the Lord.
<i>With hands extended he continues:</i>	<i>The Priest, with hands extended, adds:</i>
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.	Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
<i>The people:</i> It is right to give him thanks and praise.	<i>The people:</i> It is right and just.
<i>The priest continues the preface</i>	<i>The Priest, with hands extended, continues the Preface.</i>

Current Translation	New Translation
<p><i>At the end of the preface he joins his hands and, together with the people, concludes it by singing or saying aloud:</i></p> <p>Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, 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.</p> <p><i>In all Masses the priest may say the eucharistic prayer in an audible voice.</i></p> <p><i>In sung Masses he may sing those parts of the eucharistic prayer which may be sung in a concelebrated Mass.</i></p> <p><i>In the first eucharistic prayer (the Roman Canon) the words in parentheses may be omitted.</i></p>	<p><i>At the end of the Preface he joins his hands and concludes the Preface with the people, singing or saying aloud:</i></p> <p>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.</p> <p>Or:</p> <p>Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dóminus Deus Sábaoth. Pleni sunt caeli et terra glória tua. Hosánna in excélsis. Benedíctus qui venit in nómine Dómini. Hosánna in excélsis.</p> <p><i>In all Masses, the Priest celebrant is permitted to sing parts of the Eucharistic Prayer provided with musical notation below, especially the principal parts.</i></p> <p><i>In Eucharistic Prayer I, the Roman Canon, the words included in brackets may be omitted.</i></p>

COMMENTARY:

The Preface, in which the Priest in the name of all the faithful especially gives thanks to God for the great work of sal-

vation or for the cause of the day's feast, ends with the singing of the *Sanctus*. Many of the various texts of the Preface remind us that we join in the singing of the angels and the saints when we take the words of the *Sanctus* upon our lips. In the prophesy of Isaiah 6:3 it is the highest rank of angels, the seraphim, that stand before the throne of God and utter this thrice holy hymn. In the Book of Revelation (4:8) it is the four living creature, which came to symbolize the four Gospels, that gives God this superlative praise. In Hebrew, repeating something three times is a way of putting something in the superlative, i.e. the holiest.

Even in Latin, this very ancient liturgical text contains non-Latin words: *Sabaoth* and *Hosanna*. We retain certain Hebrew and Aramaic words in our worship, which most of the faithful use without flinching: *Amen*, *Alleluia*, and *Hosanna*. For some reason, the Current Translation, introduced back in 1973, chose to replace this Hebrew word with an English one. As scripture scholar Fr. Albert Paretsky, O.P., once said, "Of the various things that *Sabaoth* might mean, it certainly does not mean **power and might**." The New Translation has sided with the word *hosts* calling to mind the hosts of angels engaged in this hymn of praise.

The *Sanctus*, beginning at **Blessed is he**, invokes Ps. 117 (118):26, which is echoed in Mark 11:9-10 at the entry of Christ into Jerusalem as the fulfillment of the prophecy of descendent of King David entering into Jerusalem to begin his reign. In singing these words, we are reminded that we invisibly enter the awesome court of our heavenly King, whose reign has begun.

The final instruction regards the possibility of the priest singing parts of the Eucharistic Prayer. This is currently allowed but rarely done on account of the poor layout of the musical notation and its placement in the very back of the *Sacramentary*. The instruction from the Current Translation that specifies that the Eucharistic Prayer may be said in an audible voice was never part of the instruction. The silent (inaudible) canon (the priest praying the Eucharist Prayer quietly) was suppressed in 1967 by the instruction *Instructio altera*, so the instruction in the Current Translation is misleading.

