

## New Words for Worship Part 2

The first edition of the Roman Missal in English was published in 1969 and a second edition was issued in 1975. It was more complete than the first edition because it took account of documents and directives issued since the publication of the first edition but in regard to the translation, it did not differ greatly from the original version. It is important to note that the coming third edition of the Roman Missal represents a change in the language but not in the ritual. The structure of Mass and the elements that comprise it remain the same.

The change that will be most evident is in the language. The vocabulary, syntax and sentence structure will be markedly different from the current text. The aim is a “sacred style proper to liturgical language”. The new rules for translation require that every word in the Latin original must be represented in the English translation and that the Latin sentence structure has to be maintained as far as possible.

The people’s response to the priest’s greeting is a good example. The celebrant’s greeting in Latin is *‘Dominus vobiscum’*, translated in both the present Order of Mass and the revised translation as **‘The Lord be with you’**. The response of the people for the last 40 years has been **‘And also with you’**. In the new Missal this will change to **‘And with your spirit’**. The retranslation was necessary because it is a more correct rendering of the Latin *‘et cum spiritu tuo’*.

In addition, this phrase is specifically referred to in the new rules for translation: “Certain expressions that belong to the heritage of the whole or of a great part of the ancient Church, as well as others that have become part of the general human patrimony, are to be respected by a translation that is as literal as possible, as for example the words of the people’s response *Et cum spiritu tuo ...*”.

English is the only major language which did not translate the word *‘spiritu’* in the 1970 Missal. Other versions did, for example *‘E con il tuo spirit’* (Italian), *‘Et avec votre esprit’* (French), *‘Y con tu espíritu’* (Spanish) and *‘Und mit deinem Geiste’* (German). The response **‘And with your spirit’** was used in the liturgy from the earliest days of the Church. One of the first instances of its use is found in the *‘Apostolic Tradition’* of Saint Hippolytus, composed in Greek around 215.

The expression **‘And with your Spirit’** is addressed only to an ordained minister because the dialogue *‘Dominus vobiscum’* *‘et cum spiritu tuo’* is never used in the Roman Liturgy between a non-ordained person and the assembly.

The usual explanation of the meaning of *‘spiritu’* is that it refers to the gift of the spirit which the priest received at ordination. The people’s response is an acknowledgement of the Spirit of Christ present in the priest in a unique way in virtue of his ordination.

This understanding is not something new. In the fourth century St. John Chrysostom explained:

“If the Holy Spirit were not in our bishop when he gave the peace to all, you would not have replied to him all together, ‘And with your spirit’. This is why you reply with this expression ... reminding yourselves by this reply that he who is here does nothing of his own power, nor are the offered gifts the work of human nature, but is it the grace of the Spirit present and hovering over all things which prepared that mystic sacrifice.”