



UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

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FOREWORD TO THIS EDITION

November 27, 2011, marks a significant date in the liturgical life of the Church in the United States as the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*, is introduced and put into use for the celebration of the Eucharist. This brings to conclusion the work of more than ten years of research, translation, preparation, and study. The implementation of the new translation of the prayers of the Mass is probably the most significant change in the liturgy since the introduction of the *novus ordo* Missal of Pope Paul VI in 1969.

The text of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM) from the *Missale Romanum, editio typica tertia*, was translated and approved for the Dioceses of the United States in 2003 and was subsequently published as part of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Liturgy Documentary Series. The final text of the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*, for use in the Dioceses of the United States and approved in 2010, includes a new translation of the GIRM. The 2003 text was intended as a provisional translation, and in subsequent years other English-language Conferences of Bishops issued their own translations of the GIRM. The translation contained here and also in the ritual edition of the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*, is now the single official translation for the English-speaking world.

Also included in this edition are two other valuable documents: *The Universal Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Roman Calendar* and the *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds for the Dioceses of the United States of America*, both of which also appear in front matter of the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*. Together with the GIRM these documents provide a comprehensive overview and instruction for the celebration of the Mass.

Pope Benedict XVI reminds the Church that the Liturgy follows the ancient axiom, *Lex orandi, lex credendi* ("the law of faith is the law of belief"). Not only is it a matter of words that communicate the faith of the Church, but the way in which the Liturgy is celebrated witnesses to what we believe.

Pope Benedict explains:

These texts contain riches which have preserved and expressed the faith and experience of the People of God over its two-thousand-year history. Equally important for a correct *ars celebrandi* is an attentiveness to the various kinds of language that the liturgy employs: words and music, gestures and silence, movement, the liturgical colors of the vestments. By its very nature the liturgy operates on different levels of communication which enable it to engage the whole human person. (*Sacramentum Caritatis*, no. 40)

May our study and observance of liturgical norms and rubrics continue to foster prayerful and fruitful celebration of the Eucharist, that this moment in the renewal of the Liturgy will strengthen us for the ongoing renewal of the Church.

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