

## 1993 Editorial by Msgr. Richard Schuler: “More Trouble From ICEL”

### More Trouble from ICEL

The *piccolomini* (the “little people”) are at it again. This time it is the ICEL (International Committee for English in the Liturgy). A new “translation” of the Roman Missal has been announced. Certainly this is something greatly to be desired when one considers the poor quality of the liturgical texts we have been saddled with for the past twenty years. That translation has been the subject of very unfavorable comment from all sides for a long time.

But the new project has prospects of being even worse, chiefly because it will not be so much a translation of the Latin *Missale Romanum* as a paraphrase, almost a new book, introducing rites from local vernacular missals not found in the official Latin version. What is worse is that the radical feminists’ concern with so-called “inclusive” language will attack our English usage and even introduce theological errors into texts such as the *Credo*. These people object to calling God “our Father,” in spite of Jesus’ telling us that we should pray in that fashion. They come dangerously close to heresy when translating *Et homo factus est* as “He became fully human.” And there are many, many more examples of faulty phrasing. Many more examples of dangerous tampering with official texts have been pointed out by scholars who have both theological and literary expertise. (See p. 28.)

Why does one object to these variations? The chief reason is that they are being made by people who apparently are ignorant of theology and ignorant of English. They seem to lack any knowledge of the history of English translations of the scriptures or the liturgical books. They certainly do not understand the theology involved in the mystery of the Incarnation and the proper attribution of descriptive words to Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, possessed of two natures, both human and divine. A grasp of the *communicatio idiomatum* is essential to any writing dealing with the Son.

Groups of priests and laymen are being formed in objection to the projected “translation.” Church musicians, who are so close to the sacred texts, should voice their objections to the errors and the bad taste that are about to be foisted upon us. Literal translation of the Latin should be the beginning step in any effort to produce a new translation, because above all else we must be assured of theological accuracy. Then the beauty of the English language should be carefully studied to give the poetical and literary elements that liturgical texts must have to assure the mystical and spiritual dimensions that are so necessary. The banality and even vulgarity of some of the present ICEL products have turned countless people away from the liturgy and even from the Church.

Who are the people preparing the translations? What are their qualifications? Judging from their products, one is forced to say they are the *piccolomini*, the “little people” who lack the training and the learning needed to do the important work of creating a beautiful and true liturgical text that will endure. It is to be hoped that it is only ignorance that has been the cause of the poor work that ICEL has produced in the past twenty years. Surely it is not from a lack of funds available to ICEL, which operates on an annual budget of \$700,000 raised from the royalties we must pay in buying the books we are forced to use. There is a staff of seven. We need to be delivered from the inadequate translations that we are made to buy and use.

Our bishops are not literary men. Neither are they professional translators. Therefore it is their grave obligation to employ orthodox, capable and talented persons to produce liturgical books that are first-class in both theological and literary aspects. Both for the faith and for the glory of our wonderful English tongue, let us stop ICEL from imposing anymore of its inferior work upon us.

See the advertisement on p. 28 for more information and how to act to prevent ICEL from imposing another disaster upon the Church in this country and all the English-speaking world.

R.J.S.

## C R E D O, P.O. Box 7004, Arlington, Virginia 22207

A society of Catholic priests dedicated to the faithful translation of the liturgy. Lay associates are welcome. There are no dues, but contributions are appreciated. Drop a note giving your name, address, diocese and your comments.

Soon, the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) will seek approval for a new translation of the liturgy. It contains several errors and mistranslations:

1. Prayers are deleted: e.g., the response to the *Orate fratres*—"May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands." The role of the priest who stands *in persona Christi* is not affirmed.
2. The personal pronoun (He, His, Him) is deleted when referring to God. "Almighty Father" is deleted.
3. *Homo factus est* is translated as Jesus "became truly human."
4. Pastoral notes are inserted without authority along with the rubrics that have authority directing the people to stand around the altar and objecting to priests who come at communion time to help with the distribution.
5. "Table-fellowship" is advocated, stressing that the fundamental Eucharistic symbolism is sharing. With no distinction between the priest's and people's hosts, use of individual hosts is to be avoided.
6. The "Our Father" is changed, adding "for the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever" to the text; "lead us not into temptation" becomes "save us from the time of trial;" and "trespasses" becomes "sins."

### COMMENTS:

- "I believe strongly in what you are attempting." (New York)
- "I have prepared my own list of greivous translation errors which I happily send along." (Ohio)
- "I have been ordained a priest for almost three years and have grave reservations about ICEL's work." (Arizona)
- "I want to join CREDO. . . I am no expert—just a priest in a country parish." (Missouri)
- "As a newly ordained priest, I expect that any new translation of the Mass will be in effect for most, if not all, of my priesthood. It would be great to offer Mass with all the beauty and majesty that it deserves." (Maryland)
- "It's high time we got a decent and reverent translation of the Mass. God forbid that the ICELites get their way." (Illinois)
- "I sense a 'war coalition' forming spontaneously to defend—and reclaim—the language of our faith." (California)
- "Bravo for CREDO! Please be assured of my prayers and support." (Virginia)

Before an ICEL translation can be used, it must be approved by the bishops and the Holy See. The proposed translation is due for review in 1994. Here is a suggested letter to your bishop and to the officials listed below:

*Your Excellency/Your Eminence:*

*I believe that the revised translation of the Mass (and the pastoral notes) as proposed by ICEL lacks the doctrinal integrity and eloquence that the liturgy deserves. I believe a more faithful translation befitting Catholic worship is needed. For this reason, the ICEL proposal should be rejected unless major changes are demanded of them. I respectfully ask that you take into consideration the need for a truly accurate and permanent translation of the liturgy as you review the ICEL proposal due for publication in 1994.*

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The Goal of CREDO is to promote a faithful and reverent translation of the liturgy from the Latin. In view of the proposed ICEL translation, we wish to express our concerns with respect and conviction. The bishops and the Holy See need to know that, as faithful sons of the Church, we earnestly desire a translation that is truly accurate and permanent. To facilitate this effort constructively, in love for the Church and the liturgy, we will be sending to those who register suggested translations for your consideration. We invite you to share in this work.