



The New Mass

A Message from Father Stewart

22 July 2011

Dear Parishioner,

In the autumn this year, beginning in September, the words we use at Mass are going to change. The current standard form of the Mass text adopted by Rome in 2002 is in Latin. The new text that we shall be using has been written to reflect the Latin text almost word for word. This means that the words will not only be different from what we are used to but will sound unfamiliar and strange to our ears. It may take a while for us to get used to the new text. The purpose of the change is to increase the uniformity and solemnity of the words used in Catholic worship.

The order of the Mass will not change. It is important to remember that the Mass is equally valid whether we use the present text or the new text - it is still and always the place where we meet Christ in Word and Sacrament and each other in fellowship.

The Mass or Eucharist was instituted by Our Lord at the Last Supper but the words and prayers we use are composed by the Church. The Church changes them from time to time as it struggles to express the inexpressible. The Mass text has changed many times in the past. The text used for nearly 400 years from 1570 following the Council of Trent [the Tridentine Mass] was revised several times during that period and it was itself a major revision of medieval practice.

The readings will not change. Neither will the hymns we sing.

There are however numerous changes that affect the responses of the congregation. For example whenever the priest says:

The Lord be with you.

We shall be saying:

And with your spirit instead of And with you.

Also, the wording of the *Gloria* and the *Creed* will have major changes. However, by far the greater changes affect the words spoken by the priest. We priests will need your support and understanding as we adapt to the new texts which as well as being unfamiliar are longer and more complicated than those we have been using. The pace of the Mass will be slower at least until we get used to the new text.

To help you adjust to the new texts we will be providing leaflets that contain everything parishioners will need to take a full part in the Mass.

Getting used to the new text will be a challenge for us all but we should treat it as an opportunity to think about what we do and say at Mass and, in doing that, deepen the spiritual life of our community.

Yours in Christ.