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Bishop says new Mass likely in late 2011

Tim Townsend St. Louis Post-Dispatch | Jun. 16, 2010

ST. LOUIS, Mo. (RNS) A historic change in the way Roman Catholics participate in Mass will likely begin Nov. 27, 2011, according to an Illinois bishop who's been active in preparing for the changes.

Bishop Edward Braxton of Belleville, Ill., a former member of the U.S. bishops' liturgy committee, said the official date for the introduction of the new Roman Missal had not yet been set, but ?it is very possible, however, that the date will be the First Sunday of Advent 2011.?

The Roman Missal is the ritual text of prayers and instructions for the Catholic Mass. Many of the changes involve parts of the Mass in which the laity respond to prayers said by the priest.

The changes will affect some of the most recognizable parts of the liturgy. That includes the familiar greeting and sign-of-peace response, ?and also with you,? which will become ?and with your spirit.? Changes to the Nicene and Apostles' creeds have also been made.

Other church officials agreed that because Nov. 27, 2011, is the beginning of the liturgical year, it's a natural date to launch the new missal.

?We're still looking at the first Sunday of Advent next year, although nothing is official yet,? said Monsignor William McCumber, director of the St. Louis Archdiocese office of worship.

The Rev. Rick Hilgartner, associate director of the U.S. bishops' office of divine worship, confirmed that the new missal would be implemented during Advent next year. But, he said, until U.S. bishops get the go-ahead from the Vatican, ?no final decision about an exact date can be made.?

In a letter sent to his diocese and in an interview, Braxton said the changes will be a challenge for priests and laity alike. For many Catholics -- especially younger ones -- he wrote, the current translation ?is one with which they feel very much at home. It is the only translation they have ever known.?

Bishops across the country are making preparations for the coming change. They have set up an informational Web site -- www.usccb.org/romanmissal -- and workshops around the country over the next year to train priests and deacons on how to implement the changes and answer questions about them.

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