

Acclimating musicians to missal poses challenge

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Choir members sing during Mass at St. Mary's Church in Rochester, N.Y., in this 2009 file photo. (CNS photo/Mike Crupi, Catholic Courier)

WASHINGTON -- The new Roman Missal authorized Aug. 20 for use in the United States beginning in Advent of 2011 will pose significant challenges to both the musicians performing music based on new Mass texts and the congregations expected to learn them.

"The thing that's on most people's minds -- rank-and-file music directors -- is how to adapt to new texts, especially for things like the Glory to God, which is essentially the most heavily changed from the one we've been using for many, many years," said Charles Gardner, who is director for spiritual life and worship and director of liturgical music for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

In an Aug. 18 telephone interview with Catholic News Service, Gardner also expressed concern that "the most commonly used wording of the Memorial Acclamation -- 'Christ has died,' etc." might not appear in the missal.

The texts made public Aug. 20 for what is now called the Mystery of Faith did not include the phrase Gardner mentioned. One liturgical music figure said musicians should not be bothered by the changes in Mass texts. The new translation was designed to follow more closely the text in the original Latin.

"It's unleashing a lot of creative energy" among liturgical music composers, said Michael McMahon, executive director of the National Association for Pastoral Musicians, based in the Washington suburb of Silver Spring, Md. Publishers are "on the verge of releasing ... samples of new and revised Mass settings," he told CNS.

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