

Liturgist drops support of missal translation

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WASHINGTON -- Saying he "cannot promote the new missal translation with integrity," the former chairman of the music committee of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy withdrew from all speaking engagements related to the missal.

Benedictine Fr. Anthony Ruff, a professor of liturgy and Gregorian chant at St. John's University in Collegeville, Minn., made the announcement in "an open letter to the U.S. Catholic bishops." *America* magazine published the letter for its Feb. 14 issue.

The new translation use begins Nov. 27, the first Sunday of Advent, in U.S. parishes and in several other parts of the English-speaking world.

The transition to the new translation occupied most of the past decade and has had some bishops, priests and laypeople criticizing changes in wording meant to bring the translation more closely into alignment with the Latin original.

There was no comment on the priest's letter from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Ruff said his involvement with the liturgical commission's music committee, "as well as my observation of the Holy See's handling of scandal, has gradually opened my eyes to the deep problems in the structures of authority of our church."

He called the missal "part of a larger pattern of top-down impositions by a central authority that does not consider itself accountable to the larger church."

"When I think of how secretive the translation process was, how little consultation was done with priests or laity, how the Holy See allowed a small group to hijack the translation at the final stage, how unsatisfactory the final text is, how this text was imposed on national conferences of bishops in violation of their legitimate episcopal authority, how much deception and mischief have marked this process -- and then when I think of our Lord's teachings on service and love and unity ... I weep," Ruff said in the letter.

A source at the bishops' conference said Ruff's speaking engagements were not arranged by the conference or its Secretariat for Divine Worship. Ruff reportedly was scheduled to speak about the missal in eight dioceses.

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