NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Los Angeles parish quietly accepts new missal translation

Joe Ferullo | Nov. 30, 2011 NCR Today

The new Mass entered our parish in Los Angeles with a whisper instead of a bang. That's because no one was sure of the words.

At those key parts of the changed liturgy, our usually outspoken congregation turned into a small-decibel muddle. A few old phrases ("And also with you") competed with the new, as people lowered their voices, stared at their missals and focused on once-familiar phrases now punctuated with a few alien words (eg. consubstantial).

But it wasn't that big of a deal. After Mass, few people remarked on it at all, and those who did approached the topic with a shrug: The changes are what the changes are, they said, but seemed unnecessary overall.

Some things read better, many others were clunkier, still others were more accurate but less poetic. ("Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again" is now the not-as-flowing-though-theologically-stricter "We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.")

Our pastor said it best in his homily. The first thing the church wants Catholics to do is to attend Mass, to be part of the celebration and to connect with God in the best way they can. That process, he said, is a very intimate and personal one. New words in the Mass may help, but the most important ingredient is what people in the pews bring to the experience each Sunday -- nothing can take the place of that.

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