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20 Sundays of 'And with your spirit'

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NCR Today

Editor's note: Blogger Isabella R. Moyer, columnist for The Prairie Messenger, is a new blogger for NCR Today. Read more about her.

We have worshipped with the New Roman Missal through one full season of Advent and Christmas, six Sundays in Ordinary Time, Lent and the Triduum, culminating in the glorious celebrations of Easter. How is it going for you?

I did not go gently into Advent. I had followed the process and the politics behind the new translation for several years. It angered me. It saddened me. Perhaps if I hadn't paid any attention, it would have been easier. I expected a big bang on Nov. 27, but the new missal landed with little fanfare or response from our pews. Does the silence reflect an open armed acceptance, simmering displeasure or merely indifference? It's hard to tell.

Change is often a challenge. I'm old enough to have experienced several major liturgical changes in my lifetime. As a Canadian, I'm proud of our bishops for supporting the use of the NRSV Bible in our Lectionary. The transition from the Jerusalem Bible was not easy, as well-known Scripture passages were reworded. (My husband teased me that I was demoted from being the "perfect wife" to merely a "capable wife" in Proverbs 31:10!) But the discomfort of learning anew was balanced with the knowledge that the NRSV translation honored a more inclusive approach to our English language. It was worth the time, energy and expense.

For me, the reasoning behind the New Roman Missal lacks any incentive to get past the initial discomfort of newness. Inclusive language is important to me. Faithfulness to a literal translation from the original Latin, even if it means a stilted rendition of the English, is not.

I have heard positive responses to the new translation. For some, the mere challenge of having to think before responding is a call to be more mindful in our worship. Others prefer the more formal language and worship styles of years past and have welcomed the new translation.

I'm trying my hardest to give this missal a chance, but it's a struggle. Will I ever get used to hearing "chalice" rather than "cup"? Can I remember to invite Jesus "under my roof"? Will I eventually embrace the renewed focus on our abject sinfulness with the requisite beating of the breast? Time will tell. Ask me again in a year or so.

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