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Study: Catholics differ on new Mass translations

by NCR Staff by Catholic News Service

Washington — Seven in 10 Mass-goers say that the new English translation of the Roman Missal introduced a year ago at Advent is a "good thing," a survey has shown, yet a strong minority, including bishops and priests, remain hesitant.

Half of respondents agreed that the translation is a "good thing," while 20 percent strongly agreed with that that assessment, the survey found.

Three in 10 Catholics said they disagreed with such an assessment. Seven percent said they strongly disagreed that the translations were good for the Catholic church.

The findings were based on the results of a survey conducted by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University. Responses derived from 1,047 self-identified Catholic adults with a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Acceptance of the new language was higher among Catholics who attended Mass weekly or more often than those who worshiped less often.

Worshippers who like the translations said the new wording inspired them to be more faithful in daily life, helped them feel closer to God and make it easier to participate in Mass.

The results were gratifying to Msgr. Richard B. Hilgartner, executive director of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Secretariat of Divine Worship.

He said the findings in the CARA study reflected the "positive feedback" his office had received in the year since the translations have been used.

Hilgartner acknowledged that he and bishops across the country have heard complaints about the translations, but that they have been in the minority.

Some priests have struggled with the new language found in the Mass prayers, he said. Some worshipers have told him the new language is too formal and hinders their worship, he added.

A nonscientific survey conducted by *U.S. Catholic*, a monthly magazine published by the Claretians, among its online readers found weak support for the translation.

The magazine said 1,231 priests and 1,208 visitors to its website responded to the survey.

Two-thirds of respondents said they dislike or "don't particularly like" the new translation. In contrast, 17 percent of respondents said they enjoyed the translation; 6 percent said they were unsure.

Among priests, 58 percent dislike the translation and another 17 percent "don't particularly like" the new wording.

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