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Dealing with the 2-year-old translation of the Eucharist

Thomas Reese | Dec. 2, 2013 NCR Today

How can priests and bishops deal with what many feel is a disastrous translation of the Roman missal implemented two years ago? That is the provocative question raised by Maryknoll Father William Grimm, the publisher of ucanews.com [1] based in Tokyo.

In "The liturgy that got lost in translation [2]," Father Grimm notes that the German bishops announced that they were not going to introduce a new translation of the Mass "because of wide opposition to the translation?s sins against the German language." What "English-speaking bishops were afraid to do in the previous papacy is now being done by Germans apparently emboldened by the pastoral approach of Pope Francis."

Grimm notes that "Surveys have shown that a huge majority of priests are still, after two years, united in their dissatisfaction with the maltranslation." As a result, many priests find the prayers so difficult to read that they rewrite them before celebrating Mass, something he predicted would happen.

"What?s next?" he asks. He continues:

"The 1998 translation that was meant to correct the hastily done 1973 translation has already been approved unanimously by all the English-speaking bishops? conferences of the world, but was suppressed by curial officials who were not even English speakers. So, why should not some conferences declare that translation valid for use in their countries? Failing that, individual bishops might take that initiative on their authority as leaders of worship in their dioceses.

"Otherwise, my next prediction will come true. Priests will increasingly on their own initiative begin using the 1998 translation once they get a copy, available for downloading [3] after only a few minutes? search on the Internet. Or, they will dig out their 1973 Sacramentaries....

"It is time for English-speaking bishops to learn from their German confreres and take back responsibility for the life and worship of their people."

What do you think?

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