

M

y dear friends,

This summer the Diocese of Kalamazoo and the Diocese of Saginaw welcome new diocesan bishops. Bishop Paul J. Bradley, the auxiliary bishop of Pittsburgh, has been appointed to succeed Bishop James A. Murray who is retiring, having served as bishop of Kalamazoo since 1998. Bishop Robert J. Carlson, who has served as bishop of Saginaw since 2005, has been appointed archbishop of St. Louis. He is being succeeded by Bishop Joseph Cistone, an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. I invite your prayers for these two dioceses and their new bishops. On June 21, four years ago, I received the call from the Apostolic Nuncio telling me that the Holy Father had appointed me to be the bishop of Grand Rapids. I continue to be grateful for the opportunity to serve as your bishop; for the warm and gracious welcome, the support and encouragement I have received.

Our Holy Father has announced that June 2009 begins the Year of the Priesthood, a special time for the whole church to reflect on and cherish the gift that God has given to us in the priesthood – which is the priesthood of Jesus Christ. Cardinal John Dearden once said that for him “the priesthood has been a time of high adventure.” Those thoughts are my own as well.

Each year the bishops of the United States meet to discuss issues of concern to all the dioceses of the United States. Our fall meeting is in November and is held in Baltimore. Each year, the spring meeting is held in various cities throughout the country. This year’s spring meeting is being held in San Antonio, Texas. Life issues and educational matters are almost always part of the agenda. Again, this year the agenda will include matters relating to the remaining new translations of the Roman Missal we will use in our parishes.

In 2002 the Latin version of the new Roman Missal for use in the Latin rite was issued. Since that time, various national groups of bishops and their staffs have been working on translations. In San Antonio in November, the bishops will be voting on those texts that have not yet been approved. A major effort has been made to have all the English speaking countries and other language groups use a common text.

Bishop Arthur J. Seratelli,  
the chairman of the Bishops’

Committee on Divine Worship, made the following remarks that are worth sharing with you:

“Keep in mind ...

As we await the final modifications and amendments that will come, at this point, we should recall a number of facts:

1. The new texts will be used in many different English speaking countries. Therefore, the language will not bear the cultural stamp or preference of one particular country. This calls for certain openness on the part of all of us to use words that may be understood, but are not commonly used in our own particular country.
2. Since we use the language of the liturgy to address God, it should be intelligible. This does not, however, mean every word has to be part of the active vocabulary of everyone.
3. In the liturgy, we should use a noble language that lifts us up as well as honors God. From the earliest Latin texts from the 4th century, the style of the language used in prayer differed from street language. In the new translations, the noble, heightened style of liturgical prayer is certainly a gain for all.
4. When we receive the new Roman Missal for the English-speaking world, we will have a work that has aimed at an exact, though not slavishly literal translation.



➤ Bishop Walter A. Hurley anoints the forehead of Shannon Massey (center) during the sacramental celebration of confirmation Sunday, March 15 at the Cathedral of Saint Andrew. Massey was one of more than 1,500 young people from throughout the diocese to be confirmed at the cathedral this spring.

5. The new Missal will provide prayers that are “marked by sound doctrine, exact in wording and free from all ideological influence” so that “the sacred mysteries of salvation and the indefectible faith of the Church are efficaciously transmitted by means of human language ...” (*Liturgiam authenticam* 3)
6. The new Missal will come as the result of years of growth and understanding. It will improve our liturgical prayer, but it will not be perfect. Perfection will come when the liturgy on earth gives way to that of heaven where all the saints praise God with one voice.
7. When put in use, the common English text for all English speaking countries will reaffirm in a tangible manner the breadth of our Catholic identity.”

It appears that the final versions of the new translations are at least 18 months away. Once the final texts are approved, there will be a significant effort to help all understand the meaning and reasons for the revisions.

May you have a restful and blessed summer.

Sincerely yours in the Lord,  
Bishop Walter Hurley