

Understanding Our Liturgy Class for Monday February 28th, 2011

Tying up loose ends from last week:

- The mode of Christ's Eucharistic presence (not cannibalizing but can really dishonor him)
- Purgatory
 - I simply wanted to talk about the spiritual effects of the mass and I would have been derelict in my duty if I were to omit talking about its benefits for the dead.
 - 2 Macc 12:45 (Even before the NT era, sacrifice was made for the dead and it continued in the NT era).
 - We know that it's not that we are praying for people who would, apart from our prayers, go to hell. What is it then we are doing when we pray for the dead? And then if we can see also that there can still be some sort of punishment and/or judgment after forgiveness (Gen 3, 2 Sam 12:13-14, Psalm 99:8, 1 Peter 4:6), then a post-mortem purgation becomes a very satisfactory way of explaining the ancient custom of praying and offering sacrifice for the dead.
 - *Lex orandi, lex credendi*. It's not like we can get rid of this practice. It is totally engrained in the Liturgy. We didn't make it up. We received it.
 - It is a great work of faith and charity/mercy to bury the dead and pray for them. We are not just ministering to the family members of the deceased but also to the deceased.
- "Lord I am not worthy to have you come under my roof" (Mt 8:8)
 - This prayer is not found in liturgical books until the eleventh century, but Augustine used the text to discuss spiritual communion (Epistle 54) (cf. three forms of communion)
 - The Lord does for us what he did *not* do for the centurion. He risks being defiled by coming into our dwelling. This is his amazing condescension.
- The "Protestant" ending of the Our Father
 - Can be found in various liturgies from the earliest centuries (cf. *The Didache* [1st cen.] and *The Apostolic Constitutions* [3rd to 4th cen.]).
 - It is part of the Catholic liturgical heritage but was not in the Roman Rite at least for the past few centuries. It was added in the reform of the Roman Rite after V-II.
 - It appears in some ancient biblical ms traditions (Mt 6:9-13), such as the ones used for the Greek text behind the translation of the Protestant King James Bible. Thus it got into the Protestant tradition. The Vulgate doesn't have it.

General Principles of the Translation Philosophy exhibited by *Liturgiam authenticam*:

- The translations of liturgical texts should be an efficacious medium for the transmission of the mysteries of salvation and the indefectible faith of the Church (LA, 3). These mysteries and this faith are veiled realities that ultimately transcend our current experience. They will be fully unveiled for us only in the world to come. Therefore the primary aim of the translator is not the creation of a text that is fully transparent to us, a text exhibiting language and modes of speech and expression totally commensurate with our personal or current cultural experience. The Revelation expressed and made present in the Liturgy is the norm for our culture, and not vice-versa. It would in fact be strange if a translation of the Liturgy did not strike us as being out of step with our ordinary speech.
- "In preparing all translations of the liturgical books, the greatest care is to be taken to maintain the identity and unitary expression of the Roman Rite". A vernacular translation of the Roman rite is not "to be considered an avenue for the creation of new varieties or families of rites" (LA, 5). In translating our Liturgy into the vernacular, we are not setting out to create an American Rite based on the Roman Rite. Rather, we are taking our Roman Rite Liturgy and rendering it into English. In this way our communion is confirmed with other Roman Rite Catholics throughout the world, no matter what their language. Our communion with Roman Rite Catholics across time is also maintained.
- Translations and paraphrases, while having much in common, are two essentially different kinds of things. Therefore, the liturgical text "must be translated integrally and in the most exact manner, without omissions or additions in terms of content, and without paraphrase or glosses" (LA, 20). Not creativity, but fidelity and exactness are the aim.
- "The translator should strive to maintain the denotation, or primary sense of the words and expressions found in the original text, as well as their connotation, that is, the finer shades of meaning or emotion

evoked by them, and thus to ensure that the text be open to other orders of meaning that may have been intended in the original text" (LA, 52).

- cf. "dew of your Spirit" and "my soul shall be healed"
- "The translation should not restrict the full sense of the original text within narrower limits" (LA, 32).
 - the Trinitarian ending to the Collects (we *pray* this through or God will *grant* this through?)

Principles of *Liturgiam authenticam* that Govern Choice of Individual Words or Vocabulary:

- The translations need to use "words of praise and adoration that foster reverence and gratitude in the face of God's majesty, his power, his mercy and his transcendent nature" (LA, 25). All Catholic liturgical rites exhibit a reverential and sacral diction that safeguards and fosters the attitude of faith. To be true to what they are in fact translating, translators need to choose words that maintain this diction.
 - cf. Easter Vigil, *Collect*, "this *most sacred night*" (*sacratissimam noctem*)
- The translated texts "should be free of an overly servile adherence to prevailing modes of expression" (LA, 27).
- Texts, which seem to us to be inelegant or out of step with our current sensibilities, should not be "sanitized" or altered (LA, 27 and 29).
 - cf. Easter Vigil, *Collect*: "stir up in your Church a spirit of adoption..." (the Church's tendency and desire to adopt children? See Rom 8:15 in Vg.; *υιοθεσία*: *made* a son...not natural sonship)
 - Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, *Collect*: "pardon what conscience dreads"
- "The signs and images of the texts" should be allowed to speak for themselves, and the translations "should not attempt to render too explicit that which is implicit in the original" (LA, 27).
 - "Lord God of Power and Might" vs. "Lord God of Hosts"
- "The system of words and patterns of speech which the Roman Liturgy has taken from the Sacred Scriptures and ecclesial tradition – especially the writings of the Fathers – should be preserved. Here the tradition of scriptural translations and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* are important guides for the translators" (LA, 50).
 - cf. First Week of Lent: Saturday, *Collect* ("the one thing necessary", Lk 10:42)
- "On the other hand, a variety of vocabulary in the original text should give rise, insofar as possible, to a corresponding variety in the translations. The translation may be weakened and made trite, for example, by the use of a single vernacular term for rendering differing Latin terms..." (LA, 51)
 - cf. the varying forms of addressing God, such as *Domine*, *Deus*, *Omnipotens aeternae Deus*, *Pater*
- Because the subject matter of liturgical texts is principally divine realities—the mysteries of grace—and not our own interior dispositions, a vernacular translation should avoid "psychologizing", especially a "tendency to replace words treating of the theological virtues by others expressing merely human emotions" (LA, 19 and 54).
 - cf. First Week of Lent: Saturday, *Collect* ("charity")
- "Whenever the text preserves words taken from other ancient languages...consideration should be given to preserving the same words in the new vernacular translation, at least as one option among others. Indeed, a careful respect for the original text will sometimes require that this be done" (LA, 23).
 - cf. the Hebrew words *Alleluia* and *Amen*, the Greek phrase *Kyrie eleison*

Principles of *Liturgiam authenticam* that Govern Syntax and Rhetorical Style:

- "The connection between various expressions manifested by subordinate and relative clauses, the ordering of words and various forms of parallelism is to be maintained as completely as possible..." (LA, 57a)
- The translators should express in the vernacular the "theological significance of words expressing causality, purpose or consequence" in the original (LA, 57c)
- The rhetorical devices found in the original, even if they are not common to everyday speech, should be maintained in the translation. Such devices are: a) Recurring and recognizable patterns of syntax and style, b) a solemn or exalted tone, c) alliteration and assonance, d) concrete and vivid images, e) repetition, f) parallelism and contrast, g) and a rhythm and lyricism often associated with poetry (LA, 59).

The 1969 philosophy of translation put a premium on bringing the text of the Liturgy into contemporary modes of thought and speech. *Liturgiam authenticam*, on the other hand, assumes that there is a certain *irreducible* gap between the ancient text and the modern worshipper. If you try to bring the Roman Rite 100% into the world of the contemporary worshipper, you will lose a good amount of what the Rite is saying. The only option then is to leave the gap in place and let the audience try to make progress towards getting their selves into the thought world of the text. The newer more formal translation makes the contemporary audience do just this. It doesn't do everything for the audience because it knows that it can't. The audience has to work at crossing over out of their contemporary modes of thought and speech and into an unfamiliar realm of thought and speech. Preserving that gap is the only way of preserving the true meaning of the text, a meaning which is inescapably polyvalent and informed with multiple levels of connotation. Thus mystagogy is a necessity.