

and particular Churches, both Eastern and Western, into a harmonious unity that transcends the boundaries of any single region."⁴⁷

34. The Roman talent for first recognizing excellence in other cultures, and then assimilating the very same property into its own life would foreshadow the Latin Church's ability to preach the message of the Gospel to non-Roman cultures, while at the same time welcoming into the Church any features of worship from the local community which could be harmoniously combined with her own. This double movement constitutes an extremely important quality of the Roman Rite: its intrinsic capacity for adaptation to different cultures and to the assimilation of the cultural resources of various peoples. Taking up Christ's command to baptize all nations (Mt 28:19-20), the Church in the modern world brings to every culture a desire to avoid imposing a "rigid uniformity in matters which do not involve the faith or the good of the whole community. Rather does she respect and foster the qualities and talents of the various races and nations. Anything in these people's way of life which is not indissolubly bound up with superstition and error she studies with sympathy, and, if possible, preserves intact. She sometimes even admits such things into the Liturgy itself, provided they harmonize with its true and authentic spirit."⁴⁸

35. In short, the Roman Rite, from its origins, has benefited from those elements of Roman culture that were cosmopolitan in nature, embracing religious expressions from diverse peoples, even while avoiding any inclination towards syncretism. The early Church found in Roman polity a sure way of bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a world already attuned to Roman culture. It has been suggested, for example, that while the Roman mind had developed its imagination principally for establishing very fixed notions of duty, piety and trust in the providence of God, it was nevertheless highly receptive to external ideas that could be integrated into already well-grounded Roman thinking and practice. Such a tendency would allow for a periodically

adapted Liturgy, as has been, in fact, the case in the Roman Rite in a manner somewhat unique among the various rites in the Church.

Within liturgical translations in general, first place is to be given to biblical language and expression

36. As noted already, the principal liturgical language of the Church is the biblical Word through which "God speaks continually with the Spouse of his beloved Son."⁴⁹ By the use of the Scriptures, most especially in the Liturgy, "the Holy Spirit leads the Christian faithful into all truth and causes the word of Christ to dwell abundantly within them, and [by the Word] the Church perpetuates and transmits all that she herself is and all that she believes, even as she offers the prayers of all the faithful to God."⁵⁰ As a result, it is essential for every translator of the Liturgy to be alert to the presence of biblical language and imagery as it is found in the liturgical texts of the Roman Rite.

37. Most especially, translators must become familiar with the two principal ways in which the Roman Rite uses Scripture texts: (a) directly, as in the readings and antiphons chosen for the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist, and (b) indirectly, as when the language of a given prayer is redolent of biblical words or phrases taken from the *Vetus Latina*, the Vulgate or the Neo-Vulgate. The first characteristic to be studied in translating every liturgical text in the Roman Rite should be its use of scriptural language in any form. The failure to detect biblical imagery or allusions in a given liturgical text often results in the translation of a prayer that can seem disconnected from the celebration in which it is offered. A thorough grounding in the Latin of the Neo-Vulgate, as found both in the texts listed in the *Ordo lectionum Missae* and the *Missale Romanum*, is therefore indispensable for the translator, since it is principally this Latin text of the Scriptures which now informs the thematic use of biblical material throughout the Roman Rite. In the Neo-Vulgate, one may

⁴⁷ *Liturgy in authenticam*, n. 5; *Varietas legitimae*, n. 17; *Instituto Generalis Missalis Romani*, n. 397.

⁴⁸ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 37.

⁴⁹ *Liturgy in authenticam*, n. 19.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

find a carefully chosen balance between the preservation of traditional Christian Latinity, on the one hand, and critical biblical scholarship, on the other, and in this respect it might be considered a model of biblical translation for the Roman Liturgy. Consequently, it is in the comparison of the text of the Neo-Vulgate with the liturgical texts of biblical derivation that the translator may also find a dependable guide to the degree of textual correspondence that might still be prudently maintained between the translated liturgical texts and the vernacular biblical editions used for liturgical reading. Every biblical translation used within the Liturgy must take account of the text of the Neo-Vulgate⁵¹ and carry the approval of the Bishops' Conference of the territory in which it is intended for use, as well as the *recognitio* of the Holy See specifically for its liturgical use in that place.⁵²

Example. This selection from the Preface for the Mass for the Dedication of a Church and an Altar (n. 75) demonstrates not only the many Latin biblical phrases from *Eph* 2:19-22 found in its composition (as italicized below), but also how these same phrases can be translated into language adapted from the approved Lectionary for Mass.

Latin Text (2002)	Draft Translation
<i>Ecclesiam autem sanctam</i>	Though you have established
<i>constituitis civitatem,</i>	the Church as a holy city,
<i>super fundamentum Apostolorum</i>	built upon the foundation of
<i>aedificatam,</i>	the Apostles
<i>summo angulari lapide ipso Christo Iesu;</i>	with Christ Jesus himself its
<i>sed electis construendam lapidibus,</i>	chief cornerstone;
<i>Spiritu vivificatis, coagmentatis caritate,</i>	yet it is to be built of chosen
<i>ubi tu per infinita saecula omnia</i>	stones,
<i>omnibus eris</i>	brought to life by the Spirit,
<i>et Christi lumen fulgebit perenne.</i>	and bound together by charity,
	where you will be all in all for
	endless ages,
	and the light of Christ will be
	radiant for ever.

38. There is, in fact, almost no text in the celebration of the Mass which is not drawn either directly from the Bible (such as the Epistles, responsorial psalm, alleluia verse, antiphons, the Gospel, the *Sancus*, Our Father, *Agnus Dei*, and the *Ecce Agnus Dei*) or which does not take its inspiration from themes found in the Bible, using elements of biblical language as well (such as the orations, the preface, the Eucharistic Prayers and various private prayers for the Priest in the Communion Rite). Translators must first relate liturgical expression to biblical language in order to establish whether its primary meaning might be taken from the Scriptures, or at least from biblical connotation.

39. Hence, what is said regarding the preparation of Lectionaries for Mass⁵³ may also apply with equal force to the translation of liturgical texts which are biblically based, in which case great care should be taken that their translations are capable of expressing “the traditional Christological, typological and spiritual”⁵⁴ senses common to the Roman Rite. In order to achieve this goal, translators must “pay close attention to the history of interpretation that may be drawn from citations of biblical texts in the writings of the Fathers of the Church, and also from those biblical images more frequently found in Christian art and hymnody.”⁵⁵ Prayers translated without taking account of this principle risk a loss of connection with the rites they accompany, and a corresponding frustration for the participation of clergy and people alike.

Examples.

1. Generally, the liturgical text should follow as closely as possible the biblical version approved for use in the territory for which the liturgical translation is intended, adapting it more or less in the same manner that the Latin liturgical text may have adapted the Latin biblical text (cf. *Liturgiam authenticam*, n. 49). Such harmonization of texts may also work in the opposite direction: that is, if it is lectionary texts themselves that are currently being revised, they may be edited in view of rendering a specific text more apt for its prescribed use elsewhere as an antiphon, responsory, etc., provided that the resulting text remains faithful to the original biblical text as traditionally interpreted. The

51 *Ibid.*, n. 41.
52 *Ibid.*, n. 68.

53 *Ibid.*, n. 41.
54 *Ibid.*
55 *Ibid.*

following renderings of the Communion antiphon for the Solemnity of the Annunciation help to demonstrate how the different Lectionary versions of biblical texts may demand careful attention to their Christological and Marian uses within the Liturgy:

Latin text of antiphon (taken from *Is* 7:14): *Ecce virgo concipiet et pariet Filium, et vocabitur nomen eius Emmanuel.*

Revised New American Bible: The virgin shall be with child and bear a son and shall name him Emmanuel.

Jerusalem Bible: The maiden is with child and will soon give birth to a son whom she will call Emmanuel.

2. *Liturgiam authenticam*, n. 49: "In the translation of such texts, the translator would best be guided by the manner of expression that is characteristic of the version of the Sacred Scriptures approved for liturgical use in the territories for which the translation is being prepared. At the same time, care should be taken to avoid weighting down the text by clumsily over-elaborating the more delicate biblical allusions."

The translation of the revised Rites of Ordination reflect both the density of biblical references in their texts, as well as a respect for the manner in which the translation of scriptural allusions are made in the style of the *Lectionary for Mass*. The following example, taken from the Prayer of Ordination for Deacons, demonstrates this point.

De Ordinatione Episcopii

Presbyterorum et

Diaconorum (1989), n. 207

Sic in Ecclesiae tuae exordis

Apostoli Filii tui, Spiritu Sancto

auctore,

septem viros boni testimonii

delegerunt,

quos in cotidiano ministerio

adjuvarent.

ut ipsi orationi et praedicationi

verbi

abundantius possent instare,

electis illis viros

per orationem et manus

impositionem

mensarum ministerium

commisserunt.

Biblical ref:

Translation

And so, in the first days of your Church,

through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit,

your Sons Apostles appointed

seven men of good repute,

to assist them in the daily

ministry,

that they might devote

themselves more fully

to prayer and the preaching of

the word.

By prayer and the laying on of

hands,

they entrusted to these

chosen men

the ministry of serving at

table.

40. In certain cases, translators ought to preserve venerable terms from the Old or New Testament in their original languages, rather than in translation.⁵⁶ Examples of this include "Alleluia," "Amen," and various Aramaic expressions from the New Testament such as "Maranatha!", similarly to the case of the Greek words drawn from the *Trisagion* within the *Improperia* for Good Friday, or the *Kyrie eleison* of the Mass.

Example. Use of Greek in the Vernacular Editions of the Liturgy

Liturgiam authenticam, n. 23: "Whenever the biblical or liturgical text preserves words taken from other ancient languages (as, for example, the words *Alleluia* and *Amen*, the Aramaic words contained in the New Testament, the Greek words drawn from the *Trisagion* which are recited in the *Improperia* of Good Friday, and the *Kyrie eleison* of the Order of Mass, as well as many proper names), 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."

In the *Improperia* for Good Friday, the Greek strophes of the *Trisagion* could be placed alongside the English translation of their Latin originals, each sung to appropriate melodies, while taking account also of the fact that the words of the text are based on the 6th Chapter of the Prophet Micah:

Missale Romanum (2002)

Popule meus, quid feci tibi?

Aur in quo contristavi te? Responde

mihi!

Quia eduxi te de terra Aegypti:

parasti Crucem Salvatorii tui.

Hágios o Theós: Sanctus Deus.

Hágios Ischyros: Sanctus Fortis.

Hágios Athánatos: elíson himás

Sanctus Immortalis, miserere nobis.

Draft Translation

My people, what have I done to you?

Or how have I offended you?

Answer me!

For I led you out of the land of Egypt,

but you prepared a Cross for your Savior.

Hágios o Theós: Holy God!

Hágios Ischyros: Holy and strong!

Hágios Athánatos: elíson himás

Holy Immortal One! Have mercy on us!

56 *Liturgiam authenticam*, n. 23.

The Latin texts of the *editioes typicae* are to be translated fully and accurately, and paraphrase is to be avoided

41. It is always the task of the translator to render liturgical texts fully and accurately⁵⁷ from the Latin found in the *editio typica*. Translations may not be made from a translation of the *editio typica*, lest the resulting text be at a remove as regards the meaning of the original. Though translators may rearrange “the wording, the syntax and the style [of the original] in such a way as to propose a flowing vernacular text suitable to the rhythm of popular prayer, the original texts, in so far as possible, must be translated . . . without omission or addition in terms of their content.”⁵⁸

42. Accurate and full translations imply that the Latin original must reveal its meanings to a qualified translator. However, the competent reading of a Latin text relies in large measure on the degree to which the translator can understand the context in which the Latin was composed. By “context” here is meant every aspect of textual location, including origins, sources, grammatical and theological syntaxes, the history of vocabulary and composition, and tone and nuance of texts, but most importantly, the theological meaning of a prayer derived from its place within the Church’s Liturgy.

43. In light of this, every translator must become a student of the text as if it were a teaching voice which can be heard and understood only slowly and with great practice. In short, the translator must approach the text on its own terms to discover above all the meaning intended by the Church as its author. It cannot be hoped that this search for the “inner voice” of the text, as it were, will be easy or quick, but instead will require a sustained effort on the part of the translator and the continued development of the many related skills which, when applied together, make possible a rendering of “the authentic voice of the Church” at prayer.⁵⁹ Translators are reminded that the translation

of “liturgical texts requires not only a rare degree of expertise, but also a spirit of prayer and of trust in the divine assistance granted not only to the translators, but to the Church herself throughout the whole process leading to the definitive approbation of the texts.”⁶⁰

44. No part of any liturgical text, then, can be simply omitted as unnecessary, excessive or repetitive by a translator. Every word and concept presented in an original text must be fully accounted for within a translation, even when the language into which the text is being translated must be pushed beyond its normal limits of expression to do so.

Example. The accurate rendering of the Nicene Creed is an especially challenging task for liturgical translation, in that several of its words and phrases have no simple equivalents in modern vernacular expression. As a result, their style in translation is unique by comparison.

Latin Text	Draft Translation
Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto	[And] by the Holy Spirit [he] was incarnate
ex Maria Virgine, et homo factus est.	from the Virgin Mary, and became man.

Translators are therefore encouraged to use every tool of philology, linguistics, stylistometrics, history, and rhetorical and stylistic analyses to accomplish their task. Note that in the present case it is necessary to consider whether a slight re-ordering of phrases may be necessary precisely to communicate the same theological content in the English as in the Latin, for otherwise the phrase “by the Holy Spirit from the Virgin Mary” may confuse the hearer by seeming to express a misleading notion of the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. The capitalized initial letter of the translation as well as the pronoun “he” have been placed within brackets here because the need for their presence or absence here in the translation will depend on how the preceding syntax of the Creed has been constructed.

45. Paraphrase, as a method of restating a perceived meaning in terms other than those found in the original Latin, is not to be equated

⁵⁷ *Liturgiam authenticam*, nn. 20-21.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, n. 20.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, n. 7.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, n. 75.

with translation.⁶¹ Paraphrase aims to convey meaning directly and quickly in a given language, often for purposes of summarization or explanation. Moreover, the systematic use of paraphrase in liturgical translation inevitably results in a cumulatively serious loss of meaning to texts such as those in the Roman Missal.

The distinctive vocabulary of the Roman Rite is to be preserved

46. As a function of inculturation, the early Roman Rite, like many of the most ancient Rites of the Church, simultaneously adopted biblical terms received through the preaching of the Apostles, and modified existing pagan religious terms to express the mysteries of redemption through Christ. In particular, the borrowing of words from pre-Christian sources gave a distinctive vocabulary to the Roman Rite. This fact, together with the impact of the Latinity of the many different translated Latin versions of the Scriptures that were in local use in the early Church, made the Roman Rite capable of expressing itself in a “coherent system of words and patterns of speech.”⁶²

The vocabulary of the Roman Rite

47. The Fathers of the Latin West in particular continued the development of a distinctive vocabulary for the Roman Rite through their various writings, especially in homilies preached during the rites themselves, in refutation of errors which arose in contradiction to true sacramental practice, and in biblical commentaries. Accordingly, “the manner of translating the liturgical books [of the Roman Rite] should foster a correspondence between the biblical text itself and the liturgical texts of ecclesiastical composition which contain biblical words or allusions.”⁶³

48. This can be an especially complex task when the vocabulary and syntaxes of the versions of Sacred Scripture in use prior to the publication of *Liturgiam authenticam* were originally prepared without reference to the Neo-Vulgate and without consideration for the

liturgical contexts in which they are to be read. The ideal is that the broad consistency in Latin terms found in the Roman Rite, taken largely from the reading of the Bible in Latin, and “consecrated . . . by ecclesiastical tradition, especially the writings of the Fathers of the Church,”⁶⁴ should be reflected in the vernacular translation of both lectionaries and other liturgical books.

The vocabulary of the Roman Rite in translation

49. To the extent that it is possible, the terminology and sacred vocabulary distinctive of the Roman Rite should be maintained even in vernacular translations. This general rule applies not only to the language of the rites themselves, but also to words for “liturgical ministers, vessels, furnishings and vesture for similar persons or things pertaining to everyday life and usage.”⁶⁵

Example. The English translation of the Latin text below provides a ready example of the way in which specialized vocabulary of the Roman Rite can be preserved in the vernacular.

Instituto Generalis Missalis Romani (2002), n. 329:

De iudicio Conferentiae Episcoporum, actis ab Apostolica Sede recognitis, vasasacra confici possunt etiam alis ex materis solidis et, secundum communem aestimationem cuiusque regionis, nobilibus, ex gr. ebeno aut alis lignis durioribus, dummodo usui sacra aptae sint. Hoc in casu, praefertur semper materiae quae facile non frangantur neque corruptantur. Quod valet pro omnibus vasis quae ad hostias recipiendas destinata sunt, uti patena, pyxis, theca, ostensorium et alia huiusmodi.

According to the judgment of the Bishops' Conference and after the Conference's decisions have received the *recognitio* of the Apostolic See, sacred vessels may also be made from other solid materials that, according to the common estimation in each region, are precious (for example, ebony, or other hard woods), provided that such materials are suited to sacred use and do not easily break or deteriorate. This applies to all vessels intended to hold the hosts, such as the paten, the ciborium, the pyx, the monstrance and other things of this kind.

61 *Liturgiam authenticam*, n. 60.

62 *Ibid.*, n. 49.

63 *Ibid.*

64 *Ibid.*

65 *Ibid.*, n. 50c.

50. The effort to maintain the distinctive vocabulary of the Roman Rite in vernacular translation may also be challenged by the limitations of the language into which the translation is made. This is especially true wherever a "particular Latin term has a rich meaning that is difficult to render into a modern language (such as the words *munus*, *famulus*, *consubstantialis*, *propitius*, etc.) Various solutions may be employed in the translations."⁶⁶ It is possible to achieve this, for example, by using more than one word to translate a single term, by coining a new word, or by "the adaptation, transcription, or transliteration of the same term into a language that is different from that of the original text, or the use of an already existing word which may bear various meanings."⁶⁷

51. Caution should be exercised so as to avoid the common mistake of providing an *explanation* rather than a *translation* for such terms. In addition, the difficulties which technical terms in the Roman Rite present to translators are often the occasion for renderings which are verbose, ambiguous in meaning and inconsistent with the spirit and usage of other terms in the same rite. Translators must beware lest innovative solutions to individual problematic terms unintentionally result in imprecise or incomplete renderings.

52. With respect to the translation of terms of great importance within the Liturgy, and which also are commonly used in preaching, teaching of the Magisterium and catechesis, "an appropriate degree of coordination should be sought"⁶⁸ between the liturgical translation of these same terms and the "authoritative vernacular translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*."⁶⁹ Because the Liturgy serves as a source of understanding for Christian belief, the ancient adage, *lex orandi, lex credendi* must be borne in mind in developing the necessary consistency between liturgical and catechetical texts.

66 *Ibid.*, n. 53.

67 *Ibid.*

68 *Ibid.*, n. 50a.

69 *Ibid.*

The manner of expression in the Roman Rite is to be maintained in the vernacular (*Liturgiam authenticam*, n. 57)

53. The manner of expression found in the Roman Rite is varied and complex. Perhaps its most prominent feature is the use of extended subordination in the creation of complex prayer texts composed of a single sentence. The successful translation of the constitutive elements of these sentences relies, in the first place, on the translator's familiarity with the theological, rhetorical, vocabulary, tonal and syntactical components of Roman prayers generally, and secondly, with an ability to render both their forms and contents into an equivalent vernacular.

Single-sentence prayers

54. As mentioned above, the Roman Rite's use of a single-sentence form for many of its prayers seems to have been adopted from pre-Christian Roman prayers in which extended subordination serves to order all of the elements of the sentence to express a dependence upon God as the source and end of all saving action. Extended subordination in the Roman single-sentence prayer helps to emphasize what is important by clearly labeling what is secondary or subordinate to a main thought. Typically, Latin signals this by the use of conjunctives, as well as historic, causal or successive sequence with *ut* or *cum*,⁷⁰ all in an effort to underline the subordination of such expressions to the principal thought of the speaker of the prayer. In addition, such clauses are further subordinated through a sequence of tenses which links all action to that solely of the main clause, with every phrase dominated often by the power of a single governing verb.

55. This practice is at odds with what which is found often in ancient Greek, as well as in modern languages, which generally make more extensive use of coordinate sentences in stating what is secondary. The principal difficulty faced in translating the extended subordination of single-sentence Latin into coordinate sentences of many vernaculars is the almost inevitable loss of connection, cumulatively, between

70 Cf. *Liturgiam authenticam*, n. 57c.

secondary ideas along with their subordination to a principal notion. As a result, many vernaculars are composed with coordinate sentences that are inadvertently made to assume the structure of an informal argument, rather than a unified prayer with an address, a petition with its motivation, and a closing doxology. Even if it has perhaps become less frequently used in contemporary English than in the past, subordination remains comprehensible to the speaker and hearer of English, and therefore should be used to the extent that is necessary in order to translate accurately the prayers of the Roman Rite.

56. The single-sentence Roman style seeks to unify the address to God, the request made to him out of an admission of dependency and the formal closure, all forged into a single, unbroken act of prayer.

Example. The following translation of the Collect for the Mass of the Eleventh Sunday of the year demonstrates the principal characteristics of extended subordination within the single-sentence, Roman style of prayer. Special attention should be given to understanding how, with the exception of the address to God and its corresponding verb of petition, all other elements are subordinated, one to another.

Latin Text (2002)	Draft Translation
Deus, qui humani generis utramque substantiam presentium munerum et alimento vegetas et renovas sacramento, tribue, quaesumus, ut eorum et corporibus nostris subsidium non desit et mentibus.	O God, who in the gifts presented here nourish with food and renew with sacrament the twofold nature of the human race, grant, we pray, that their sustenance may not fail us in body or in mind.
Per Christum.	Through Christ our Lord.

The relationship of rhetorical form and content

57. Two other elements of the manner of expression of the Roman Rite are also found prominently in the single-sentence prayers of the orations. The first is *antithesis* or the juxtaposition of contrasting ideas, usually done simply and without elaboration. The second,

aphorism, or a conciseness of expression, nearly always accompanies and sharpens antithesis. These two rhetorical forms are practically inseparable when occurring in single-sentence Roman prayers and, when accurately translated, convey key elements of the unique tone of the Roman expression in the Liturgy. Early Roman prayers illustrate this clearly.

Example. The following prayer, taken from the Liturgy for the Sixth Day within the Octave of Christmas, demonstrates both the *antithesis* and the *aphorism* discussed above; typical of Roman prayers in this text, *antithesis* is evident in the contrast, for example, between *new* and *age-old*; between *free us and enslavement*, while *aphorism* is found in the shortened expression, *your Only-Begotten*, and in the compactness of the phrase, *new birth in the flesh*. While *aphorism*, in particular, may sometimes be impossible to render exactly into the vernacular, account should be taken of the effect achieved by such a device in the original text; including the fact that it gently coaxes the hearer to reflection upon the compactly and, in some instances, elliptically worded expression, and thus to cultivate an active posture of listening.⁷¹ Accordingly, the translator should be reticent to supply extra words in a well-intentioned but perhaps unhelpful attempt to clarify the text.

Latin Text (2002)	Draft Translation
Concede, quaesumus, omnipotens Deus, ut nos Unigeniti tui nova per carnem natiuitas liberet, quos sub peccati iugo vetusta seruitus tenet.	Grant, we pray, almighty God: that the new birth in the flesh of your Only-Begotten may free us who are held bound in age-old enslavement under the yoke of sin.
Per Dominum.	Through our Lord.

58. It is significant to note that the orations newly introduced into the *Missale Romanum* after the Second Vatican Council have adopted this same ancient Roman style of liturgical expression, especially for Postcommunion Prayers, thereby preserving a continuity in style and form to the Roman Rite even during its most recent renewal.

⁷¹ Cf. *Liturgiam authenticam*, n. 59.

Example. The following example, taken from the Postcommunion prayer for the optional Memorial of St. Paul of the Cross (October 19th), demonstrates very clearly the five component parts traditional in a Roman oration. In addition, the extended subordination typical of the Roman style, together with a variety of rhetorical devices used to enhance the delivery of the prayer (such as traditional word order which places greatest emphasis on words arranged first and last in key phrases) help to restyle this prayer over its previous form in the 1962 Missal.

<i>Missale Romanum</i> of 1962	<i>Missale Romanum</i> of 2002
Sumpsimus, Domine, divinum sacramentum,	Deus, qui, cunctis mysterium
immensae caritatus tuae memoriae perpetuum;	in beato Paulo mirabiliter illustrasti,
tribue, quaesumus:	concede propitius, ut, ex hoc sacrificio roborati,
ut, sancti Pauli meritis et imitatione, aquam de fontibus tuis hauriamus	Christo fideles haereamus, et in Ecclesia ad salutem omnium operemur.
in vitam aeternam salientem, et tuam sacratissimam passionem cordibus nostris impressam moribus et vita teamur.	Per Christum,
Qui vivis	

59. Translators must always strive to note the connection between rhetorical form and content in liturgical prayer. Before any liturgical text is rendered, its rhetorical form must be discerned in order to explore how the theological meaning of the prayer is affected by the form it assumes in the Latin, and further, how, in the translation which is to follow, the same relationship between content and form might be preserved.⁷² It is especially important not to discount the theological meaning of a given phrase or element of a prayer under the supposition that its presence is due solely to an antiquated form or an undesirable rhetorical convention,⁷³ as if such elements had no role in expressing “the mysteries of the faith and the proper disposition of the Christian soul.”⁷⁴

⁷² *Liturgiam authenticam*, n. 57a.
⁷³ *Ibid.*, n. 55.
⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

60. Translators have in the past frequently dropped phrases which are connected with the Latin *cursum* as irrelevant to modern expression and therefore to the content of the prayer. Even so, great care must be taken to render any such terms “that may appear to have been introduced into the Latin liturgical text for reasons of meter or other technical or literary reasons” since these terms “convey in reality a properly theological content.”⁷⁵

61. Finally, it should be noted that “the literary genres of the various texts of the Roman Liturgy are to be maintained”⁷⁶ in translation. The Roman Rite contains many such genres, from the solemn thanksgiving of the Eucharistic Prayers to the hymnody of the *Gloria*, or to the poetry of the sequence *Stabat Mater* on the memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows. Translators must master each Latin genre separately, especially in the case of poetry, before attempting to supply an equivalent rendering in the vernacular.

Example. The *Stabat Mater* sequence for the memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows (September 15th) was included in the Roman Liturgy by decree of Benedict XIII in 1712, originally as a hymn used in the Divine Office, though its composition is almost certainly medieval. It is structured around ten double stanzas of six lines, each comprising three couplets; there is carefully worked out parallelism of content between the lines of each couplet, with identical accentual meter throughout. In addition, there is a complete rhyme scheme of AABCCB in all of the stanzas, which is meant not only to please the listener euphonically, but thereby to draw attention to the religious meaning of the key words of each stanza invoked in the rhyme. The melody of the *Stabat Mater*, together with its unflinching meter, is intended to assist the faithful in identifying with the sorrowing mother of Jesus as she stands beneath his cross. Both musical and poetic forms combine into what many Christians, Catholics and Protestants alike, have found as a powerful composition. As an example of the way in which translation can attempt to capture the essentials of poetic and musical

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*
⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, n. 58.

genes, the 1849 English rendering of the *Stabat Mater* by Edward Caswell is given below. Of note is Caswell's attention to duplicating both the meter and the rhyme scheme, but with only a fair accuracy as regards the content and parallelism found in the Latin. The familiar melody for Caswell's piece is from the 1661 Mainz *Gesangbuch*, to which Caswell applied his text.

Select Stanza from the *Stabat Mater*:

Latin text (2002)	Caswell Translation (1849)
Stabat Mater dolorosa	At the cross her station keeping
lucta crucem lacrimosa	Stood the mournful Mother weeping,
dum pendebat Filius.	Close to Jesus to the last.
Cuius animam gementem,	Through her heart, his sorrow sharing,
conturbatam et dolentem	All his bitter anguish bearing,
pertransivit gladius.	Now at length the sword had passed.

Anthropomorphisms, metaphors and images from original texts should be fully included (*Liturgical Authenticam*, n. 43)

62. Whenever a translator finds a metaphor, simile or anthropomorphism within a liturgical text, or within a biblical text intended for use in the Liturgy, every effort should be made to render the image with the same concreteness, vividness and specificity that is contained in the original text.⁷⁷ The practice of translating either the meaning of the image, or an interpretation of it only damages the translation as a whole. While the divine mysteries are often described through metaphors and other similar constructions in a liturgical text, their truths are never fully captured by any rhetorical device. As a result, all images which offer a comparison between God and some thing or human must be understood as incomplete by nature, allowing connotation or association to suggest other allied meanings. The most privileged of these images and rhetorical devices are found in the Scriptures under terms such as “the face of God,” “the Body of Christ” as the Church, or through individual Latin words applied to describe the actions or person of God, such as “*ambulare*, *brachium*, *digitus*” and

the like.⁷⁸ One of the effects of such language is often to “provoke inquisitiveness in the hearer and [thereby] to provide an occasion for catechesis,⁷⁹ an occasion that might be lost if the image is explained away or dropped in translation.

Example.

Et revelabitur gloria Domini,
et videbit omnis caro pariter
quod os Domini locutus est. —Is 40:5

Unacceptable:
And the glory of the Lord shall be
revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the Lord has said so.

The terms in the original text corresponding to the Neo-Vulgate's terms *caro* and *os Domini* have not been rendered adequately here

63. In other cases, the metaphor is more diffuse or at least not clearly expressed by nouns. Nevertheless, the same attention is required on the part of translators to the “word picture.”

Example. In the revised *De Ordinatione Episcopi, Presbyteriorum et Diaconorum* (1989) n. 159, the Latin text prays that “sinners may be reconciled and the sick raised up” (*reconcilientur peccatores et subleventur infirmi*). This rests on an image from *James* 5:14 in which the healing of the sick is captured in the metaphor of being “raised,” possibly an allusion to standing up from a sick bed, though expressed in a manner that is also evocative of the resurrection of the body. However, to render this phrase alternately by its plain meaning—“that sinners may be reconciled and the sick be healed”—would be to deprive the prayer of an image whose biblical allusions are far richer.

⁷⁷ *Liturgical Authenticam*, n. 43.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*
⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

A single translation of a given liturgical book in a given language is to be preferred

64. It is possible, when truly necessary, for a given liturgical book of the Roman Rite to be translated separately by different Bishops' Conferences, either because of their differing needs or because of the urgency of a translation in one country that might not admit of the delays necessary for concerted action with other Conferences. Nevertheless, the use of a single translation of a given liturgical book is the goal to be sought insofar as is possible.

65. In particular, those parts of the Mass which "call for the direct participation of the people"⁸⁰ ideally should exist in one translation only within a given vernacular.⁸¹ This is especially so for the *Ordo Missae* and other texts that contain elements are spoken or sung by the people; such unity among translation is required unless a contrary provision has been made by the Holy See for an individual case.⁸² In general, the participation of the faithful is deepened and broadened where members of a single language group are able to attend the Eucharist with a sure knowledge of the wording to be used in the acclamations and common prayers.

66. Similarly, even though Bishops' Conferences retain their right to approve versions of Sacred Scripture for use in Lectionaries, and to arrange the prescribed *pericopae*, antiphons or other excerpts from this version in the translations of liturgical books that they submit to the Holy See for the *recognitio*, serious consideration should be given to the possibility of a single version for international liturgical use among speakers of English, or at least to a limited number of such versions.

67. Particularly important would be a unified version of the Psalter that might be employed, if the Conferences so wish, not only in the Liturgy of the Hours but throughout the translations of all liturgical

books wherever excerpts from the Psalms appear.⁸³ If necessary, one or more Mixed Commissions might be established for the specific purpose of preparing Scripture translations in accordance with the norms of *Liturgiam authenticam*.⁸⁴

Coordination in liturgical translations between Latin and Eastern Catholic Churches

68. Efforts should be made to coordinate insofar as possible to seek the modern language translations employed by the different ancient Rites of the Church in the translation of prayers and Scripture readings. Given the multiplicity of liturgical forms, the most evident case of common interest is the translation of the Scriptures. At the same time, the complete juridical autonomy of the Eastern Catholic Churches must be respected.⁸⁵

B. PRINCIPLES REGARDING ADAPTATION TO THE QUALITIES AND EXIGENCIES OF THE VERNACULAR LANGUAGE

Vernacular translation must be guided by the principles of inculturation developed in tandem with *Varietates legitimae* and *Liturgiam authenticam* (*Liturgiam authenticam*, nn. 6, 8, 22, 47, 67).

69. As noted above, the use of Latin in the Liturgy was itself a form of inculturation that took place in the early centuries of the life of the Church. By the time of Pope Gregory the Great (d. 604), it would appear that Latin had become the sole liturgical language of the Roman Rite, though in his day it contained some Greek refrains and hymns of both older and more recent date, such as the *Kyrie eleison* and those in the *Trisagion*. In any case, it is from Greek that the Roman

80 *Liturgiam authenticam*, n. 88.

81 *Ibid.*

82 *Cf. Ibid.*, nn. 87-88.

83 *Cf. Ibid.*, n. 36.

84 *Cf. Ibid.*, nn. 92-105.

85 *Ibid.*, n. 90.

Rite adapted itself to Latin and, in the process, established the basis of a liturgical language which survives even to the present day.

70. The Popes have not been inattentive to what we now call inculturation. Pope John Paul II gave particular emphasis throughout his pontificate to the theological notion of inculturation, especially as applied to the Liturgy. Even prior to the publication by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments on 25 January 1994 of the Instruction on the Roman Liturgy and Inculturation, *Varietates legitimæ*, John Paul II had carefully developed the two central ideas of liturgical inculturation, first in his 1979 Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi tradendæ* and then in his 1985 Encyclical *Slavorum Apostoli*: (1) that through evangelization the Gospel is inserted into the life of a given culture and (2) that the best of such a culture is thereby transformed and drawn into the life of the Church. As a result, whatever in a culture is harmonious with the Gospel can become a part of the local Church through evangelization, mysteriously showing forth another aspect of the fullness of Christ who is all in all (*Col* 3:11).⁸⁶ Pope John Paul specifically points to the ninth-century introduction of the Slavonic language into the Liturgy by Saints Cyril and Methodius not only as an example of this kind of inculturation, but also as a unifying force in the Liturgy, like that of Latin in the Roman Rite.

71. Moreover, in section five of his Apostolic Letter *Vicesimus quintus annus*, given in 1988 on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the promulgation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Pope John Paul again developed his teaching on inculturation and the Liturgy by stating that the evangelization of peoples by the Church of Roman Rite must use that Rite as its framework so as to protect its "substantial unity" (*substantiali servata Ritus Romani unitate*) and hence, its unifying force for the communion of all believers.⁸⁷

86 Cf. Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi tradendæ*, 16 October 1979, in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 71 (1979) 1277-1340; also, his Encyclical Letter *Slavorum Apostoli*, 2 June 1985, in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 77 (1985) 779-813.

87 Cf. Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Vicesimus quintus annus*, 4 December 1988, in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 81 (1988) 897-918.

72. The Pope concludes these observations by stating that the Church has the competency to adjust changeable parts of the Liturgy to newly evangelized cultures and that adaptation of the Liturgy indeed requires a conversion of hearts and a cessation of any practice incompatible with the Catholic faith. Upon *Vicesimus quintus annus* followed the Encyclical *Redemptio missio*, in which John Paul II reaffirms that inculturation is a transformation of human cultures by their encounter with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and their integration into the Church.

73. As a result, the important message of the 1994 Fourth Instruction, *Varietates legitimæ*, on liturgical inculturation, can be clearly seen within the context prepared by the John Paul II since 1979. For it is in tandem with the principles found in *Varietates legitimæ* that the Fifth Instruction, *Liturgiam authenticam*, is to be read⁸⁸ in order to apply its message most effectively to the translation of the Liturgy. The norms found in *Liturgiam authenticam* "are to be substituted for all norms previously published on the matter, with the exception of *Varietates legitimæ*."⁸⁹

Intelligibility and accessibility of expression should mark all vernacular translation for the sake of clear moral, pastoral and doctrinal teaching (*Liturgiam authenticam*, n. 25)

74. As first characteristics of liturgical vernacular, intelligibility and accessibility of expression are vital for the Church's prayer.⁹⁰ It is essential that all liturgical texts assist the faithful to "respond to the hunger and thirst for the living God that is experienced by the people of our time."⁹¹ Such an appetite for true worship also demands that the dignity, beauty and doctrinal precision and intent of original Latin texts be safeguarded in translation. This is especially true where important doctrinal distinctions regarding articles of belief or moral teachings are subtly present in a given Latin text. Translators must be cautious to render precisely what is meant without resorting to a mode

88 *Liturgiam authenticam*, n. 8.

89 *Ibid.*

90 *Ibid.*, n. 25.

91 *Ibid.*

of expression that would be insufficiently comprehensible because of its being antiquated or outmoded.

Expressions overly dependent on colloquial language should be avoided

75. Liturgical vernacular is, by nature, language which both differs from, yet depends in some way upon everyday or ordinary speech. Liturgical translation is a development of a given popular language, alive to contemporary usage. There are a number of consequences that flow from this.

76. A liturgical vernacular can on occasion search for words that can draw from its own literary history to express the divine realities found in the Liturgy. Even "a certain manner of speech which has come to be considered somewhat obsolete in daily usage may continue to be maintained in the liturgical context"⁹² due to its beauty and precision in capturing the meaning of a liturgical text.

Example. Prose translations of the sequences in the Roman Missal are not used in liturgical celebrations. These renderings had as their original intention to assist the faithful in understanding the sequences in very contemporary expression. The following stanza of the *Lauda Sion*, for example, is taken from the Rev. Joseph Connelly's *Hymns of the Roman Liturgy* (Westminster, The Newman Press, 1954), p. 124; translated colloquially, but without any attempt to propose its equivalence in form or style with the Latin of the Roman Missal.

Latin Text (2002)	Connelly Prose Translation
Quantum potes, tantum aude.	Praise Him as much as you can,
Quia major omni laude	for He is beyond all praising and you
Nec laudare sufficis.	will never be able to praise him
	as He merits.

77. As a corollary of this principle, one should avoid a tendency to sanitize the translation of biblical passages "where seemingly inelegant

words or expressions are used"⁹³ with contemporary euphemisms. This applies to all scriptural texts used throughout the Liturgy, whether in readings or in any other contexts.

Example. English translations of the Scriptures frequently employ a euphemism, in one form or other, to mute strong or offensive language or images. The following examples demonstrate this tendency in a moderate degree in rendering the term *pannus inquinatus* (or cloths used in menstruation) in *Isaiah* 64:6.

Neo-Vulgate:	Et facti sumus et immundus omnes nos, et quasi pannus inquinatus universae iustitiae nostrae.
Jerusalem Bible:	We were all like men unclean, all that integrity of ours like filthy clothing.
New Revised Standard Version:	We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.
Revised New American Bible:	All of us have become like unclean men, all our good deeds are like polluted rags.

The examples given here show translations that seek to do, justice to the biblical image in question, albeit without pressing it or rendering it perhaps as explicit as it might have appeared in the original text. On the other hand, completely removing the image and replacing it with a circumlocution calculated merely to express distaste without the help of such an image would be unacceptable: "all our good deeds are like filth."

Academic style manuals should not serve as standards for liturgical expression (*Liturgical authenticity*, n. 32)

78. Though varying degrees of authority are attributed to them in different countries, academic style manuals are frequently consulted as guides for many types of composition in the vernacular. However, their principles are derived from complex analyses of the ever-changing usage and meaning of language, especially within academic works. As a result, such manuals may be unconcerned with certain

⁹² *Ibid.*, n. 27.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

important aspects of the translation of liturgical, biblical, theological or doctrinal texts, including the implications of the capitalization of certain terms that they contain.⁹⁴ In fact, capitalization in such texts is often far more than mere convention, and may therefore affect understanding of that which is being read and communicated to the listener. Accordingly, academic style manuals, like many other handbooks of grammar or usage derived from scholarly discourse, commerce, advertising or politics, cannot be used as reliable standards for liturgical translation.

79. In sum, no style sheet can be used to “restrict the full sense of the original text within narrower limits”⁹⁵ than is intended by the Liturgy itself. The *Chicago Manual of Style* (University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 208, for example, instructs its readers that the names of rites other than the Eucharist “are not capitalized in run of the text,” including all the Sacraments, whereas clearly in English-language liturgical books it has been a long-standing and well-founded practice to capitalize words such as “Confirmation” as the proper name of a particular sacrament.

Psychological or emotive language should not be used in place of moral or doctrinal expressions in the Liturgy (*Liturgiam authenticam*, n. 34)

80. The immense influence which psychology gained in vernacular expression over the last century has sometimes resulted in the translation of properly moral terms by words that convey feeling or emotion rather than by those that name the cardinal or theological virtues, or the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The distinction between emotions (as human feelings) and virtues (as habits of supernaturally inspired action) is essential in conveying the doctrinal meaning of texts in the Roman Liturgy. For example, *pietas* as a gift of the Holy Spirit cannot be rendered as if it referred merely to faith and inner

peace, even though no single English term is able to cover its diverse meanings, which will differ depending on whether it is applied to God, on the one hand (e.g., “goodness,” “compassion,” etc.), or to the faithful, on the other (e.g., “devotion,” “love,” “piety,” etc). Nor could *zelus*, as a biblical virtue, be accurately translated as “caring,” but instead as “zeal” or by some other such term clearly signifying, in a manner adapted to the context, an intense and effective desire to promote what is good.

Consistency in liturgical translation

81. For the sake of the participation of the faithful, their ability to see in the Liturgy its true nature expressed in a variety of rites and prayers, and even to learn parts of it by heart, a consistency in translation of texts is important.

Example. The same formula for the blessing of the oil of the sick may be found in the Latin texts of both the *Ordo benedicensi oleum catechumenorum et infirmorum et conficendi chrisma* (n. 20), employed at the Chism Mass of Holy Thursday, as well as in the *Ordo unctionis infirmorum eorumque pastoralis cure* (n. 75), though the ritual context of each blessing is different. A consistency in the translation of this one prayer between diverse rites allows the faithful to see the same truths about the action of God's Holy Spirit with regard to oil as a healing medium of grace throughout the Roman Rite. Moreover, the texts of the Ritual Mass formularies in the Missal are reduplicated in great part within the different parts of the Roman Pontifical and the Roman Ritual. Obviously, these translations must be coordinated.

Stability in the translation and re-translation of liturgical texts should be preserved as much as possible

82. Following the Second Vatican Council's willingness to admit the use and of the vernacular in the Liturgy,⁹⁶ many Bishops' Conferences chose to act quickly on this aspect of the renewal of the Liturgy. The work of liturgical translation over the past 40 years has yielded many

94 *Cf. Liturgiam authenticam*, n. 32.
95 *Ibid.*

96 *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nn. 35, 54.

positive results.⁹⁷ Bishops are nevertheless counseled to exercise the greatest possible care in the preparation and pastoral implementation of liturgical books in the vernacular,⁹⁸ since the transmission of the faith of the Church, as well as the proper worship of God are in part dependent upon this enterprise.⁹⁹

Stability in translation and re-translation

83. All due effort should be made to maintain stability in translation and re-translation "whenever possible in successive editions prepared in modern languages."¹⁰⁰ This is especially true of those parts of the Mass which many of the faithful will have committed to memory, such as the Creed or the Eucharistic Prayers,¹⁰¹ and which constitute the very heart of the profession of the faith. These texts should be changed "only for a just and considerable reason,"¹⁰² such as the present situation at the time of the publication of this *ratio translationis*, in which more radical revision of existing English-language translations is necessary to bring the texts into conformity with the norms in the Instruction *Liturgiam authenticam*. Still, should a significant correction be deemed necessary, it is best that it be made all at once so as to re-establish subsequently a stability of practice necessary for the memorization of a new text.¹⁰³

Avoiding pastoral confusion

84. Re-translation of a given liturgical text should be done in such a way as to avoid confusing the faithful who must use it at the Liturgy. In particular, once an acceptable translation is in use the sung settings of the Mass, especially for Sunday celebrations, which are "widely used by the faithful" should remain as stable as possible to avoid confusion.¹⁰⁴

97 Cf. *Liturgiam authenticam*, n. 3.

98 *Ibid.*

99 *Ibid.*

100 *Liturgiam authenticam*, n. 74.

101 Cf. *Ibid.*, n. 63.

102 *Ibid.*, n. 74.

103 *Ibid.*

104 *Liturgiam authenticam*, n. 108.

Stability versus accuracy

85. Stability in translation is a value that must be carefully balanced with the need for the texts to conform to the norms currently in force for liturgical translation. Indeed, in certain instances, if it turns out that many changes to a given text are already required by the norms, the Bishops may decide that a thoroughly new text would perhaps be easier for the faithful to receive and to use than a text in which only certain elements have changed.

Changed translations need explanation

86. Re-translations which differ significantly from texts already in use should be explained to the clergy and faithful.¹⁰⁵ It cannot be presumed that the advantages of the new text will be self-evident, and the force of habit will tend to weigh against acceptance.

C. PRINCIPLES RELATED TO THE ORAL-AURAL-MNEMONIC DIMENSIONS OF TRANSLATION

The oral-aural dimensions of liturgical vernacular and the exigencies of the musical proclamation of a text should be respected in translation (*Liturgiam authenticam*, nn. 42, 44, 48, 59, 60, 61)

87. A great number of the texts in the Roman Liturgy are composed to be sung, as the best way in which to convey their meaning and to deepen the unified and orderly participation of the faithful.¹⁰⁶ Otherwise, it is by proclamation that the Priest, Deacon, reader or other minister delivers the prayers and readings of the Roman Rite to show that the voice of the Church at prayer is fully alive, supporting the living experience of the faithful, who bring their lives to the Liturgy as a spiritual sacrifice.¹⁰⁷

105 *Ibid.*, n. 63.

106 *Ibid.*, n. 60.

107 *Sacrosanctam Concilium*, n. 48; *Instituto Generalis Missalis Romani*, n. 81.

Priority should be given to singing the Liturgy

88. Sung texts greatly increase the solemnity of any celebration and manifest the unity of the faithful through a "union of voices." As a result, all liturgical translations must be suitable for musical setting,¹⁰⁸ with due regard for accuracy and integrity of content.¹⁰⁹ For this purpose it will be helpful at appropriate stages during the translation process to consult competent musicians who are familiar with the Church's norms for sacred music, and who are in full agreement with those norms.

89. However, the authority of the text, even in the most traditional of musical settings, must remain primary. Especially in the translation of the Psalter or other biblical texts set to music, but also in the translation of the Latin liturgical texts of ecclesiastical composition, concerns of musical arrangement should never be used to justify any alteration, diminution or addition to the content of the original text, a change in voice, or even an ordering of words in English that would result in a transfer of emphasis to certain elements of the text that are not similarly emphasized in the original text. Nor may translators accommodate a musical setting by replacing the liturgical text with a paraphrase; nor may other hymns which appear to be "genuine equivalents" of official texts be substituted within any Liturgy.¹¹⁰ At a minimum, translators should provide vernacular versions of the hymns already found in the *editioes typicae*,¹¹¹ while recognizing that these are "only the smallest part of the historic treasury of the Latin Church,"¹¹² but are fully deserving of translators' attention. Texts of new hymns are best taken from the biblical and liturgical patrimony of the Latin West.

90. Antiphons which in the Latin are adapted from the text of Sacred Scripture may be translated with somewhat more flexibility than texts

¹⁰⁸ *Liturgical authenticity*, nn. 60, 61.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, nn. 21, 22, 23, 24, 60.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, n. 61.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

taken directly from Sacred Scripture, but the biblical language found within them should be subject to the same principles regarding the translation of liturgical texts employing biblical language that are found elsewhere in this *Ratio*. Poetry must be rendered somewhat flexibly in a vernacular that intends to present such in a recognized literary form,¹¹³ but without losing the important link between meaning and form as discussed above. However, liturgical expressions in the Roman Rite which "have a particular doctrinal or spiritual importance or those that are more widely known are, in so far as possible, to be translated literally."¹¹⁴

91. As regards the proclamation of texts, Priest celebrants, Deacons, readers and other participants must be given translations which avoid any expression that could be confusing or ambiguous when pronounced aloud.¹¹⁵ Hence, all translation must be tested orally, no matter how polished its written form may appear. This is especially true when vernacular texts attempt to capture the form and sense of a composition in the original Latin, occasionally producing new or even seemingly strained expressions in translation.¹¹⁶

92. Attention to the requirements of musical setting in the work of translation should envision primarily a type of setting based on Gregorian chant and psalmody, even if other types of musical settings may eventually be used.

Words or expressions that might be confusing to the ear should be avoided

93. In consideration of the oral-aural dimension of the liturgical vernacular, it is also necessary to avoid expressions that are confusing or ambiguous when proclaimed orally and heard.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, n. 59.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, n. 44.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, n. 59.

Example.

Ps 42:1—"As a hart longs for flowing streams...."

A better translation would be—"As a deer longs for flowing streams...."

Liturgical texts should be memorable

94. The memorability of prayer texts can be enhanced by the marching of compelling form with content, thereby helping the faithful to open their hearts as they pray.¹¹⁷ Texts of the Eucharistic Prayers in particular, which are often remembered more or less verbatim by the faithful because of the central role of these texts in the Mass, should not be radically re-translated once an acceptable translation is in place, unless serious reasons suggest otherwise.¹¹⁸ Thus, once there is a translation in place that conforms to the norms of the Instruction *Liturgiam authenticam*, "successive revisions of translations," especially of texts memorable because of their importance in the Liturgy, such as the Creed, the Our Father or the Eucharistic Prayer, "should not totally change the previously approved vernacular texts"¹¹⁹ except in rare cases when strictly necessary.

In the translation of liturgical texts both denotation and connotation must be preserved (*Liturgiam authenticam*, n. 52)

95. As a part of rendering texts accurately and fully translators must strive to maintain the denotation and connotation found in liturgical texts.¹²⁰ By doing so, translators "ensure that the text [is] open to other orders of meaning that may have been intended in the original text."¹²¹

96. Some clarification of terms for translators in this area may be helpful. Generally speaking, the *denotation* of a word is its definition

117 *Ibid.*
118 *Ibid.*, n. 64.
119 *Ibid.*, n. 61.
120 *Ibid.*, n. 52.
121 *Ibid.*

as given in a dictionary, independent of special contexts in which it might be used. The *meaning* of a term refers to the ideas which a particular word awakens in a reader's mind, especially when put into play with other words. The *sense* of a word is a delimitation of meaning produced by repeated use in context with other words or in various literary forms. The term *connotation* refers to "the finer shades of meaning or emotion evoked"¹²² by a word. These four ideas can assist a translator to understand the many ways in which a given word may function in a liturgical text.

97. As an example, the word "*Deus*" as used in the *Missale Romanum* is defined as the supreme being who is creator and ruler of all.¹²³ This would also be its denotation. However, in many liturgical contexts the meaning of "*Deus*" is that of "the Blessed Trinity," or one being in three divine persons. The sense of "*Deus*," however, is very often only that of the First Person of the Trinity, as frequently found in the address of orations and accompanied by relative clauses of description: "*Deus, qui legatum differentiam hostiarum unius sacrificii perfectione sanxisti.*" As a result, the connotations of "*Deus*" are correspondingly numerous: God is the most merciful Father (*clementissime Pater*), the one who dwells in inaccessible light (*qui inaccessibilem lucem inhabitans*), and is so filled with love that, to ransom a slave, he handed over his only Son (*ut servum redimeres, Filium tradidisti*!).

98. Through an awareness, then, of denotation and connotation, the translator is first able to see what the full weight of a Latin word may be and then can attempt to translate it as completely as possible into the vernacular.

122 *Ibid.*
123 A. Blaise, *Le Vocabulaire latin des principaux thèmes liturgiques* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1966), p. 248. This work is an extremely valuable tool that will assist the translator in choosing the proper vernacular word for a Latin term in a given context.

Liturgical texts should be rendered to correspond to the ritual acts they accompany (*Liturgical authenticam*, n. 62)

99. Many texts in the Roman Rite accompany particular ritual acts. In these instances, text and rite are inseparable parts of the liturgical action, seen perhaps most clearly in the case of sacramental formulae which are always used with a simultaneous ritual gesture by the celebrant. Translators need to be aware that at such moments in the Liturgy, the vernacular must reflect as closely as possible the spiritual action realized in the unity between the Latin text and the rite itself. In the translation of sacramental formulae, whose final approval is reserved to the Pope,¹²⁴ this is especially important, since the failure to capture important nuances of Latin wording, or to take into account such elements as the time required for the accompanying action, can greatly lessen the impact of the rite or altogether frustrate the participation of the faithful. The close correspondence between rite and text can be seen, for example, in the description found in Pope Paul VI's Apostolic Constitution, *Divinae consortium naturae*, which approved the *Ordo Confirmationis* (1979). There, he links the moment of the anointing with chrism in the sacrament of Confirmation to the formula itself: *Sacramentum Confirmationis confertur per unctionem chrismais in fronte, quae fit manus impositione atque per verba: "Accipe signaculum domi Spiritus Sancti"* (The Sacrament of Confirmation is conferred through the anointing with chrism on the forehead, which is done by the laying on of the hand, and through the words: "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit"). In effect, the conferral of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation is done by gesture and word together.

100. When translators render texts which are "associated with ritual actions expressed by a particular posture, gesture, or the use of signs"¹²⁵ such as water, oil or fire, there can be no substitute for a thorough acquaintance with the mind of the Church regarding the action of grace to be accomplished in these moments. Prior to rendering such

texts, it is the duty of translators to steep themselves in the Church's understanding of the meaning and action of sacramental or ritual acts within each rite.

101. At least four special factors must be considered by translators in preparing appropriate translations for such texts: (1) "the time required for reciting the words"¹²⁶ by the celebrant, the Deacon or the people; (2) the suitability of such texts "for being sung or recited,"¹²⁷ judged against an understanding of where else in the Liturgy the same texts may be used or even set to music; (3) the possibility that such texts may, in fact, need to be repeated at some length; and (4) the use of biblical texts, or biblically inspired ones, whose wordings are taken from or based upon the wording of a vernacular translation approved for use in the Liturgy, especially if these vernacular versions were not made with due attention to the Neo-Vulgate as a guide to the maintenance of the Latin tradition of biblical interpretation. In this last case, an indiscriminate use of a biblical verse translated from the Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek texts of the Bible into the vernacular, without attentiveness to their traditional interpretation in the Roman Liturgy, may not carry forward important Christological or Marian themes essential to its use in a given rite and which continue to be found in the Neo-Vulgate.

¹²⁴ *Liturgical authenticam*, n. 85.
¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, n. 62.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*
¹²⁷ *Ibid.*