Beyond the Words
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The Roman Catholic Church in America will begin using a new Roman Missal — the ritual text for the celebration of the Mass — on Nov. 27. Parishioners can expect to hear significant differences in both the words of the priest and in the people's responses.

"Anytime there is a change to ritual, it gives people what I call 'ritual whiplash,'" said Emily Strand, director of liturgy at the University of Dayton. "Ritual is a person's point of encounter with the holy, and when you change that, it can be very disconcerting. We want to help make this transition as smooth as possible."

"Beyond the Words" is a free, online audio program intended to do just that. It is a joint effort of the University of Dayton and the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Strand and her co-host Bob Wurzelbacher, associate director of the archdiocese's Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry, answer questions, explain changes, uncover interesting bits of information and conduct interviews — all about the new Roman Missal.

Follow the related link to listen and subscribe to the podcast.

"We really hope this fills a need in our new media world," Strand said. "We see it as a way to reach young people in particular and get everyone prepared for the changes. Although it's still a few months away, I think people have a real interest and hunger to know more."

The new Roman Missal is the third edition since it was first published in 1970, and the first major update in 36 years. According to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the new edition contains prayers for the celebration of recently canonized saints, additional prefaces for the Eucharistic prayers, additional Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Intentions, and some updated instructions for the celebration of the Mass. The English translation will also include updated translations of existing prayers, including some of the well-known responses and acclamations of the people.

One of the most noticeable changes will be in the traditional Catholic greeting and response:

"The Lord be with you."
"And also with you."

In the new Missal, this greeting becomes:

"The Lord be with you."
"And with your spirit."

Strand said the changes attempt to follow a more word-for-word translation of the Latin than previous editions, which used a "dynamic equivalence" translation that sought to capture the spirit of the phrase. The prayers will sound longer and echo the Latin grammar, tone and style, Strand said.

"The updates will not change anything we do, just what we say," she said. "It's not going to look different, it's just going to sound different."

The first episode of "Beyond the Words" was released Feb. 24 and includes an exclusive interview with Cincinnati Archbishop Dennis Schnurr. Three more episodes have been added, featuring interviews with local high school and college students and focusing on language and the sacramental power of words.

Strand said she expects to record between 15 and 20 episodes, releasing some after the change in November.

Visit the related links for more information.

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