Change to Conclusion of Doxology in Prayers at Mass

The USCCB recently announced a change in wording to the conclusion of the prayers at Mass, from "one God, for ever and ever" to "God, for ever and ever." A February 4 memo from the Bishops' Committee on Divine Worship explained that the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments had written to all English-speaking Conferences of Bishops last May, noting that the current English translation of the doxology was inaccurate. “There is, in fact, no mention of ‘one’ in the Latin, and the word ‘Deus’ refers to Christ,” the memo stated. A correct translation is reflected in other languages, including the Spanish translation of the Roman Missal currently used in the United States.

English translations of the Missal for use by the faithful prior to the Second Vatican Council typically included an accurate translation of the doxology, as, for example, in the Saint Joseph’s Missals of the 1950’s. However, when the post-conciliar texts were published in English, the word “one” was added. During the
translation of the *Roman Missal* currently in use, this discrepancy was noted, but it was decided at the time to retain “one God” in the new translation.

In light of the Congregation’s most recent observations in this matter, the Latin Rite Bishops of the USCCB voted to amend the present translation, and the Congregation quickly confirmed their decision. Several other English-speaking Conferences, including those from England and Wales, Ireland, and Canada have also approved this alteration over the past several months. Moving forward, the translation of the doxology will be consistent amongst English-language liturgical books.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

*When should this change take place, and exactly which words are being modified?*

This change to the concluding doxology of the orations came into effect on Ash Wednesday, February 17, 2021. The words “one God, for ever and ever” are to be replaced with “God, for ever and ever.”

*Is there a need to purchase a new Roman Missal?*

No. It should not be difficult for the celebrant simply to omit the word “one” when offering the prayer. However, publishers are being informed of this change, and any reprints or new editions of the *Missal* will reflect the new translation. Other publications, such as participation aids for the faithful, will begin to carry the new text as soon as possible. Many of these are printed well in advance, however, so it will take some time for the change to appear.

*Does this change apply to other liturgical books besides the Roman Missal?*

Yes. Any time the formula appears in a liturgical book, the new translation should be used. Apart from the *Roman Missal*, the *Liturgy of the Hours* is the book where it is encountered most often. The orations in the current breviary are an older translation than what is found in the *Missal*, but the conclusion is the same, and the new translation can be applied.

**Pope Francis Allows for Women to Serve as Instituted Lectors and Acolytes**

On January 10, Pope Francis signed an apostolic letter (*Spiritus Domini*) which altered the Code of Canon Law to allow women to be admitted to the instituted ministries of acolyte and lector. For centuries, these offices were considered “minor orders” on the path to the priesthood, but they were abolished by Pope Saint Paul VI in 1972, at which time he established the two instituted ministries of lector and acolyte. These ministries were restricted to men, and, in some dioceses, reserved to those preparing for the priesthood in seminaries. Of course, women and girls have also served in these roles by temporary designation for decades; however, the Holy Father’s recent apostolic letter now makes provision for permanently assigning them, by means of an established liturgical rite, to these ministries.
Spiritus Domini describes instituted lectors and acolytes as men and women who have prayerfully discerned a charism of liturgical ministry within the Church that is a particular exercise of their baptismal priesthood. Pope Saint Paul VI’s apostolic letter, Ministeria quaedam (1972), had already listed the qualities and functions that would characterize these persons, some of which extend beyond service in the sanctuary:

**INSTITUTED LECTOR**

- Proclaims the readings from sacred Scripture, except for the gospel in the Mass and other sacred celebrations;
- Recites the psalm between the readings when there is no psalmist;
- Presents the intentions for the universal prayer in the absence of a deacon or cantor;
- Takes care of preparing other faithful who are appointed on a temporary basis to read the Scriptures in liturgical celebrations; and,
- Meditates assiduously on sacred Scripture.

**INSTITUTED ACOLYTE**

- Aids the deacon, and ministers to the priest, especially in the celebration of Mass;
- Distributes communion as an extraordinary minister of holy communion;
- May be entrusted with publicly exposing the Blessed Sacrament for adoration by the faithful and afterward replacing it, but not with blessing the people;
- Instructs other faithful who on a temporary basis are appointed to assist the priest or deacon in liturgical celebrations by carrying the Missal, cross, candles, etc., or by performing other such duties; and,
- Should learn all matters concerning public divine worship and strive to grasp their inner spiritual meaning.

In view of these descriptions, it would seem to be the Church’s intention that instituted lectors and acolytes would take on a leadership role among the other lay readers and servers in the parish, instructing and serving as a model of ministry for them. What is probably not envisioned is that every reader or server in the parish would be an instituted minister.

At this time, the Archdiocese awaits further instructions from the USCCB, which is entrusted with publishing guidelines and establishing criteria for the selection of instituted lectors and acolytes for the United States. Notwithstanding, it is anticipated that these will include a minimum age requirement, a prayerful discernment of one’s charism in collaboration with one’s pastor, suitable instruction, and the celebration of a formal rite of institution and blessing. It should be noted that the current rite of installation will also have to be updated, as it now refers only to men.
New Archdiocesan Guidelines for Music at First Communion and Confirmation liturgies with Children

In February, the Liturgy Office and archdiocesan Liturgical Music Commission published guidelines for music at First Communion and Confirmation liturgies with children. The celebrations of First Holy Communion and Confirmation liturgies with children are times of great joy in the life of a parish. These events are significant spiritual milestones for those who receive these sacraments, and they also serve as opportunities for a renewal of faith amongst family, friends, and the entire parish community. Music plays a special and memorable role in these celebrations, and parish leadership and staff frequently seek assistance in the proper selection of music for these liturgies. This document seeks to provide guidance to parishes, answering some of the particular questions that may arise when preparing First Communion and Confirmation celebrations with children. The new guidelines may be accessed and downloaded at the Liturgy Office website.

Liturgical Q and A: Scrutiny Rite Readings in Years B and C

Most parishes are already aware that the scrutiny readings assigned to Year A on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Sundays of Lent should be used in Years B and C when the scrutiny rites are celebrated within Mass. However, the Liturgy Office is sometimes asked if parishes may use these same readings in Years B and C at Masses where there is no scrutiny. This question usually arises out of a concern related to using different readings from one Mass to the next on the same Sunday, and the resulting need to prepare additional homilies and musical selections. An answer to this common question may be found in the Lectionary at the beginning of the readings for the Third Sunday of Lent, Year B (Lectionary #29B). There, the rubric reads: “The readings given for Year A, n. 28, may be used in place of these.” This same rubric appears at the beginning of the readings for the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Sundays of Lent, for Years B and C.

The three readings from John's Gospel in Year A — the woman at the well, the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus — focus on the themes of conversion, healing, and the promise of eternal life. Bearing in mind the relevance of these themes for those preparing for Christian Initiation, and for all the baptized during Lent, the Church permits the readings from Years B and C to be substituted with the Year A (scrutiny) readings, even in those Masses where the scrutinies are not celebrated. This option allows a celebrant to prepare just one homily on these Sundays, in which he can draw the community’s attention to the intentions of those who are preparing to receive baptism at the Easter Vigil, while emphasizing that spiritual conversion is an ongoing process throughout one's life, and is rightly the focus of all Christians during the Lenten season.
USCCB’s Committee on Doctrine Offers Guidance for Evaluating Hymn Texts

On December 10, 2020, the USCCB’s Committee on Doctrine distributed to bishops a document entitled “Catholic Hymnody at the Service of the Church: An Aid for Evaluating Hymn Lyrics.” The Committee offered these observations as a guide to all bishops who might be tasked with evaluating “the suitability of certain hymnals proposed for use in their diocese.”

In its work, the Committee reviewed approximately 1000 hymns written mostly from 1980-2015, and considered two general principles when evaluating these texts: 1) Is the hymn in conformity with Catholic doctrine? and 2) Is the hymn expressed in image and vocabulary appropriately reflective of the usage of Scripture and the public liturgical prayer of the Church?

The Committee made note of several categories and offered examples of potential deficiencies related to imprecise language or incomplete presentations of various points of doctrine, including:

**Deficient in Eucharistic Doctrine:**
- God is Here! As We His People (Fred Pratt Green, 1979, Hope Publishing Co.)
- Now in This Banquet (Marty Haugen, 1986, GIA)
- All Are Welcome (Marty Haugen, 1994, GIA)
- Let Us Break Bread Together on Our Knees (Spiritual)

**Deficient in Trinitarian Doctrine:**
- Some doxologies (Magnificat, text by Owen Alstott, tune by Bernadette Farrell, 1993, OCP)
  - Led by the Spirit (Bob Hurd, 1996, OCP)

**Deficient in Theological Anthropological Doctrine:**
- God Beyond All Names (Bernadette Farrell, 1990, OCP)
- Canticle of the Sun (Marty Haugen, 1980, GIA)

**Deficient in Ecclesiological Doctrine:**
- Sing a New Church (Delores Duffner, OSB 1991, OCP)
- As a Fire is Meant for Burning (Ruth Duck, 1992, GIA)

**Incorrect views of the Jewish People:**
- The Lord of the Dance (text adaptation by Sydney B. Carter, 1963, administered by Hope Publishing Co.)
- O Crucified Messiah (Carmen Scialla, 2003, OCP)

The Committee encouraged bishops and pastors to review their findings, and to be especially attentive to the theological content of songs in the standard corpus of hymns and in hymnals used throughout their dioceses and in parishes. In so doing, the Committee stated, sacred music used in liturgical celebrations will achieve its purpose, “which is the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful” (Sacrosanctum concilium, 112.).
Year of Saint Joseph Resources

On the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception last year, Pope Francis released an Apostolic Letter entitled *Patris corde* (“a Father’s Heart”) in honor of Saint Joseph. The Holy Father noted that, “after Mary, the Mother of God, no saint is mentioned more frequently in the papal magisterium than Joseph, her spouse.” Reflecting on the important role that Saint Joseph has played in the life of the Church over the centuries, Pope Francis stated his hope that “each of us might discover in Joseph – the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence – an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble. Saint Joseph reminds us that those who appear hidden or in the shadows can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation.” In an effort to encourage greater devotion to the foster father of Our Lord, Pope Francis declared a “Year of Saint Joseph,” to be observed from December 8, 2020 to December 8, 2021.

In response to the Holy Father’s initiative, His Eminence, Timothy Cardinal Dolan, has announced that he will consecrate the Archdiocese of New York to Saint Joseph on March 19, the Solemnity of Saint Joseph. All parishes throughout the Archdiocese are invited to join in offering the prayers of consecration on this day, and the Service of Consecration may be downloaded at the enclosed link. Additional prayers and devotional services have also been assembled for parish use throughout the Year of Saint Joseph, and announcements about special events to mark this period may be found on the archdiocesan webpage dedicated to this theme. The Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions has also assembled a body of prayers and information on obtaining a special plenary indulgence during the Year of Saint Joseph.

In addition to consulting these resources, priests may wish to consider offering a votive Mass for Saint Joseph, either on the nineteenth day of each month, or on Wednesdays (the day traditionally dedicated to honoring Saint Joseph). The concluding prayer of the Universal Prayer at Mass could be offered through the intercession of Saint Joseph during this year. Weather permitting, outdoor processions on the two feasts of Saint Joseph (March 19 and May 1) could be scheduled, and parishes might look to commissioning and dedicating a new image or statue of Saint Joseph in the church or parish school, or they might consider refurbishing an existing shrine.

The Year of Saint Joseph is a privileged opportunity to honor our beloved Patron of the Universal Church, to ask for his intercession, and to praise God for the gift of this heroic and saintly man in our lives. Through this initiative, Pope Francis is encouraging the Church to imitate this great saint’s virtues and zeal, most especially in his devoted care of the family entrusted to him, his humble attentiveness to the voice of God, and his obedience to the Will of the Father.
New Memorials Added to the Universal Calendar

On February 2, the Congregation of Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments released two decrees, approved by Pope Francis, inscribing several new memorials into the Roman Calendar. The first decree added the Memorial of Saints Martha, Mary, and Lazarus on July 29. The Congregation noted that the addition of this liturgical celebration was intended to highlight the important evangelical witness these saints offered in welcoming Jesus into their home, as well as the love and familial spirit with which they conversed and cared for the Lord and each other as family members.

A separate decree inscribed three Optional Memorials in the Roman Calendar for several Doctors of the Church, observing that “the combination of holiness with knowledge in the experience of the mystery of Jesus Christ is inextricably linked to the mystery of the Church.” The new memorials and their dates are:

- Saint Gregory of Narek, Abbot and Doctor of the Church, on 27 February
- Saint John De Avila, Priest and Doctor of the Church, on 10 May
- Saint Hildegard of Bingen, Virgin and Doctor of the Church, on 17 September

New prayers for these memorials have been issued in Latin by the Holy See, and these will now be translated by the various episcopal conferences throughout the world.

Liturgical Preparation Aid for Lent

The Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions (FDLC) has published a free resource in English and Spanish for the Lenten season. This preparation aid includes:

- the full text of the Rite of Reconciliation of Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution;
- music suggestions;
- an Order for the Reception of the Holy Oils;
- a liturgical calendar advisory for Lent, the Triduum, and the Easter Season; and,
- preparation worksheets for the celebration of the Triduum.

This resource may be downloaded from the Liturgy Office website (English/Spanish) and distributed freely.
Archdiocesan Distribution of Holy Oils

In the Archdiocese of New York, the distribution of holy oils during Holy Week will take place according to the following schedule:

At Saint Patrick's Cathedral

Six-ounce bottles of holy oils will be prepared and distributed by the seminarians to clergy at the conclusion of the Chrism Mass. Old oils will not be accepted at the Cathedral; these may be buried at the parish or burned in the new fire at the Easter Vigil. Parishes may wish to celebrate the “Order for the Reception of the Holy Oils” following the Chrism Mass at the Cathedral. This rite is available from the USCCB at the enclosed link.

Parishes of Area Deans

Those parishes who will not be sending representatives to the Chrism Mass are asked to pick up holy oils at the parishes of their area deans on Thursday, April 1. Parishes who will be receiving oils from their dean must register to do so at the enclosed link. Packages of holy oils will be reserved only for those parishes who have registered beforehand, so please be sure to sign up.

Please note that holy oils will not be distributed at Saint Joseph’s Seminary this year. Parishes who are in need of additional oils later in the year are asked to please contact the Liturgy Office.

Upcoming Events

Chants of Holy Week: Online Workshop for Clergy. Thursday, March 18, at 8pm. Via Zoom. Free of charge. Presented by Dr. Jennifer Donelson-Nowicka, DMA. More information and registration at the enclosed link.

Office of Liturgy
Father Matthew S. Ernest, S.T.D., Director
201 Seminary Avenue
Yonkers, New York 10704
914.968.6200, ext.8177
liturgy@archny.org
nlyliturgy.org