

From your Friendly Neighborhood Director of Worship:

BREAKING: NEW CONFESSION TRANSLATION INCOMING

The International Commission for English in the Liturgy (ICEL) has published a new translation of the rite for the sacrament of confession. This follows the updated translation of the Mass back in 2011, as well as new versions of the books for baptism and marriage that we've seen in recent years. The new translation will be implemented in two stages: priests can start using it optionally on Ash Wednesday (2/22), and it **MUST** be used starting Divine Mercy Sunday (4/16). In our family of parishes, the priests will begin using the new translation on Ash Wednesday, but if you go to another priest or another parish for confession, you might hear the old one until Divine Mercy Sunday.

Let's look at the new translation. Most of the prayer of absolution is the same, but the italicized parts are different:

God, the Father of mercies,
through the Death and Resurrection of his Son
has reconciled the world to himself
and *poured out the Holy Spirit* for the forgiveness of sins;
through the ministry of the Church
may God *grant* you pardon and peace.
and I ABSOLVE YOU FROM YOUR SINS,
in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
R. Amen.

The first difference is the part about the Holy Spirit. Before, the prayer said “sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins.” There are two changes here. First, the phrase “among us” in the old version has been removed. This is because that phrase didn't exist in the original Latin text of the prayer – I don't know why, but ICEL had decided to invent it for the old translation. The second change is the verb: the new one says the Holy Spirit is “poured out,” while the old one said the Holy Spirit was “sent.” This is much more faithful to the Latin verb “effudit,” and brings out a bunch of connections. This is the same word as in the consecration of the Precious Blood in the Mass: “Poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.” We receive forgiveness from Jesus pouring out his Blood for us on the cross, and to continue that work in the world He has poured out the Holy Spirit upon the Church. It's a beautiful connection. It also mirrors the language about the Holy Spirit coming down “like the dewfall” in Eucharistic Prayer II.

The second difference is much smaller. The old version said “May God give you pardon and peace;” and in the new version the word “Grant” replaces the word “Give.” This might actually surprise some of you, because a number of priests accidentally used the word “grant” even with the old translation! Again, “Grant” is closer to the original Latin, “tribuat.” It also more clearly explains what is happening in confession: the Church is using the authority that Jesus gave her to forgive sins after his resurrection (see John 20:21-23).

The words that I put in all caps above (I absolve you from your sins) did not change with the new translation. This is good! Those words are the *essential formula* for the prayer of absolution. If the priest makes a mistake with the other words of the prayer, but he gets those words right, the sacrament still works and your sins are forgiven! So even if a priest uses the old prayer by mistake, the most important words are the same, and you can trust that your sins are forgiven!

That's your update on the incoming change to the prayer of absolution! Stay tuned for next week, when I'll talk about the updated Act of Contrition.

Your in Christ,
Fr. Ambrose