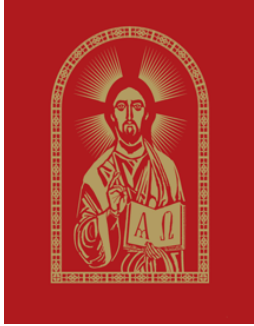


And With Your Spirit

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As we march ever closer to the implementation of the new translation of the Roman Missal on the first Sunday of Advent some of our common phrases and prayers have been altered a bit from the way we have been used to saying them to more closely reflect the original Latin prayers. One of the most literal is “The Lord be with you”.

Perhaps the most common dialogue in the Liturgy of the Roman Rite consists of the greeting:



Priest: Dominus vobiscum

Congregation: et cum spiritu tuo

Since 1970, this has been translated as:

Priest: The Lord be with you.

Congregation: And also with you.

As a part of the revised translation of the Roman Missal, now taking place, the translation of this dialogue has been revised, to read:

Priest: The Lord be with you.

Congregation: And with your spirit.

Latin Text

Dominus vobiscum.

Et cum spiritu tuo.

1970 Translation

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

New Translation

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

Since it is clear that the change to “and with your spirit” is a significant and wide ranging change in a longstanding liturgical practice, the following questions are provided to clarify the reasons for the change and the meaning of the dialogue itself.

1. ***Why has the response et cum spiritu tuo been translated as and with your spirit?***

The retranslation was necessary because it is a more correct rendering of *et cum spiritu tuo*. Recent scholarship has recognized the need for a more precise translation capable of expressing the full meaning of the Latin text.

2. ***What about the other major languages? Do they have to change their translations?***

No. English is the only major language of the Roman Rite which did not translate the word *spiritu*. The Italian (*E con il tuo spirito*), French (*Et avec votre esprit*), Spanish (*Y con tu espíritu*) and German (*Und mit deinem Geiste*) renderings of 1970 all translated the Latin word *spiritu* precisely.

3. ***Has the Holy See ever addressed this question?***

In 2001, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments published an instruction entitled, *Liturgiam authenticam*, subtitled, *On the Use of Vernacular Languages in the Publication of the Books of the Roman Liturgy*. The instruction directs specifically that: “Certain expressions that belong to the heritage of the whole or of a great part of the ancient Church, as well as others that have become part of the general human patrimony, are to be respected by a translation that is as literal as possible, as for example the words of the people’s response *Et cum spiritu tuo*, or the expression *mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa* in the Act of Penance of the Order of Mass.”

4. ***Where does this dialogue come from?***

The response *et cum spiritu tuo* is found in the Liturgies of both East and West, from the earliest days of the Church. One of the first instances of its use is found in the *Traditio Apostolica* of Saint Hippolytus, composed in Greek around AD 215.

5. *How is this dialogue used in the Liturgy?*

The dialogue is only used between the priest and the people, or exceptionally, between the deacon and the people. The greeting is never used in the Roman Liturgy between a non-ordained person and the gathered assembly.

6. *Why does the priest mean when he says "The Lord be with you"?*

By greeting the people with the words "The Lord be with you," the priest expresses his desire that the dynamic activity of God's spirit be given to the people of God, enabling them to do the work of transforming the world that God has entrusted to them.

7. *What do the people mean when they respond "and with your spirit"?*

The expression *et cum spiritu tuo* is only addressed to an ordained minister. Some scholars have suggested that *spiritu* refers to the gift of the spirit he received at ordination. In their response, the people assure the priest of the same divine assistance of God's spirit and, more specifically, help for the priest to use the charismatic gifts given to him in ordination and in so doing to fulfill his prophetic function in the Church.