

The New Roman Missal

Advent and beyond

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By Sr. Ann Rehrauer

This is the last in a series of columns on the revised Roman Missal.

At last! It seems like we've been reading about and preparing for this new missal for a long time, and the first Sunday of Advent is finally at hand! During the past seven months we've considered the reasons for a new translation and looked at some of the new texts, especially those that might sound a bit different. But beyond preparing for new words and a new book, we've also reflected on what we hope will happen as we come together each Sunday to worship the Father, to offer the sacrifice of Christ, to receive Christ in holy Communion, and to be transformed through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The prayers in the missal, the style of the priest celebrant, the people who gather with us, and the music and visual environment are all aids to help us worship God and to grow in our relationship with him.

During these next weeks, we'll continue to learn and sing new music, our responses will become more familiar and the Advent and Christmas liturgies will invite us into a deeper sense of who we are as a loved and redeemed people.

As we continue to pray with the new missal, there are a few other changes that we'll experience. Instead of "seasons," the missal now uses the consistent terminology of "time." Just as it has been Ordinary Time, it will be Advent Time, Lenten Time and Easter Time.

Jan. 22 (or Jan. 23 when Jan. 22 is a Sunday) has been designated as a Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children. On Jan. 20 and 22 in our diocese, we will pray with one of the two options for the Mass in thanksgiving for the gift of human life, and the vestments will be white. We can also use the Mass for the Preservation of Peace and Justice on these days, with violet vestments.

During Lent, in 2012, there is a special "prayer over the people" for each day of Lent. And as we move toward Holy Week, there will be a few additional changes. The one we'll probably notice is that on Good Friday, instead of having several crosses available for veneration, there will only be one cross.

There are two options for the ritual of veneration. One involves everyone coming forth to venerate or reverence the cross as we've done in the past. The other has the priest raise the cross in the sanctuary for all of us to venerate from our places.

Throughout the year there will also be celebrations of the recently canonized saints. The prayers for the feasts are now incorporated in the missal (for Katharine Drexel, Padre Pio, Damien DeVeuster (the saint of Molokai), Junipero Serra and Juan Diego).

There are additional Mass texts for celebrations in honor of the Blessed Virgin, and a new Votive Mass for the Mercy of God (which is not used on Divine Mercy Sunday. The prayers that day must be those of the second Sunday of Easter). There is also an expanded set of texts for the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, and several new ritual Masses.

Another aspect of the missal that doesn't directly impact us is the arrangement of the book. In looking for special Masses or other texts, the priests will need to do some further searching, since things have been rearranged.

As we prepare to celebrate the sacred mysteries this week, may Advent Time be a season of renewed hope as we await the coming of the Lord, and a time of renewed devotion and prayerfulness as we celebrate with new words and open hearts.

Sr. Rehrauer is the diocesan director of Evangelization, Living Justice, and Worship.