



Archdiocese of New York + 2011

"AND WITH YOUR SPIRIT"

A Bit of History - Why the Change?: One of the changes in the People's parts of the Mass is their response to *The Lord be with you*, a greeting given by the priest three times in the Mass. The response which we have made since 1970 has been *And also with you*. The new response will be *And with your spirit*. This change calls for some explanation: Prior to the reforms of Vatican II, this greeting in the Mass was, in Latin, *Dominus vobiscum* and the response to it was *Et cum spiritu tuo*. The Latin text of the reformed Roman Missal we have today contains the same words of greeting and response. Why, then, a different wording for our English translation of the response?

The origin of words, phrases and their meaning: The translation of *Et cum spiritu tuo* as *and also with you* in the 1970s was based, in part, on a point of view which held that this phrase was simply a greeting common to the Semitic community whose language and practice had much influence on early Christian liturgy. In other words, this phrase was thought to have been more in the nature of a commonplace greeting, e.g. "Hello" or "How are you?" than one with profound theological significance.

The Translation "And also with you"- Some Concerns: Although, with the permission of the Holy See, the translation *and also with you* was incorporated into the English translation of the Mass, further study and reflection, coupled with the experience of years, has taught us that, in pursuit of legitimate reform and renewal, we can, at times, be in danger of losing touch with our Scriptural and traditional roots. It is this concern that has led to the new, more literal translation, *and with your spirit*.

How does this greeting and the new translation of the response reflect our Scriptural and traditional roots? The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* states: *By this Greeting and the people's response, the mystery of the Church gathered together is made manifest.* (n. 50) It is Saint Paul to whom we turn for better understanding of this principle. He will often address a person, for example his disciple Timothy,

by referring to his spirit rather than to the person himself. Paul seems to recognize that he is speaking to someone who possesses the Spirit of God and he expresses this in his form of address. In today's Church we are ever more conscious that we, who have been baptized into Christ, share this same Spirit, the Spirit of God which is far more than simply the human life-principle. When the priest greets the people with the words *The Lord be with you* he is praying that the people celebrating with him will be given the dynamic gift of the Spirit enabling them to go forth and transform the world that God has entrusted to them. When the people respond *and with your spirit*, (a response made only to an ordained minister), they are praying that the priest will be given the same dynamic Spirit to enable him to fulfill the role of teaching, offering the Eucharistic Sacrifice and sanctifying given to him at ordination.

And so this greeting cannot be compared to commonplace statements like "Hello" or "How are you?" It has, for us who celebrate the Eucharist, a profound theological significance, as does the response we make to it. It is this significance which the new translation seeks to emphasize. Perhaps it is best reflected in the words of a 4th century Father of the Church, St. John Chrysostom, who gave the following instruction to his people:

... he himself [the priest] invokes on you the grace that comes from the Lord, and you answer him 'and to your Spirit', reminding yourselves by those words that the man who is present does nothing, and that the gifts set before you are not achievements of human nature, but that it is the Spirit's grace, present and descending on all, that prepares that mystical sacrifice. Do not therefore look to the nature of what is seen, but recognize the grace that is unseen. Of the things that take place in this holy sanctuary, nothing is human. If the Spirit were not present, the Church would not assemble; and if the Church does assemble, then it is clear that the Spirit is present.