

A Tale of Two Translations: Rhetorical Style and the Post-Conciliar English Translations of the Mass

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David A. Stosur

Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, WI, USA

Abstract

John O'Malley's study of the rhetorical style of Vatican II bears also on the question of post-conciliar vernacular translations of the liturgy. This article proposes a "hospitality" model of liturgical translation as consonant with the conciliar style. Of the key instructions on liturgical translation, *Comme le prévoit* (1969) and *Liturgiam Authenticam* (2001), the earlier is more consistent with a hospitality model. Analysis of selected collects in the English translations of the Mass based on these instructions, *The Sacramentary* (1974/1985) and the *Roman Missal* (2010), respectively, indicates that *The Sacramentary* translation is likewise better in representing the hospitable style of Vatican II called for in the present liturgical context.

Keywords

Comme le prévoit, English translations of the Mass, hospitality, *Liturgiam Authenticam*, Mass collects, John O'Malley, rhetoric/style of Vatican II, *Roman Missal*, *The Sacramentary*

Corresponding author:

David A. Stosur, Cardinal Stritch University, 6801 N. Yates Dr., Milwaukee, WI 53217-3985, USA.
Email: dastosur@stritch.edu

Commonly known by the title *The Sacramentary* in previous editions,¹ *The Roman Missal*,² the most recent translation of the *Missale Romanum*,³ constitutes the official ordinary text of the ritual for Roman Catholic eucharistic celebrations in English-speaking countries. This translation, implemented on the First Sunday of Advent in November 2011, remains controversial due to the Vatican-mandated shift in principles of translation upon which it is based and to the process of decision-making centralized in Rome that characterized its development and eventual publication.⁴ The recent reconsideration of this process by Pope Francis, resulting in his apostolic letter *Magnum Principium*,⁵ which restores to the bishops' conferences their appropriate role in the preparation and approval of liturgical translations as envisioned by *Sacrosanctum Concilium*,⁶ has once again brought to the fore

1. *The Roman Missal Revised by Decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and Published by Authority of Pope Paul VI: The Sacramentary Approved for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and Confirmed by the Apostolic See*, trans. The International Commission on English in the Liturgy (New York: Catholic Book Publishing, 1974, 1985) (hereafter cited in text as *Sac*). The 1985 edition was revised according to additions in the second typical edition of the *Missale Romanum* (1975).
2. *The Roman Missal Renewed by Decree of the Most Holy Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Promulgated by Authority of Pope Paul VI and Revised at the Direction of Pope John Paul II, English Translation according to the Third Typical Edition, For Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, Approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Confirmed by the Apostolic See*, 2010 translation by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2011) (hereafter cited in text as *RM*).
3. *Missale Romanum, edition typical tertia*, promulgated by John Paul II as *Missale Romanum: ex decreto Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratum: auctoritate Pauli PP. VI promulgatum: Ionannis Pauli PP. II cura recognitum* (Città del Vaticano: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 2002), emended in 2008.
4. The complicated history and various critiques of that process are well documented elsewhere. See Peter Jeffrey, *Translating Tradition: A Chant Historian Reads Liturgiam Authenticam* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2005), a reissuing in book form of a series of four articles from *Worship* (2004); Donald W. Trautman, "The Relationship of the Active Participation of the Assembly to Liturgical Translations," *Worship* 80/4 (2006): 290–309; John Wilkins, "Lost in Translation: The Bishops, the Vatican & the English Liturgy," *Commonweal* (December 2, 2005), <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/lost-translation-1>; Rita Ferrone, "It Doesn't Sing: The Trouble with the New Roman Missal," *Commonweal* (July 15, 2011), <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/it-doesn%E2%80%99t-sing>; and most recently Gerald O'Collins, with John Wilkins, *Lost in Translation: The English Language and the Catholic Mass* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2017).
5. Francis, *Magnum Principium* (September 3, 2017), http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/motu_proprio/documents/papa-francesco-motu-proprio_20170903_magnum-principium.html.
6. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (December 4, 1963), http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html (hereafter cited in text as *SC*): *SC* 36.4: "Translations from the Latin text into the mother

the continuing debates over the process and principles that produced the current translation.⁷

This article compares samples of prayer texts from the former and current Missal translations, after first exploring sections from each translation's principles and procedures outlined in *Comme le prévoit* (1969)⁸ and *Liturgiam Authenticam* (2001),⁹ respectively the first and the most recent instructions concerned with implementing the Second Vatican Council's liturgical reforms regarding vernacular translations.¹⁰ I investigate how the styles of these two sets of instructions, along with the styles of the translations produced in accordance with them, compare with the rhetorical style of the council as described by John O'Malley. Finally, it proposes that a model of "hospitality" characterizes the translation style most in keeping with the rhetoric of Vatican II, and argues that the more recent principles of translation and the resulting current translation are less successful than are their previous counterparts in embodying such hospitality.

O'Malley on the Style of Vatican II and a Hospitality Model of Translation

In identifying the council's style, O'Malley examines the vocabulary of the "language-event" that was Vatican II and observes several categories—"horizontal-words, equality-words, reciprocity-words, change-words, empowerment-words"—that together

tongue intended for use in the liturgy must be approved by the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned above," i.e., in *SC 22.2*: "In virtue of power conceded by the law, the regulation of the liturgy within certain defined limits belongs also to various kinds of competent territorial bodies of bishops legitimately established."

7. See Rita Ferrone, "Faithful Translation: More on *Magnum Principium*," *Commonweal* (October 11, 2017), <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/faithful-translation>; see also "Postscript: September 2017," in O'Collins, *Lost in Translation*, 114–16.
8. For the full text, see *The Liturgy Documents: A Parish Resource*, vol. 2 (Chicago: Liturgy Training, 1999), 235–42 (hereafter cited in text as *CP*); more extensive discussion of the instruction and related documents on translation can be found in this same volume in Gilbert W. Ostieck's "Overview of *Comme le prévoit*: On the Translation of Liturgical Texts for Celebrations with a Congregation, *To Speak as a Christian Community* and *Criteria for the Evaluation of Inclusive Language Translations*," 228–33.
9. Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, "Instruction: *Liturgiam Authenticam*," 28 March 2001, *Origins* 31, no. 2 (2001): 17, 19–32, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_20010507_liturgiam-Authenticam_en.html (hereafter cited in text as *LA*).
10. *CP*'s guidelines, developed as the working principles of the Concilium and given approval by Pope Paul VI, were in effect until the promulgation of *LA*. Among those who have questioned *CP*'s authoritative status is Anthony Ward, "The Instruction '*Liturgiam authenticam*': Some Particulars," *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 116 (2002): 197–221, who describes it as "of unclear literary and juridical genre" and as having "somewhat casual and provisional status" (200). Given that all recognized translations until *LA* appeared utilized *CP* as a guide, the point is somewhat moot, and does not change the following analysis with respect to style.

indicate, in marked contrast to the broadly “judicial” and “legislative” style of previous councils’ canons and decrees, an “epideictic” and “panegyric” style.¹¹ As I explore the two post-conciliar instructions and the two translations of the *Missale Romanum* they guided, I follow O’Malley’s lead in paying attention to the genres of the texts in question. Neither the instructions nor the translations, after all, are conciliar texts. One might expect a certain directive and legalistic tone in the instructions themselves, given the kind of documents that they are. One should nevertheless be able to detect, in what they have to say regarding the principles and procedures for translation, something of the council’s style insofar as these instructions are meant to be tools in the implementation of its intended liturgical reforms. As for the translations, which are ritual texts, a style ought all the more to be anticipated that is consonant with the reforming intentions of the council: “In the restoration and development of the sacred liturgy the full and active participation by all the people is the paramount concern, for it is the primary, indeed the indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit” (SC 14).

Translated texts and the principles of translation that guide them were not on the table following previous councils, of course. This fact is important to recall when asking how the change in style and tone at Vatican II described by O’Malley might be re-envisioned in order to determine a style suited to the distinct textual genres under discussion here. If the conciliar rhetoric has undergone at Vatican II the transformation in style from judicial/legislative to epideictic/panegyric, how might we transpose these terms into the key of liturgical translation? I propose the term *circumscription/defensiveness* as a useful analogy to the judicial/legislative kind of rhetoric by which previous councils’ documents can be characterized, and as a summative term for the pre-conciliar maintenance of Latin as the liturgical language. Let us use the contrasting term *hospitality* to denote the Second Vatican Council’s willingness to open the Catholic Church’s doors to liturgy in the vernacular.¹² Indeed, “hospitality” is a

11. See John W. O’Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap/Harvard University Press, 2008), 306–7.

12. This “hospitality model of translation” is directly indebted to Paul Ricoeur’s “translational model of hospitality” in his *On Translation*, trans. Eileen Brennan (New York: Routledge, 2006), 23: “Translation sets us not only intellectual work, theoretical or practical, but also an ethical problem. Bringing the reader to the author, bringing the author to the reader, at the risk of serving and of betraying two masters: this is to practice what I like to call *linguistic hospitality*. It is this which serves as a model for other forms of hospitality that I think resemble it: confessions, religions, are they not like languages that are foreign to one another, with their lexicon, their grammar, their rhetoric, their stylistics which we must learn in order to make our way into them? And is eucharistic hospitality not to be taken up with the same risks of translation-betrayal, but also with the same renunciation of the perfect translation?” Ricoeur’s understanding of linguistic hospitality is taken up as a “translational model of hospitality” in a collection of essays on interreligious dialogue; see Richard Kearney and James Taylor, eds., *Hosting the Stranger: Between Religions* (New York: Continuum, 2011), especially the essays by Taylor, “Hospitality as Translation,” 11–21, Catherine Cornille, “Interreligious Hospitality and Its Limits,” 35–43, and Marianne Moyaert, “Biblical, Ethical and Hermeneutical Reflections On Narrative Hospitality,” 95–108.

somewhat summative word implied in O'Malley's own conciliar vocabulary list of such "equality-words" and "reciprocity-words" like *friendship, collaboration, partnership, dialogue, pilgrim, servant, dignity, collegiality, inclusion, trust, engagement, invitation, appreciation*, and even *mystery*. "Liberty, equality, and fraternity," writes O'Malley, "as well as other formerly unwelcome guests knocked at the door and gained entrance to the feast."¹³

Principles and Procedures of Liturgical Translation and the Rhetoric of the Instructions

A number of authors have commented upon the content of the two instructions under consideration: *Comme le prévoit*'s "dynamic equivalence" approach, concerned with the overall meaning-effects of a translation of texts from one language to another, and *Liturgiam Authenticam*'s "formal correspondence" approach, wherein a literal, one-to-one correlation between the words of the original language and those of the target language is the goal of the translation.¹⁴ Since our focus here is on the extent to which each expresses a style of hospitality consonant with the style of Vatican II, we first briefly overview their instructional content—the principles and procedures of translation—then also comment on the documents' respective rhetorical styles, beginning with *Comme le prévoit*.

The basic principle of dynamic equivalence as a general method of translation is itself indicative of mutual hospitality between the original and target languages (see CP 6). Both the context of the original text as a whole and the more popular form of the target language should be considered (CP 12 and 15). Because it is to a particular people that a translation must communicate faithfully (CP 6 and 20), a trusting attitude on the part of the recipients of the translations is implied, and therefore an openness to that people's ordinary language must characterize a liturgical translation. Since meaning is contextual, hospitality to the whole text, in its integrity, must also guide the decision to use specific words. Hospitality to the kind of thing a liturgical text is—a text used in the context of a performative prayer-act of communication, a ritual utterance in a particular time and place—honors the communicative function of the text as a priority over such things as precision of meaning (CP 20, 25, and 28). Hospitality to the newness of the present time and culture is discernible in *Comme le*

13. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, 306.

14. Among the more prominent commentaries are Jeffery, *Translating Tradition*; Rita Ferrone, *Liturgy: Sacrosanctum Concilium* (New York: Paulist, 2007), 55–75; Keith F. Pecklers, *The Genius of the Roman Rite: On the Reception and Implementation of the New Missal* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2009), 47–68; and most recently O'Collins, *Lost in Translation*, 20–31. See also Mark R. Francis, "Toward a Symphonic Roman Rite," *Worship* 91 (2017): 292–98. Ferrone has pointed out that just such a comparison underlies Pope Francis's recent *motu proprio*, in that without explicitly naming *Comme le prévoit*, examples of its wording are identifiable in several places in *Magnum Principium*; see Ferrone, "Faithful Translation."

prévoit's openness to creativity in the production of a translation. It may be necessary to augment certain prayers or otherwise alter them due to differences in rhetorical style resulting from the cultural gap between ancient Roman and contemporary prayer-styles (CP 34). Even ecumenical concerns, and thus a hospitable stance toward other Christian denominations, may have an influence in some instances, for example, popular musical settings of the Psalms (CP 36).¹⁵

A style of translation characterized by hospitality is evident not only in the principles of translation outlined in *Comme le prévoit*, but also in the procedures it envisions of bringing the translations to the point of approval by the bishops and recognition by the Holy See. The very process of developing this first instruction, overseen by the Consilium, the commission charged with implementing the liturgical reforms immediately after the promulgation of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, was one of consultation and collaboration with the various major language ("mixed") commissions such as ICEL already working on translations.¹⁶ Hospitality to the people of the vernacular language group is shown in *Comme le prévoit* by the fact that the episcopal bodies of the respective territories, rather than a Vatican dicastery, were entrusted with the responsibility for oversight of the process of translation, for decisions about utilizing mixed commissions, and for the official approval of the final translations. As Gilbert Ostdiek relates, the concluding paragraph of *Comme le prévoit* declared the necessity for the creation of new prayer texts based on the church's tradition (CP 43), "what Annibale Bugnini has called an 'extraordinary expression of openness.'"¹⁷ The contrast to a pre-conciliar mode of circumscription and defensiveness in maintaining the status quo is patent. In its creative hospitality to the needs of the present and of the future, since eventually "all translations [would] need review" (CP 1), *Comme le prévoit* demonstrated just how well definitiveness had given way soon after the council to open-endedness.

Not only this instructional content but also the tone and manner of *Comme le prévoit* point to a rhetoric of inclusion, respect, dialogue, and hospitality rather than defense, mirroring the model of translation it endorses: "faithfully communicate to a given people, and in their own language," "the literary form proper to the respective language" (CP 6); "not the individual word but the whole passage" (CP 12); "language . . . should be that in 'common' usage . . . suited to the greater number of the

15. This brief reference to other churches should be seen against the background of the extensive ecumenical efforts undertaken by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL), until that possibility was revoked by *LA*. See the history of the International Consultation on English Texts (ICET), formed in 1969 at ICEL's invitation, and its successor group, the English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC), of which ICEL was again one of the original conveners, at <http://englishtexts.org/About-ELLC/Historical-Introduction>; for the history of the North American scholars group known as the Consultation on Common Texts (CCT), also formed in 1969, see <http://www.common texts.org/history/>.

16. See Ostdiek, "Overview of *Comme le prévoit*," 229.

17. Ostdiek, "Overview of *Comme le prévoit*," 231; the quotation is from Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy 1948–1975*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1990), 238.

faithful who speak it in everyday use” (CP 15); verbatim translations are “insufficient,” for “the genuine prayer of the congregation” in which “each of its members should be able to express himself or herself” (CP 20); prayers may be “rendered somewhat more freely” in keeping with “the celebration and the needs of today,” while “pompous and superfluous language should be avoided” (CP 34); regarding the mixed commissions, “competent experts are able to cooperate” and “participation of the people is made easier” (CP 41). While a “directive” tone and an intention to be “definitive” is evident in the occasional “must”/“cannot,” “is”/“is not,” and “should”/“should not” vocabulary of this, after all, instructional document, the overriding rhetoric is one of invitation and openness.

In juxtaposition to the style of hospitality characterizing the principles, procedures, and rhetoric of *Comme le prévoit* (a Vatican document known by its vernacular title), there is considerable backsliding toward a circumscriptive/defensive style in *Liturgiam Authenticam*, issued 42 years later. Unlike the hospitality shown to both the message and the audience in *Comme le prévoit*’s dynamic equivalence approach, the formal correspondence principles of *Liturgiam Authenticam* place the communicative context in a subordinate position, and deliberately reverse the direction taken by *Comme le prévoit* (LA 7 and 20). Whereas full, conscious, and active participation of the faithful was an important motivation assumed in the translation principles of *Comme le prévoit*, *Liturgiam Authenticam* mentions participation, but largely only in passing reference to the council.¹⁸ A protective, circumscriptive style of translation promoted by *Liturgiam Authenticam* is set early in the document, for in the liturgical renewal it views as authentic, the correct transmission of sound doctrine through precision in wording is primary (LA 3). This doctrinal defense extended to the principle that translations should intentionally avoid wording or style resembling that found in the prayer traditions of non-Catholics or of other religions (LA 40), leaving ecumenical and interreligious matters to the homily or to catechesis and not to ritual prayer expression (LA 29).¹⁹

The authors of *Liturgiam Authenticam* appear to understand the theological purpose of translation along the lines of what Louis-Marie Chauvet critiques as an “instrumental” model of language (as opposed to a “mediational” model)²⁰ and in terms of what

18. The one paragraph where that reform principle is mentioned in relationship to a principle or strategy of translation is in LA 28, which proscribes for translations the addition of explanatory texts, since it understands “the whole person” rather than simply “man’s intellect” to be the “subject” of liturgical participation. This posture runs counter to the hospitality promoted in the conciliar reform’s agenda of liturgical inculturation.

19. John Wilkins, “Lost in Translation,” rightfully asks, “Could the framers of the Vatican instruction really be suggesting that translations of the Gloria and Creed agreed upon with other churches were causing ‘confusion’ and ‘discomfort’ to Catholic parishioners ...? As recently as [his 1995 encyclical, *Ut Unum Sint*],” Wilkins continues, “Pope John Paul [II] himself had encouraged the preparation of agreed-upon texts for the prayers of the liturgy that the Christian churches have in common.”

20. Louis-Marie Chauvet, *The Sacraments: The Word of God at the Mercy of the Body* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2001), especially 3–17.

Stephen Bevans calls a “countercultural model” of contextual theology.²¹ Each of these models in their own way sees the theological or doctrinal “message” in supracontextual terms, essentially unbound to or “above” any particular cultural-linguistic framework. Rather than being gauged to the act of communication that takes place in actual congregations, translations that accord with this understanding of liturgical renewal should be universal in meaning and style, “assimilating” diverse cultural expressions into a “unity that transcends the boundaries of any single region” (*LA* 5). Where *Comme le prévoit* encouraged amplifying or paraphrasing language in order to adapt the succinctness and abstraction of the Roman prayer style, *Liturgiam Authenticam* is more circumscriptive: “That notable feature of the Roman Rite, namely its concise and compact manner of expression, is to be maintained as far as possible in the translation” (*LA* 57).²² Scriptural and liturgical words “express truths that transcend the limits of time and space” (*LA* 19) and thus should cultivate a kind of sacral character in translation. The kind of unusual or obsolete language in prayer texts *Comme le prévoit* sought to avoid is defended and promoted (*LA* 27 and 50c).

With respect to the process of approval, where *Comme le prévoit* had implemented the council’s directive that the legitimate decision-making body in matters of liturgical translation is the bishops’ conference (with confirmation by the Holy See; see *CP* 2), *Liturgiam Authenticam* notes that the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments makes a special claim to insert itself in the preparation and approval of the translations of major languages (see *LA* 104 and 76).²³ In a further centralizing move, the Congregation insisted that the establishment and oversight of mixed commissions such as ICEL would fall, no longer to the conferences of bishops, but to the Congregation itself (*LA* 93). Rather than being staffed by experts selected by the various bishops’ conferences to work in close collaboration and to pool their resources, international commissions should function as a set of independent national commissions, with their staffs working separately (*LA* 96). One detects a fear of both creativity and theological/liturgical expertise motivating the injunction that mixed commissions be limited only to translating the Latin of the typical editions without undertaking original compositions or even engaging collaboratively with other international commissions (*LA* 98).

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21. Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, rev. ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002), 117–37; the supracontextual understanding of the Christian message is first described on 40–44, in the chapter on Bevans’s “translation model,” a presuppositional feature shared with the countercultural model. The largely negative view of culture that is detectable in *LA* makes the countercultural model a better overall candidate for application to this instruction than the translation model.
22. Mark R. Francis, “Another Look at the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy and the Substantial Unity of the Roman Rite,” *Worship* 88 (2014): 217–39, argues that this interpretation of the “supra-regional” nature of the Roman rite is fundamentally “ahistorical,” and that “the insistence on the literal translation of words and the reproduction in English of Latin rhetorical devices of late antiquity as a necessary part of the ‘substantial unity’ of the Roman Rite, displays the problematic nature of the cultural assumptions of [*LA*] for all to see” (253).
23. See Francis, “Another Look,” 243–46 for a succinct account of the struggle over decentralization/re-centralization of authority for translation approval between the time of the council and the promulgation of *LA*.

Any non-bishop experts or staff members working for international commissions would now require the Congregation's *nihil obstat* (LA 100).²⁴

Nearly from its inception and until the promulgation of *Liturgiam Authenticam*, ICEL's ecumenical involvement and cooperation in seeking common texts where possible had been a hallmark of its way of operating,²⁵ with no hint of concern over such collaboration expressed in *Comme le prévoit. Liturgiam Authenticam* effectively halted these efforts. Lutheran liturgical scholar Maxwell Johnson points out that many Protestant liturgical prayers were developed on the foundation of the Roman Catholic texts, often in collaboration with ICEL: "'the manner of speech of non-Catholic ecclesial communities' in their liturgical language is based directly on the manner of *Catholic* liturgical speech because it is adapted directly *from* already existing Catholic liturgical speech! It is not and could not have been the other way around, even if for Roman Catholics ecumenical consultation had been part of the process."²⁶

The rhetorical style of *Liturgiam Authentica* itself reflects the circumscriptive, defensive, and inhospitable posture of the principles and procedures of liturgical translation. An imposing tone is set, seemingly intended to keep all bishops' conferences and language groups on their heels, when unnamed vernacular language groups are chided: "The omissions or errors which affect certain existing vernacular translations—especially in the case of certain languages—have impeded the progress of the inculturation that actually should have taken place" (LA 6). Or consider words and phrases such as the following: "tendencies . . . which are to be avoided," "stand secure as the authentic voice of the Church," "safeguards also the faith and the unity of the whole Church" (LA 7); "not so much a work of creative innovation" (LA 20); "the addition of explanatory texts . . . is to be prudently avoided" (LA 28); "the indefectible faith of the Church" (LA 4); "maintain the identity and unitary expression of the Roman Rite" (LA 5); "free of an overly servile adherence to prevailing modes of expression," "a sacred style that will come to be recognized as proper to liturgical language," "manner of speech which has come to be considered somewhat obsolete in

24. These provisions made it possible in July 2001 for the Vatican congregation to appoint a group of English-speaking bishops of its choosing, the Vox Clara Committee, to oversee the work of ICEL, whose professional staff it summarily replaced. See Bishop Maurice Taylor's account in "A Cold Wind from Rome," ch. 5 in *It's the Eucharist, Thank God* (Suffolk: Decani, 2009), 47–74, especially 50–74.

25. See ELLC, "Historical Introduction," <http://englishtexts.org/About-ELLC/Historical-Introduction>: "ICEL as one of the original conveners of both ICET and ELLC, was a full member of ELLC until [the publication of *Liturgiam Authenticam*] which proscribed its involvement in ecumenical bodies . . . Their withdrawal was accepted with great regret, and we look forward to the day when it is once again possible for ICEL to return to membership." One can now hope that ICEL's hospitality to ecumenical efforts in liturgical matters eventually may be restored, given Pope Francis's hospitality toward returning related decision-making authority to bishops' conferences.

26. Maxwell E. Johnson, "Ecumenism and the Study of Liturgy: What Shall We Do Now?" *Liturgical Ministry* 20, no. 1 (2011): 13–21 at 16, citing LA 40; see also Paul F. Bradshaw, "Liturgical Reform and the Unity of Christian Churches," *Studia Liturgica* 44 (2014): 163–71, especially 168–70.

daily usage may continue to be maintained in the liturgical context,” and “where seemingly inelegant words or expressions are used, a hasty tendency to sanitize this characteristic is likewise to be avoided” (*LA* 27). In stating that “the Holy See reserves to itself the right to prepare translations in any language, and to approve them” (*LA* 104), *Liturgiam Authenticam* demonstrates that it is inhospitable to the de-centralizing hospitality of Vatican II so apparent in *Comme le prévoit*.

A Sampling of the Two English Translations

A thorough examination of the differences in the translations of *The Sacramentary*, which was based on *Comme le prévoit*, and *The Roman Missal*, based on *Liturgiam Authenticam*, is beyond the scope of this article, as is a discussion of the 1998 translation approved by English-speaking bishops’ conferences but rejected by Rome.²⁷ I will confine my analysis to a few examples of particular rhetorical effects produced by the two fully implemented translations, effects that I contend are idiomatic to each, without claiming that they are necessarily exclusive to each. I examine several collects in the section of the Missal arranged under the heading “Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions,” selecting from the subheadings “For Civil Needs” and “For Various Occasions.”²⁸ The analysis intends to be illustrative rather than exhaustive.

The dimension of Greimasian semiotics broadly termed “narrative analysis,” which includes examination of the structural roles played by various characters in the unfolding of the plot, attempts to lay bare the “narrative programs” (roughly, the plots and

27. Others have told the story of the English translation “that almost was,” the 1998 translation of the *MR* some 13 or more years in the making by ICEL, approved by all the major English-speaking bishops’ conferences, including the USCCB, but rejected by Rome with the promulgation of *LA* in 2001. Again, with the new situation emerging due to Pope Francis’s *Magnum Principium*, the possibility arises that the efforts of ICEL in the development of that translation may again have a role to play in future revisions. Gerald O’Collins proposes that this very possibility be taken up without delay in *Lost in Translation*, x, 111, and *passim*. I confine my remarks here to the two translations that were fully approved and implemented for use in the United States and other English-speaking countries.

28. This description of headings and subheadings follows the current listing in *RM*, which is identical to that in the *MR* in this part of the missal except for the one additional pair of prayers found only in *RM* and specifically composed for use “In the Dioceses of the United States,” no. 48/1A and B, “For Giving Thanks to God for the Gift of Human Life.” The listing of categories and enumeration in *Sac* is different due to its having followed the arrangement of these prayers in the previous (second) edition of *MR*. A general overview of the arrangement in the *MR* (2002) may be found in Maurizio Barba, “Le Messe Rituali, per altre circostanze particolari, votive e dei defunti nel nuovo ‘Missale Romanum,’” *Ephemerides liturgicae* 117 (2003): 15–52.

The choice of particular texts to analyze was not entirely arbitrary. Initially, I chose them in part because these are not very familiar, rarely analyzed, and seldom-used texts. I also hoped that they might offer some liturgical/theological insight into civil and political affairs in the wake of a rather disruptive political climate following the 2016 elections in the United States. The generality of these prayer texts, however, makes it difficult to glean much insight into such contemporary concerns, in spite of the fact that most of these texts are modern compositions.

subplots) of a narrative.²⁹ In the case of the prayer form known as the “collect” (“opening prayer” in *The Sacramentary*), the standard narrative trajectory of the prayer is structured by its literary form, often portrayed in English shorthand as “You–Who–Do–Through”: a direct address to God (the Father), often with a qualifying adjective naming the distinctive divine attributes (Almighty, Ever-living, etc.); an anamnetic subordinate clause, often beginning with *qui* in Latin, which acknowledges and praises God’s past deeds; a petition entreating God to act so as to bestow some favor requested by those praying—and here we do well to insert into the usual shorthand “To,” as in “in order to”/“so that,” as another subordinate clause (frequently *ut* in Latin) indicating the purpose or intention, the desired result or outcome toward which the petition is directed (e.g., “give us x, so that we might be able to do y”); concluding with a naming of Christ the Lord as the one through whose mediation (*per Dominum*) the prayer is made and a trinitarian doxology naming Christ’s unity with God (the Father) in the Holy Spirit, also signaling the end of the prayer voiced by the presider, thereby marking the moment for the assembly to respond, “Amen.”³⁰

It comes as no surprise, given the standard form, that the narrative program is virtually identical between translations of the same prayer. In attending to the structure of the opening prayers, we notice that in every instance the “plot” is the same in both translations. It would indeed be unexpected if the narrative implied by one translation differed in any significant way from the other, since that story constitutes the “what” of the translations from the Latin *editio typica* to each English version of the prayer. Take, for example the two translations of the collect “For the Nation or State”/“For the Nation, (State,) or City”:

<p>MR 21. PRO PATRIA VEL CIVITATE <i>Deus, qui mirabili consilio univérſa dispónis, súscipe benignus quas pro pátria nostra tibi fúndimus preces, ut sapiéntia moderatórum et honestáte civium concórdia et iustítia firméntur, atque fiat cum pace prospérita perpétua. Per Dóminum.</i></p>	<p>Sac 17. FOR THE NATION, (STATE,) OR CITY God our Father, you guide everything in wisdom and love. Accept the prayers we offer for our nation; by the wisdom of our leaders and integrity of our citizens, may harmony and justice be secured and may there be lasting prosperity and peace. We ask this through</p>	<p>RM 21. FOR THE NATION OR STATE O God, who arrange all things according to a wonderful design, graciously receive the prayers we pour out to you for our country (state), that, through the wisdom of its leaders and the integrity of its citizens, harmony and justice may be assured and lasting prosperity come with peace. Through</p>
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29. See Groupe d’Entrevernes, *Analyse sémiotique des textes. Introduction: théorie–pratique*, 5e éd. (Lyon: Presses universitaires de Lyon, 1985), and the helpful overview in Walter Vogels, *Reading and Preaching the Bible: A New Semiotic Approach* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1986).

30. For more detailed analyses of collects and collect-type prayers, see, among others, Kathleen H. Hughes, “The Opening Prayers of ‘The Sacramentary’: A Structural Study of the Prayers

It is clear that the “plots” implied by the two translations, following as they do those in the Latin original, do not differ. Broadly speaking, the “what” of the prayer in *The Roman Missal* is for all practical purposes the same as that in *The Sacramentary*, and both are the same as in the *Missale Romanum*: God is praised for being the divine planner/director of all things, and is asked to accept the assembly’s prayers for the wisdom of their country’s leadership and the integrity of its citizens, so that harmony, justice, peace, and prosperity will result.

But what about the “how” of these prayers? The formal aspects of the “how”—how the narrative programs implied are moved along by the prayer’s structure—are again more or less identical. It is not in the narrative itself that differences are detectable. In the discursive and performative/communicative features, however, we can observe some distinctions in the tone or rhetorical effects as each prayer falls on the ears of the English-speaking worshipers who hear them or, in the case of presiders, speak them. In the terms by which we have transposed O’Malley’s description of conciliar styles, we can ask, How well does each translation present a style of hospitality, both in general as inviting to those who hear it, and consequently in particular to the reformed liturgical aim of full, conscious, and active participation of all the faithful? The following part-by-part comparison of this prayer notes instances in which a given feature is typical of other collects, and thus is reinforced in a manner that especially characterizes the rhetoric of one or the other translation.

In the address, each translation expands on the single word of the original, *Deus*. In *The Sacramentary*, the translation is rendered “God our Father,” naming the first person of the Trinity (a theological assumption, but one verified in part based on the not infrequent reference to Christ as *tuus filius*, “your Son,” in numerous prayers in the liturgy, including many collects, though not in this prayer).³¹ It also uses the first-person plural possessive pronoun “our,” indicating immediately both that the addresser of the prayer is first-person plural and the relationship between God and those assembled is figured here as “parent–children.” This is the same type of relationship figured in the address of the Lord’s Prayer (“Our Father”), Jesus’ prescribed address in the prayer by which he taught his disciples how to pray (Matt 6:9). The hospitable style of address in this translation of the word *Deus* is somewhat mitigated in contemporary contexts by the gender-exclusive aspect of the additional English word “Father.” The very

of the Easter Cycle” (PhD dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1980); Gerard Moore, *Vatican II and the Collects for Ordinary Time: A Study in the Roman Missal (1975)* (San Francisco: Catholic Scholars, 1998); James G. Leachman and Daniel P. McCarthy, eds., *Appreciating the Collect: An Irenic Methodology* (Farnborough, Hampshire: St. Michael’s Abbey, 2008); Lauren Pristas, *Collects of the Roman Missals: A Comparative Study of the Sundays in Proper Seasons before and after the Second Vatican Council* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

31. In the set of prayers for various needs and occasions, such a reference occurs only in *RM* 43 (= *Sac* 30), “For Those Held in Captivity,” *RM* 45A (= *Sac* 32A), “For the Sick,” and *RM* 46A (= *Sac* 33), “For the Dying” (as well as in the alternative for this prayer in *RM*, “For those who will die this day,” an addition to the third edition of *MR* and thus not found in *Sac*).

frequent use of the term in *The Sacramentary* whenever the address did not contain a description of a divine attribute came into prominence just as the legitimate concern for gender-inclusive language was taking hold in the 1970s (and was, of course, greatly on the minds of the ICEL translators who prepared the 1998 translation). The translation in *The Roman Missal* of the direct address, “O God,” avoids the gender-exclusive addition, but also introduces its own addition, the poetic apostrophe “O,” giving the address to God an archaic quality that exemplifies the principle in *Liturgiam Authenticam* 27, permitting obsolete usages to be preserved in the liturgical translation on the grounds that these lend themselves to “expressing heavenly realities.” Apparently, the translators deemed this principle more important than the one in *Liturgiam Authenticam* 20 calling for strict correspondence and a literal translation that avoids additions.

Turning to the second part of the collect, which in Latin is a subordinate clause acknowledging God’s past deeds (*qui mirabili consilio univérsa dispónis*), one comes up against a feature that distinguishes both prayer translations in their entirety, and which turns out to be a significant difference in strategy that is broadly characteristic of the two translations. The tactic in *The Roman Missal* here and routinely is to imitate the Latin prayer by maintaining its sentence-count, here a single sentence up until the final mediatory phrase, *Per Dominum* (“Through our Lord . . .”) *The Sacramentary* breaks up that single sentence into two written sentences, the second having a compound coordinate clause, so that the effect on the listener is of hearing, and on the presider of speaking, three sentences. It is typical of the collects that *The Roman Missal* keeps the number of sentences to one plus the phrase “through,” while *The Sacramentary* invariably adds (at least) one sentence by turning the anamnestic subordinate clause into a separate sentence beginning “you . . .” (following upon the direct address to God). It then also turns *Per Dominum* into a full sentence beginning “We ask this . . .” There is perhaps no more thoroughgoing example of the hospitality shown by *The Sacramentary* to the users of the vernacular and to the communicative genre of a performative ritual prayer in English, in juxtaposition to the defensiveness of the original Latin formulation by maintaining its one-sentence-plus-a-phrase structure for collects in *The Roman Missal*.

As for the anamnesis of God’s works, *The Sacramentary* translates the subordinate clause in this prayer as a sentence: “You guide everything in wisdom and love.” While by no means a word-for-word translation of the Latin, it conveys a sense of the divine involvement in and care for all that happens in the universe, of God’s own hospitality toward creation, and clearly maintains the direct address in the use of the second-person pronoun “you.” By contrast, *The Roman Missal* adheres very closely to the Latin with “who arrange all things according to a wonderful design.” Here one detects a certain dissonance, a strangeness in the sound—albeit grammatically correct—of the second-person form of the verb “arrange” coming after the relative pronoun “who.” This is another archaism, since it would be rare in English to address someone and then immediately use the relative pronoun whose antecedent is the addressee. We are more likely in common parlance to hear the relative pronoun used as a third-person referent, so that the second-person form of the verb, “who arrange,” sounds initially

like a grammar mistake: Should it not be “who arranges,” we might at first ask ourselves? The effect is arguably one that creates distance and mitigates the sense of relational presence that accompanies the direct address, potentially inhibiting the rhetoric of dialogue that should be characteristic of prayer addressing God,³² and is all the more serious as so many collects follow this identical pattern. Anytime the Latin *qui* clause is in the present tense, *The Roman Missal* translation is in the form of “who” and the foreign-sounding second-person form of the verb: “O God, who do . . .” or “O God, who are . . .” The phrase as a whole in this particular prayer, while true to the Latin original, also has the ring of the ancient Platonic view of creation by a demiurge, and the choice of the indefinite article in the phrase “according to a wonderful design” does not even name God as in fact the designer, leaving open the possible interpretation that God followed someone else’s wonderful design. Overall, the phrase well exemplifies the stark contrast between the premodern worldview of the Latin prayers described by Mark Francis as one “in which men and women felt incapable of challenging the vicissitudes of the natural world and abandoned themselves to the ‘givenness’ of the social and political constructions that governed their lives, since they believed that these structures came directly from God,” over against the worldview of contemporary men and women, which “sees human beings as active participants with God in an evolving world that is no longer the center of the universe.”³³

The petition in the prayer is likewise translated in *The Roman Missal* in close approximation to the Latin: “graciously receive the prayers we pour out to you for our country.” O’Collins points out that *Comme le prévoit*

questioned whether translators should seek equivalents for “the phrases of approach to the Almighty” that the Latin liturgy “adapted from forms of address to the sovereign in the courts of Byzantium and Rome” [*CP* 13]. The 2010 Missal relentlessly pursues, however, the unctuous or fulsome path of those courts, with “graciously” incessantly introducing prayers: “graciously grant,” “graciously accept,” “graciously choose,” [and so forth] . . .³⁴

The Roman Missal translation continues by naming in a subordinate clause that the result (harmony, justice, etc.) be secured “by the wisdom of [our country’s] leaders and the integrity of its citizens.” The much simpler formulation in *The Sacramentary*, “Accept

32. Martin Buber’s *I and Thou*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1970; original 1923, 1957) is pertinent to this observation about the aural slippage into the third person and the address to God: “When one cannot get around saying You, perhaps to one’s father, wife, companion—why not say You and mean It? After all, producing the sound ‘You’ with one’s vocal cords does not by any means entail speaking the uncanny basic word [I–You]” (85). On the importance of Buber for the mid-twentieth-century philosophical significance of dialogue as a conceptual framework influencing the rhetoric of Vatican II, see Ann Michele Nolan, *A Privileged Moment: Dialogue in the Language of the Second Vatican Council 1962–1965* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2006), especially chap. 5, “Dialectic, Rhetoric, and Dialogue,” 156–63, on Buber.

33. Francis, “Toward a Symphonic Roman Rite,” 295.

34. O’Collins, *Lost in Translation*, 39.

the prayers we offer for our nation,” continues with a coordinate clause and refers to “our leaders” and “our citizens,” establishing a closer personal relationship with the choice of the first-person pronoun “our” over the more distant and detached third-person “its.”

Our examination of this example of the collect “For the Nation or State” demonstrates a clear instance in which the earlier translation in *The Sacramentary*, based on principles from *Comme le prévoit*, exhibits a rhetoric of hospitality lacking in *The Roman Missal* translation, which does indeed seem more aligned to the rhetoric of circumscription/defensiveness propounded by *Liturgiam Authenticam*. One example, of course, is hardly convincing evidence, so let us briefly consider other collect prayers in this section of Masses for “various needs and occasions” (civil needs / various occasions). The general outlines and structures are similar across the prayer examples, so a line-by-line analysis is hardly necessary. Instead, we will select particular phrases that illustrate thematically how the rhetoric of *The Roman Missal* rather consistently is one of circumscription/defensiveness, as opposed to the way a rhetoric of hospitality emerges in the translations of *The Sacramentary*.³⁵

The two translations of the prayer for those in public office read:

Sac 18. FOR THOSE WHO SERVE IN PUBLIC OFFICE

Almighty and eternal God,
you know the longings of men’s hearts
and you protect their rights.
In your goodness,
watch over those in authority,
so that people everywhere may enjoy
freedom, security, and peace.

We ask this through

RM 22. FOR THOSE IN PUBLIC OFFICE

Almighty ever-living God,
in whose hand lies every human heart and the
rights of peoples,
look with favor, we pray,
on those who govern with authority over us,
that throughout the whole world
the prosperity of peoples,
the assurance of peace,
and freedom of religion
may through your gift be made secure.
Through

The anamnetic phrase following the address to God in *The Roman Missal* 22 has been translated, “in whose hand lies every human heart and the rights of peoples.” The awkwardness of this phrase stems from the fact that, while the metaphor of human hearts being in God’s hands may be poetic, in combination with “the rights of peoples” also being in God’s hands, an infelicitous clash of meaning results: human hearts and human rights are of different orders, and they are not situated within God’s “hands” in the same way. It is difficult to envision a hand holding innumerable hearts while also containing human rights. The less literal rendering in *The Sacramentary*, “you know the longing of men’s hearts and you protect their rights,” differentiates God’s way of relating to human hearts as “knowing” their longings, from the stance of protection God is figured as taking toward human rights. Though the gender-exclusive “men’s

35. Since in every instance the *RM* translation stays very close to the Latin original, we will dispense with citing the entire Latin version of the prayer.

hearts” is problematic, *The Sacramentary* also makes the direct address plain by twice using the second-person pronoun “you,” a relation hidden by the pronoun “whose” in *The Roman Missal*’s translation. The petition in *The Sacramentary* for God to “watch over those in authority” puts an emphasis on God’s constant care for public leaders, in contrast to the fussy “look with favor, we pray, on those who govern with authority over us” (emphasis added) in *The Roman Missal*, which also accents the vertical/top-down relationship between the leaders and those praying. The convoluted “may through your gift be made secure,” like the awkwardness of the anamnetic clause, is inhospitable to presiding prayer-reciters as well as participating worshiper-hearers.

In this pair of prayers for human labor, the difference in title is eye-catching:

Sac 25. FOR THE BLESSING OF HUMAN LABOR

A

God our Creator,
it is your will that man accept the duty of work.

In your kindness may the work we begin bring us growth in this life and help to extend the kingdom of Christ.

We ask this through

B

God our Father,
you have placed all the powers of nature under the control of man and his work. May we bring the spirit of Christ to all our efforts and work with our brothers and sisters at our common task, establishing true love and guiding your creation to perfect fulfillment.

We ask this through

RM 26. FOR THE SANCTIFICATION OF HUMAN LABOR

A

O God, Creator of all things,
who have commanded the human race to bear the burden of labor,
grant that the work we are beginning may bring progress in this life and, by your favor,
advance the spread of the Kingdom of Christ. Who lives and reigns with you

B

O God, who willed to subject the forces of nature to human labor,
mercifully grant that, undertaking in a Christian spirit what we are to do,
we may merit to join our brothers and sisters in practicing sincere charity and in advancing the fulfillment of your divine work of creation.

Through

In the first option, *The Sacramentary* 25A has “blessing” of human labor, while *The Roman Missal* 26A has “sanctification” of human labor; the latter is surely closer to the Latin (*sanctificando*), but the more popular term “blessing” is replaced with a more technical, sacral term. Of course, the titles of these prayers are not typically spoken for the assembly to hear. What is spoken is the prayer itself, and here two points are worth noting. First, to say in addressing God as in *The Sacramentary*, “it is your will that man accept the duty of work”—a reference to the creation story (Gen 3:17–18) as suggested also in the titles given God (“God our Creator” in *The Sacramentary*; “O God, Creator of all things” in *The Roman Missal*)—is to invite a conception of human labor as dignified by God, of work as something to which human beings are divinely called and by which they may actively and freely “accept” their duty. The same idea is far

less hospitably conceived in *The Roman Missal*, where work is a burden commanded by God for humans to bear, an onus on humans by which God subjugates humanity. Second, *The Sacramentary* envisions in the purpose-clause that the work we have begun “will help to extend the kingdom of Christ”; while *The Sacramentary*’s translation is more bland than poetic, *The Roman Missal*’s rendering as “advance the spread of the Kingdom of Christ” is certainly no improvement, inviting to native English ears a comparison of Christ’s reign to a virulent disease.

In the alternative prayer for human labor, we see in *The Roman Missal* 26B an example of an often-criticized feature of the more recent translation, the rendering in English of the deponent verb *mereor* (here, *mereamur*) as “merit”: “that . . . we may merit to join our brothers and sisters . . .” The Pelagian overtones of this word are avoided in *The Sacramentary* 25B: “May we . . . work with our brothers and sisters in our common task . . .” Another frequent difference in word choice is exemplified in this option, namely, the translation of *caritas* (here, *caritatem*) as “love” in *The Sacramentary* and as “charity” in *The Roman Missal*. Given the more common association of “charity” in English with philanthropic giving, especially of the kind that keeps those trapped in poverty at an institutional distance from those possessing wealth, it would seem that “love” is the translation more in keeping with a rhetoric of hospitality.³⁶

The very timely subject of our final example relates directly to the theme of hospitality: the prayer “For Refugees and Exiles.”

<p>Sac 29. FOR REFUGEES AND EXILES Lord, no one is a stranger to you and no one is ever far from your loving care. In your kindness watch over refugees and exiles, those separated from their loved ones, young people who are lost, and those who have left or run away from home. Bring them back safely to the place where they long to be and help us always to show your kindness to strangers and to those in need. We ask this through</p>	<p>RM 32. FOR REFUGEES AND EXILES O Lord, to whom no one is a stranger and from whose help no one is ever distant, look with compassion on refugees and exiles, on segregated persons and on lost children; restore them, we pray, to a homeland, and give us a kind heart for the needy and for strangers. Through</p>
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36. Consider, for example, Rosemary Haughton on the difference between charity and hospitality in *Images for Change: The Transformation of Society* (New York: Paulist, 1997), especially chap. 7, “A Criterion for Structural Choices.” Hospitality “challenges the political basis of ‘charity’ as a response to need, because charity assumes that structures need no change but only modification while hospitality proposes an entirely different political and moral structure for human living” (133). “Hospitality as a practical criterion is about how to share spaces and resources in ways that are just, sustainable and humanly satisfying . . . If hospitality is about making it possible for people to meet, to share food, to talk, to look at each other, then it is about the crossing of thresholds with all that that implies” (140–41).

The concern for hospitality and the rhetoric of hospitality go hand-in-hand in *The Sacramentary* 29, while the tone in *The Roman Missal* 32 is by comparison less hospitable if not in some ways inhospitable. The formality of “to whom no one is a stranger and from whose help no one is ever distant” in *The Roman Missal* refers somewhat stiffly to God but does not address God, unlike the direct address to the affectionate God of *The Sacramentary*’s “no one is a stranger to you and no one is ever far from your loving care.” Where *The Sacramentary* speaks of the kindness proper to God as the source of active, divine protection of refugees and exiles (“watch over”), *The Roman Missal* mentions compassion instrumentally and with more detachment (“look ... on”). *The Sacramentary* 29 speaks to the plight of “those separated from their loved ones” in its translation of *segregátos hómines* from the *Missale Romanum* 32, while the very literal “segregated persons” of *The Roman Missal* 32 could only cause confusion and potentially offense in using a term that carries with it, especially in the United States, a history of racism. *The Sacramentary* sensitively renders *The Roman Missal*’s terse “lost children” as “young people who are lost, and those who have left or run away from home.” The petition to “bring them back safely to the place where they long to be” in *The Sacramentary* marks an openness to the dignity of such persons, honoring their own desires and longings, whereas the “restore them to a homeland” of *The Roman Missal* depicts them as passive. Unfortunately, one could envision this petition in *The Roman Missal* also being prayed by those who have no intention of welcoming refugees, and who might prefer to “send them back home.” Finally, the concluding petition in *The Roman Missal* to “give us a kind heart for the needy and for strangers” puts the focus on what “we” receive and uses a collective term, “the needy,” in a way that directly identifies a group of persons by their poverty. *The Sacramentary*, on the other hand, asks God to “help us always to show your kindness to strangers and to those in need.” It thus images what “we” receive to be an extension of God’s own kindness to strangers and to persons whose identity is not in their poverty, although since they thereby suffer, the prayer reminds us of our obligation to attend to their needs.

Conclusion: A Hospitality Model of Liturgical Translation

The concern for style in the work of translation holds no matter what type of text is under consideration, but there is a particular need for hospitable care and attention in the translation of Christian liturgical texts, where significant theological issues are indeed at stake. Where there is a tendency as in *Liturgiam Authenticam* to view “theological” in primarily “doctrinal” terms, however, as if the main purpose of the Mass were to communicate doctrine, a proclivity for a rhetoric of circumscription/defensiveness predominates.³⁷ My proposal for a rhetoric of hospitality is intended to

37. The doctrinal emphasis is, understandably, a hallmark of many magisterial approaches to the liturgy. It was explicitly stated by Pius XII in *Mediator Dei* (November 20, 1947) 48, which reverses the priority in the maxim attributed to Prosper of Aquitaine, “*Legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi*” (let the rule for prayer determine the rule

recognize that the manner in which one approaches liturgical translation should attend to far more than the words of the ritual text, as if they were doctrinal statements in ritual form. When translating the genre of texts that are Christian liturgical books, what exactly is being translated?

If the answer to this question comes from a narrow view of liturgical translation that sees the “object” of translation simply and straightforwardly to be the Latin text of the *Missale Romanum*, the result is a circumscriptive/defensive style of translation. When one asks just what that Latin text is and represents, much larger questions of the performative, relational, symbolic, contextual, and theological orders arise—and there doctrine is but one of the secondary questions. The eucharistic liturgy is not the ritual performance of doctrine (not even of doctrine regarding the Eucharist, and not even if in some times and places the recitation of the Creed has been taken up as an element within eucharistic celebrations). What then is it? To paraphrase liturgical scholar John Baldovin, liturgy is a symbolic/ritual translation of the Paschal Mystery (Passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ) in the context of the church as his Body and in the power of the Holy Spirit.³⁸ The very life of God revealed in Christ in the power of the Spirit is what the liturgy itself “translates” in the ecclesial context.

All that goes with the task of translation—its gains and its losses, as well as its status as an act of interpretation—is implied here. Paul Ricoeur’s *On Translation* shows a number of dimensions of the act of translating, which have further theological implications when the “object” of translation is ultimately the divine subject who offers life to human subjects in the economy of salvation. Translation is both “a work of remembering” and “a work of mourning,” a “vow of faithfulness” and “a suspicion of betrayal” on both sides—with respect, that is, to both the original and the target languages/cultural contexts, to both “author” (of the original) and “reader” (of the translation).³⁹ The formulation here is important: translation is not merely a mechanism for turning the words of one language into the words of another, for authors and readers—persons—are at stake. We should note that Ricoeur’s fundamental understanding of translation is expressed in the hospitable terms of the dynamic equivalence

for belief): “More properly, since the liturgy is also a profession of eternal truths, and subject, as such, to the supreme teaching authority of the church, it can supply proofs and testimony, quite clearly, of no little value, towards the determination of a particular point of Christian doctrine. But if one desires to differentiate and describe the relationship between faith and the sacred liturgy in absolute and general terms, it is perfectly correct to say, ‘*Lex credendi legem statuat supplicandi*’—let the rule of belief determine the rule of prayer”; http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_20111947_mediator-dei.html.

38. Baldovin offers this definition of sacrament: “Sacraments are symbolic/ritual activity that effectively mediate Christian identity by re-actualizing the Paschal Mystery (Passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ) in the context of the church as his Body and in the power of the Holy Spirit,” in *Bread of Life, Cup of Salvation: Understanding the Mass* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 157.

39. See Ricoeur, chap. 1, “Translation as Challenge and Source of Happiness,” *On Translation*, 3–10.

approach to which *Comme le prévoit* subscribes.⁴⁰ He sums up the dynamic with this injunction: “give up the ideal of a perfect translation.”⁴¹ This is not to give up on translation altogether, for in fact translation does happen, “*there is translation*.”⁴² It is an idealized perfection that must be mourned or renounced, even as translation happens. What is mourned is what no longer can be in the new context as it unfolds; but faithfulness to what is remembered in the text is also faithfulness to what is becoming, what emerges under present conditions: it is faithfulness to the living tradition.⁴³

The human dimension of translation—the fact that it is a mediating dynamic between persons whose identities are themselves linguistically and culturally mediated—brings us to view the act of liturgical translation in greater relief. The *Missale Romanum* provides a Latin language template as a tool for helping to unify, in their legitimate cultural diversity, Roman Rite Catholic Christians to whom, since the Second Vatican Council, the right has been restored to celebrate the Eucharist in their own language. To ignore this dimension and reduce the task of liturgical translation to determining a Latin-word-for-vernacular-word correspondence, with little if any regard for the contextual/cultural dimension of linguistic meaning, especially when done with the understanding that what is being translated is primarily doctrine, risks a subtle form of idolatry. As Martin Buber once put it, “O mysteriousness without mystery, O piling up of information! It, it, it!”⁴⁴ For Buber this means that one’s mode is that of “experience and use,” rather than one of encounter, of authentic relation (I–You).⁴⁵ One must therefore question the extent to which an English translation ought to rely primarily, much less solely, on the Latin “ritual translation” of the Paschal Mystery. It is questionable, in this light, whether the “genius” of the Roman Rite is “captured” at the level of the *Missale Romanum*, with its particular verbal rhetoric and rubrical style. Is not that genius, because of the historical emergence of English-speaking Roman Catholic communities, already embodied in those communities, which have their own style, albeit one shaped by the (nominally) Roman tradition? It is time to mourn the passing of the ideal of perfection that hinders the authentic

40. “Not only are the semantic fields not superimposed on one another, but the syntaxes are not equivalent, the turns of phrase do not serve as a vehicle for the same cultural legacies; and what is to be said about the half-silent connotations, which alter the best-defined denotations of the original vocabulary, and which drift, as it were, between the signs, the sentences, the sequences whether short or long. It is to this heterogeneity that the foreign text owes its resistance to translation and, in this sense, its intermittent untranslatability.” Ricoeur, *On Translation*, 6.

41. Ricoeur, *On Translation*, 8.

42. Ricoeur, *On Translation*, 32, emphasis original.

43. Ricoeur wishes not to “defend tradition understood as an inert transmission of dead sediment,” rather he points to tradition “as a living passing-on of innovation which can always be re-activated by a return to the most creative moments of the poetic composition.” Ricoeur, “Life: A Story in Search of a Narrator,” in *A Ricoeur Reader*, ed. Mario J. Valdés (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 429.

44. Buber, *I and Thou*, 56.

45. Buber, *I and Thou*, 55–56.

liturgy of real persons and real communities in relationship with the One who makes all things new. That authenticity, for our time and place, entails a style of translation representative of the style of Vatican II that Professor O'Malley so carefully and thoroughly describes, a style of dialogue, of invitation, of openness to mystery—a style of hospitality.

Author Biography

David A. Stosur (PhD Notre Dame) is professor of religious studies at Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, specializing in liturgical theology. He recently published “Narrative Signification and the Paschal Mystery: Liturgy, Participation, and Hermeneutics,” *Questions liturgiques / Studies in Liturgy* (2015).