

### Spiritual Connections

*We hope you will find this communication interesting.*

*As a faith-based institution, our signature song is the power of prayer, learning and reflection.*

*It is our prayer that you find the "changes" in the Mass have you singing with us in prayer and reflection...*

### Our Mission

*The Benedictine Sisters of Florida seek God in monastic community, prayer and ministry. Nourished by the Word of God and our life together, we respond with the compassion of Christ to feed the hungry of the people of God.*

*We strive to help all those within our realm of influence to develop their fullest human and spiritual potential.*

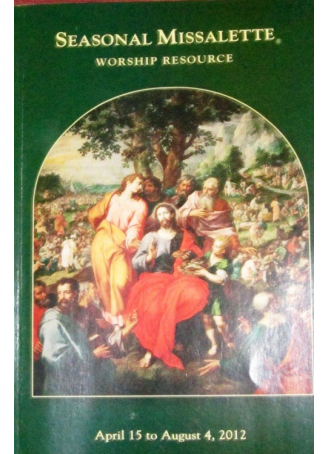
*We accomplish our mission by sharing our human and material resources and our Benedictine values.*

## Benedictine Sisters of Florida

# Changes in the Unchanging Mass

JULY 2012

Advent 2011 marked the inauguration of the Anew@ Roman Missal. Responses in the Mass which once so easily tripped off our tongues, were replaced with an altered translation and we suddenly have to really think about what we are saying. We here at Holy Name Monastery have been blessed with being able to participate in daily Mass so for us many of the Anew@ responses have become almost second nature. However, we too, like most Catholics, still have to refer to the Apew card@ now and then to be sure that we are saying the correct words.



Some people refer to the changes in the Roman Missal as the Anew Mass.@ But in reality, the Mass itself has not changed. Certainly the 2011 changes are not nearly as radical as the changes which took place after the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) when Mass was no longer celebrated in Latin, but in the vernacular, i.e., the common language of each country or area. For centuries the Mass had been celebrated in Latin. No matter where you traveled or what country you visited, the Mass was always the same and the familiar Latin text was heard. But with the change to the vernacular, the faithful were able to hear the Mass in their own language and thus better understand it.

Vatican II resulted in some changes to the format of the Mass. The Anew@ Roman Missal has given us an updated translation of the Mass texts. But keep in mind that what has not changed are the principal parts of the Mass - its essential core - the Offertory, Consecration and Communion. These parts are the same as they have been

celebrated for centuries. Think of what happens when a woman wears a basic black dress. When she changes her accessories such as shoes, belt, purse and jewelry, she presents a different picture, but the basic dress has not changed. This analogy may seem a bit trite, but it does give us a way to think about the *changes* in the unchanging Mass.

At one time our Protestant brothers and sisters knew the Bible much better than we Catholics did. However, after Vatican II the greater emphasis on Scripture in the expanded Liturgy of the Word—with its three-year cycle of Sunday readings and two-year cycle weekday readings—introduced us to a wealth of Biblical texts. Furthermore, our ability to hear these Scripture readings in our own language helps us to better understand the Word of God. When we attentively listen to the Bible passages week after week, the Word of God slowly penetrates our hearts and, if we let it, changes our lives. It is interesting to note that when asked for their favorite Scriptural passages, a confirmation class overwhelmingly chose texts from the Liturgy of the Word...many of which had not been used before Vatican II.

Vatican II resulted in other changes in the format of the Mass as well. For example, the altar was moved so that the priest could face the people. More emphasis was placed upon the participation of the laity in the Mass. We were no longer spectators, but as members of the assembly, we have an important role to play. The rite of the exchange of peace was incorporated into the Mass and the short dialogue at the beginning of the Mass changed somewhat. And, of course, all the texts of the Mass are in our own language.

The “new” Roman Missal did not change the format of the Mass, but rather changes the translations of some of the texts. The translations in our current Roman Missal more closely adhere to the original Latin. Actually the changes in our part (some responses, the Gloria, the Creed, the Holy, Holy, and the Memorial Acclamations) are quite minimal in comparison to the prayers recited by the priest.

With time this translation of the Roman Missal will become very familiar to us all. Meanwhile it has given us an opportunity to hear anew the prayers of the Mass. We have had to pay attention! We have had to be mindful of what we are saying. All of us need to keep this attitude of mindfulness as we participate in the Mass...pondering the meaning of what we are saying even more than thinking about what words to say.

