

**The Román Canon: A comparison  
of the Spanish and english trans-  
lations.**

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In 1963, the Second Vatican Council decreed that, "in those Masses which are celebrated with the people, a suitable place may be allotted to their mother-tongue. This is to apply in the first place to the readings and the prayer of the faithful, but also, as local conditions may warrant, to those items of the liturgy which pertain to the people". (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, para. 54).

As we now know, this cautiously worded decree was merely the thin end of the wedge and, a few years afterwards, the whole of the Mass, including the Canon itself, was being celebrated in the mother-tongue of each nation.

This is not the place to dwell on the benefits we have gained from being able to hear and say the words of the Mass in our own language; nor is it the place to lament the rapid and virtual disappearance of Latin from most of our worship, the loss of a heritage of nearly 2000 years. Rather, I want to write about the process of rendering the Latin liturgical texts into English, the difficulties, foreseen or otherwise, that were encountered, and the results that were obtained.

I hope that this will be of particular interest to those who are familiar with the Spanish translation now in use in this country and who will therefore be able to contrast these with the English translation and to compare the problems each has had to face, the fidelity with which the Latin is translated in each case, and the degree of effectiveness of the liturgical texts in the two Languages.

Such an essay as this, if it is not to remain theoretical and nebulous, must be continually making reference to the texts themselves. But the number of texts is enormous and so, in order to keep this study manageable both for the writer and for the reader, I limit myself to an examination of probable the

best known text of all, the Roman Canon or, to give it its official name, Eucharistic Prayer no. 1.

The English text of the Roman Canon is the work of the International Committee on English in the Liturgy ("ICEL"), established in 1964 by the episcopal conferences of ten different English-speaking countries. The translation was completed and published in 1967 and, with a few subsequent and minor amendments, it is the version in use today. The basic aim of the translators was to provide a text that could be spoken aloud easily and effectively so that those in the congregation could hear and understand what the priest was saying.

More precisely, the translation had to try to express faithfully the meaning, intention and character of the Latin original, it had to keep in mind the sacral nature of the Canon, it had to provide a composition to be used in public worship (which might not be the same as that suitable for private and personal prayer), it had to respect contemporary linguistic usage and avoid an archaic English style and, not least, it had to be a translation acceptable to English-speaking Catholics all over the world. As ICEL pointed out, "an idiom which is modern and contemporary to a liturgiologist in Chicago is very different to the idiom natural to a taxi-driver in London, a lawyer in Durban, a store-keeper in Karachi or a bank clerk in Sydney". The final translation, therefore, had to "aim at good, straight, simple English, which brings understanding to the unlearned and delight to the literate". A deceptively simple prescription for an immensely difficult task!

Long before the ICEL translation of the Roman Canon, there were of course other versions in English, to be found in missals for the people's use and in other prayer books. All of these stuck closely to literal renderings of the Latin texts, lacking in true English style and employing a diction that was largely archaic. They were regarded by ICEL as perhaps suitable for private use but quite unsuitable for public recitation aloud.

ICEL, in fact, tried to find a middle way between two extremes. On the one hand, it wanted to avoid a literal translation which would slavishly attempt to render every word in every phrase of the Latin original; on the other hand, it had to be careful not to produce merely a vague paraphrase of the Latin text. In either case, the result would have been infidelity

to the original because a word-for-word translation while perhaps preserving the form of the Latin, would inevitably distort its meaning for those who heard it and were not conversant with the Latin style so different from that of contemporary English; even more obviously, a loose paraphrase offers no guarantee at all that one is being given "the meaning, intention and character of the Latin original". The ICEL translation, therefore, is not afraid to restructure the form or to vary the syntax of the original; it is not afraid to omit many words, and particularly adjectives, that occur in the original - and, because of this procedure rather than in spite of it, the result is claimed to be a translation in complete fidelity to the Latin text, reproducing as far as possible every meaning and value, especially biblical and liturgical, of the original.

Inevitably, there has been criticism of the translation, much of which has maintained that it has departed too far from a literal rendering, that in some cases the translation is too near a paraphrase that distorts or at least is not wholly faithful to the Latin sense. Some critics are quick to see a conspiracy in all this, a diabolical plot to remove from the Mass the proper emphasis on the mysteries of the Catholic faith - the divinity of Christ, the sacrificial nature of the Mass, the real presence of our Lord in the Eucharist, the distinction between priests and laity. The translators retort that certain words are in the Latin text not for their theological significance but only for stylistic purposes and that, since present-day English has nothing corresponding to these characteristics of Latin style, the attempt to find an English word for every single Latin word would result not merely in awkwardness and artificiality but indeed in mistranslation.

Let us examine the English text itself. We shall see that it is less faithful to the original wording and phrasing than the Spanish translation is. Yet in most cases we shall also see that the ICEL translators are able to make out a good case for their alterations, fundamentally on the grounds that they have tried always to use language and style that will make comprehensible to men wherever English is spoken the real sense and meaning of the great Eucharistic prayer.

Te igitur, clementissime Pater,  
per Iesum Christum, Filium tuum, Dominum nostrum,  
supplices rogamus et petimus,  
uti accepta habeas  
et benedicas haec dona, haec munera,  
haec sancta sacrificia illibata,

A ti, pues,  
Padre misericordioso,  
te pedimos humildemente  
por Jesucristo, tu Hijo, nuestro Señor,  
que aceptes y bendigas  
estos dones,  
este sacrificio santo y puro que te ofrecemos,

We come to you, Father,  
with praise and thanksgiving,  
through Jesus Christ your Son.  
Through him we ask you to accept and bless  
these gifts we offer you in sacrifice.

In the English translation of this section of the Roman Canon which follows the Preface and Sanctus, there are two points of some importance. In the first place, the first two lines do not occur explicitly in the Latin original (nor in the Spanish), but they were written in to the English to interpret *igitur* and thus to sum up the themes of the Sanctus (praise) and the Preface (thanksgiving).

Secondly, even this short section we have three examples of something that will frequently be remarked in the English translation, viz., that words or phrases in the Latin have been suppressed. *Clementissime* has gone because English does not have the same multiplicity of adjectives (especially superlatives) as Latin and moreover it is extremely rare in English to attach an adjective to a noun in the vocative case; *Dominum nostrum* is omitted to keep the reference to the Second Person as direct and uncluttered as possible; *supplices rogamus ac petimus* becomes "we ask you" because Latin frequently uses pairs of words not because they represent distinct thoughts or ideas that have to be explicitly translated (cf. the Spanish *te pedimos hu-*

**mildemente**) but rather for reasons of Latin rhythm or style which are foreign to English.

It will be noted, however, that, at the end of this section, the three nouns **dona**, **munera**, **sacrificia**, all appear in the English but in a neat translation which avoids monotony or repetition. The adjectives **sancta** and **illibata** attached to **sacrificia** for euphony have nevertheless disappeared.

In primis, quae tibi offerimus  
pro Ecclesia tua sancta catholica:  
quam pacificare, custodire, adunare  
et regere digneris toto orbe terrarum:  
una cum famulo tuo Papa nostro N.  
et Antistite nostro N.  
et omnibus orthodoxis atque catholicae et apostolicae  
fidei cultoribus.

Ante todo, por tu Iglesia santa y católica,  
para que le concedas la paz,  
la protejas,  
la congregues en la unidad  
y la gobiernes en el mundo entero,  
con tu servidor el Papa N.,  
con nuestro obispo N.,  
y todos aquellos que, fieles a la verdad,  
promueven la fe católica y apostólica.

We offer them for your holy catholic Church,  
watch over it, Lord, and guide it;  
grant it peace and unity throughout the world.  
We offer them for N. our Pope,  
for N. our bishop,  
and for all who hold and teach the catholic faith  
that comes to us from the apostles.

**Digneris** followed by the infinitive is not translated by the word "deign" (archaic) nor by any attempt to use a subjunctive construction ("may" in particular would have been ambiguous as this word is often employed to introduce a question). Instead, the four infinitives are rendered by imperatives (which nowadays

especially carry no peremptory connotation); the order of the four is altered, for purposes of style.

The final two lines in English are an example of a non-literal rendering which succeeds in conveying the theological meaning of the phrase in a way that a word-for-word translation would not. (The Spanish here is similarly an interpretation of the Latin.)

Memento, Domine, famulorum famularumque tuarum N. et N.  
et omnium circumstantium,  
quorum tibi fides cognita est et nota devotio,  
pro quibus tibi offerimus:  
vel qui tibi offerunt hoc sacrificium laudis,  
pro se suisque omnibus:  
pro redemptione animarum suarum,  
pro spe salutis et incolumitatis suae;  
tibi que reddunt vota sua  
aeterno Deo, vivo et vero.

Acuérdate, Señor, de tus hijos N. y N.  
y de todos los aquí reunidos,  
cuya fe y entrega bien conoces;  
por ellos y todos los suyos,  
por el perdón de sus pecados  
y la salvación que esperan,  
te ofrecemos, y ellos mismos te ofrecen,  
este sacrificio de alabanza,  
a tí, eterno Dios, vivo y verdadero.

Remember, Lord, your people,  
especially those for whom we now pray: N. and N.  
Remember all of us gathered here before you.  
You know how firmly we believe in you  
and dedicate ourselves to you.  
We offer you this sacrifice of praise  
for ourselves and those who are dear to us.  
We pray to you, our living and true God,  
for our well-being and redemption.

*Famulorum famularumque tuarum* was not translated as "servants" because of the restricted meaning of that word now-



days; instead, "your people" was chosen because it is a biblical term. The phrase that follows was added as an interpretation in the spoken English of what **N. et N.** conveyed in the written Latin of the old silent Canon. (The Spanish translators chose **hijos** for **famulorum famularumque tuarum**, also very biblical, but not so suitable in English: "sons?... but what about daughters? "children"?... but what about the grown-ups? And, since the Canon is properly to be listened to by the congregation and not read by them from written texts, **N. y N.** in the Spanish would seem inadequate as the priest does not read these letters aloud.)

The second half of the section has been much changed in English. The phrase **pro quibus tibi offerimus vel qui tibi offerunt** has been reduced to "we ofer you", mainly on the grounds that the words **pro quibus tibi offerimus** are a late addition to the Latin text and make the whole phrase theologically confused and pastorally confusing. (Spanish gets over the difficulty by changing **vel** into **y**: **te ofrecemos y ellos mismos te ofrecen.**) **Suisque omnibus** becomes "those who are dear to us"; it was considered sufficient to translate **pro redemptione animarum suarum, pro spe salutis et incolumitatis suae** by the rather jejune phrase, "for our well-being and redemption"; and the nearly impossible **tibique reddunt vota sua** (omitted in Spanish) has become the simple "we pray to you".

Communicantes,  
et memoriam venerantes,  
in primis gloriosae semper Virginis Mariae,  
Genetricis Dei et Domini nostri Iesu Christi:  
sed et beati Ioseph, eiusdem Virginis Sponsi,  
et beatorum Apostolorum ac Martyrum tuorum,  
Petri et Pauli, Andreae,  
et omnium Sanctorum tuorum;  
quorum meritis precibusque concedas,  
ut in omnibus protectionis tuae muniamur auxilio.

Reunidos en comuni3n,  
veneramos la memoria, ante todo,  
de la gloriosa siempre Virgen Marfa,  
Madre de Jesucristo, nuestro Dios y Se1or;

la de su esposo, San José;  
la de los santos apóstoles y mártires  
Pedro y Pablo, Andrés,  
y la de todos los santos;  
por sus méritos y oraciones  
concédenos en todo tu protección.

In union with the whole Church  
we honour Mary  
the ever-Virgin mother of Jesus Christ our Lord and God.  
We honour Joseph, her husband,  
the apostles and martyrs  
Peter and Paul, Andrew,  
and all the saints.  
May their merits and prayers  
gain us your constant help and protection.

The translators considered that the phrase *gloriosae semper Virginis Mariae, Genetricis Dei et Domini nostri Iesu Christi* was too long and out of proportion to the mere enumeration of the names of the other saints, so, in the interests of effective and emphatic English, the translation first made was "Mary, the virgin mother of Jesus Christ our Lord". This version met with much criticism on the grounds that it seemed to derogate the unique position and privileges of our Lady and might even be construed as throwing doubt on the divinity of her Son. The phrase was therefore amended and only the adjective *gloriosae* is missing from a literal rendering of the Latin.

Hanc igitur oblationem servitutis nostrae,  
sed et cunctae familiae tuae,  
quaesumus, Domine, ut placatus accipias:  
diesque nostros in tua pace disponas,  
atque ab aeterna damnatione nos eripi  
et in electorum tuorum iubeas grege numerari.

Acepta, Señor, en tu bondad,  
esta ofrenda de tus siervos  
y de toda tu familia santa;  
ordena en tu paz nuestros días,  
líbranos de la condenación eterna  
y cuéntanos entre tus elegidos.

Father, accept this offering  
from your whole family.  
Grant us your peace in this life,  
save us from final damnation,  
and count us among those you have chosen.

Asserting that the words **Pater**, **Domine** and **Deus** are syno-

nymous and interchangeable in the Latin original, the English translation chooses the word which seems best suited for clarity and effectiveness. So here **Domine** becomes "Father" and, in the next section, **Deus** is omitted.

The term *servitutis nostrae*, which refers to the ministers at the altar, is left out altogether on the grounds that these are included in the "whole family" of God. This, despite the fact that some saw the omission as an insidious attempt to play down the distinction between ordained priests and the laity.

Quam oblationem, tu, Deus, in omnibus, quaesumus,  
benedictam, adscriptam, ratam,  
rationabilem, acceptabilemque facere digneris:  
ut nobis Corpus et Sanguis fiat dilectissimi Filii tui,  
Domini nostri Iesu Christi.

Bendice y acepta, oh Padre, esta ofrenda  
haciéndola espiritual,  
para que sea  
Cuerpo y Sangre de tu Hijo amado,  
Jesucristo, nuestro Señor.

Bless and approve our offering;  
make it acceptable to you,  
an offering in spirit and truth.  
Let it become for us  
the body and blood of Jesus Christ,  
your only Son, our Lord.

The first English translation of this series of five adjectives was "Bless and approve our offering; make it truly spiritual and acceptable". This was later amended so that, despite the fact that, in all probability, the five Latin adjectives are principally a stylistic embellishment and despite the difficulty of knowing

the exact meaning of each, an attempt has been made to render each of them distinctly in English, though the order has been changed somewhat and the adjectival form dispensed with. (Cf. the Spanish, **Bendice y acepta... haciéndola espiritual.**)

Qui, pridie quam pateretur,  
accepit panem in sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas,  
et elevatis oculis in caelum  
ad te Deum Patrem suum omnipotentem,  
tibi gratias agens benedixit,  
fregit,  
deditque discipulis suis, dicens:  
**ACCIPITE ET MANDUCATE EX HOC OMNES:  
HOC EST ENIM CORPUS MEUM,  
QUOD PRO VOBIS TRADETUR.**

El cual, la víspera de su Pasión,  
tomó pan en sus santas y venerables manos,  
y, elevando los ojos al cielo,  
hacia ti, Dios, Padre suyo todopoderoso,  
dándose gracias y bendiciendo,  
lo partió,  
lo dio a sus discípulos y dijo:  
**TOMAD Y COMED TODOS DE EL,  
PORQUE ESTO ES MI CUERPO,  
QUE SERA ENTREGADO POR VOSOTROS.**

The day before he suffered  
he took bread in his sacred hands  
and looking up to heaven,  
to you, his almighty Father,  
he gave you thanks and praise.  
He broke the bread,  
gave it to his disciples, and said:  
**TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND EAT IT:  
THIS IS MY BODY WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP  
[FOR YOU.]**

The English follows very closely the Latin wording, although **venerabiles**, **Deum** and **enim** have been omitted for motives already given in earlier similar examples. The word **benedixit**

has been translated not by "blessed" but by "he gave you praise", it being held that the latter better expresses the Hebrew concept underlying the Latin word; "blessed" in English would suggest hallowing the bread, making it holy, which is not the purpose here of the Latin word, **benedixit**.

Simili modo, postquam cenatum est,  
accipiens et hunc preclarum calicem  
in sanctas et venerabiles manus suas,  
item tibi gratias agens benedixit,  
deditque discipulis suis, dicens,  
**ACCIPITE ET BIBITE EX EO OMNES:  
HIC EST ENIM CALIX SANGUINIS MEI  
NOVI ET AETERNI TESTAMENTI,  
QUI PRO VOBIS ET PRO MULTIS EFFUNDETUR  
IN REMISSIONEM PECCATORUM.  
HOC FACITE IN MEAM COMMEMORATIONEM.**

Del mismo modo, acabada la cena,  
tomó este cáliz glorioso  
en sus santas y venrables manos;  
dándote gracias y bendiciendo,  
lo dio a sus discípulos y dijo:  
**TOMAD Y BEBED TODOS DE EL,  
PORQUE ESTE ES EL CALIZ  
DE MI SANGRE,  
SANGRE DE LA ALIANZA  
NUEVA Y ETERNA,  
QUE SERA DERRAMADA POR VOSOTROS  
Y POR TODOS LOS HOMBRES  
PARA EL PERDON DE LOS PECADOS.  
HACED ESTO EN CONMEMORACION MIA**

When supper was ended,  
he took the cup.  
Again he gave you thanks and praise,  
gave the cup to his disciples, and said:  
**TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND DRINK FROM IT:  
THIS IS THE CUP OF MY BLOOD,  
THE BLOOD OF THE NEW AND EVERLASTING  
[COVENANT.]**

IT WILL BE SHED FOR YOU AND FOR ALL MEN  
SO THAT SINS MAY BE FORGIVEN.  
DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME.

Again a number of words which are found in the Latin and justifiable there on stylistic grounds and not because they are found in the biblical accounts of the Last Supper are left out. (In both consecrations, the Spanish retains all the Words of the Latin original and is practically a word-for-word rendering.)

Both English and Spanish have rightly translated **multis** as "all men" and **todos los hombres** since neither Hebrew nor Aramaic had a word for "all" and used the word "multitude" without meaning it in the exclusive sense of "many, but not all".

Unde et memores, Domine,  
nos servi tui,  
sed et plebs tua sancta,  
eiusdem Christi, Filii tui, Domini nostri,  
tam beatæ passionis,  
necnon et ab inferis resurrectionis,  
sed et in caelos gloriosæ ascensionis:  
offerimus præclaræ maiestati tuæ  
de tuis donis ac datis  
hostiam puram,  
hostiam sanctam,  
hostiam immaculatam,  
Panem sanctum vitæ æternæ  
et Calicem salutis perpetuæ.

Por eso, Señor,  
nosotros, tus siervos, y todo tu pueblo santo,  
al celebrar este memorial  
de la pasión gloriosa  
de Jesucristo, tu Hijo, nuestro Señor;  
de su santa resurrección  
del lugar de los muertos  
y de su admirable ascensión a los cielos,  
te ofrecemos, Dios de gloria y majestad,  
de los mismos bienes que nos has dado,  
el sacrificio puro, immaculado y santo:  
pan de vida eterna  
y cáliz de eterna salvación.

Father, we celebrate the memory of Christ, your Son.  
We, your people and your ministers,  
recalls his passion,  
his resurrection from the dead,  
and his ascension into glory;  
and from the many gifts you have given us  
we offer to you, God of glory and majesty,  
this holy and perfect sacrifice:  
the bread of life  
and the cup of eternal salvation.

This section has been simplified in English, particularly by the omission of a number of adjectives. The phrase, **nos servi tui sed et plebs tua sancta**, which in Spanish remains **nosotros tus siervos y todo tu pueblo santo**, is inverted in English and one of its elements interpreted: "we, your people and your ministers". It is worth noting that in both languages the Latin phrase, **praeclarae maiestati tuae**, is adapted in exactly the same way so as to give a better understanding of the underlying biblical idea, although the English translators did so reluctantly as they felt that the expression, "God of glory and majesty", was somewhat alien to the simplicity of their translation.

Supra quae propitio ac sereno vultu  
respicere digneris:  
et accepta habere,  
sicuti accepta habere dignatus es  
munera pueri tui iusti Abel,  
et sacrificium Patriarchae nostri Abrahae,  
et quod tibi obtulit summus sacerdos tuus Melchisedech,  
sanctum sacrificium, immaculatam hostiam.

Dirige tu mirada serena y bondadosa  
sobre esta ofrenda:  
acéptala,  
como aceptaste los dones del justo Abel,  
el sacrificio de Abrahán,  
nuestro padre en la fe,  
y la oblación pura  
de tu sumo sacerdote Melquisedec.

Look with favour on these offerings,  
accept them as once you accepted  
the gifts of your servant Abel,  
the sacrifice of Abraham, our father in faith,  
and the bread and wine offered by your priest Melchisedech.

The last four words in the Latin are a later addition and it is not clear if they refer to Melchisedech's offering or to the Eucharistic gifts. The Spanish version contents itself by reducing **quod tibi obtulit... sanctum sacrificium, immaculatam hostiam** to **la oblación pura**, but in English an even greater change is made, with a mention, not found in the Latin, of the objects which constituted the offering of Melchisedech.

Supplices te rogamus, omnipotens Deus:  
iube haec perferri per manus sancti Angeli tui  
in sublime altare tuum,  
in conspectu divinae maiestatis tuae;  
ut, quotquot ex hac altaris participatione  
sacrosanctum Filii tui Corpus et Sanguinem sumpserimus,  
omni benedictione caelesti et gratia repleamur.

Te pedimos humildemente,  
Dios todopoderoso,  
que esta ofrenda sea llevada a tu presencia,  
hasta el altar del cielo,  
por manos de ángel,  
para que cuantos recibimos  
el Cuerpo y la Sangre de tu Hijo,  
al participar aquí de este altar,  
bendecidos con tu gracia,  
tengamos también parte  
en la plenitud de tu reino.

Almighty God,  
we pray that your angel may take this sacrifice  
to your altar in heaven.  
Then, as we receive from this altar  
the sacred body and blood of your Son,  
let us be filled with every grace and blessing.



The usual simplification occurs once more in the English: omissions of words and even of whole phrases, such as **in conspectu divinae maiestatis tuae**.

Memento etiam, Domine, famulorum famularumque tuarum N. et N., qui nos praecesserunt cum signo fidei, et dormiunt in somno pacis.  
Ipsis, Domine, et omnibus in Christo quiescentibus, locum refrigerii, lucis et pacis, ut indulgeas, deprecamur.

Acuérdate también, Señor, de tus hijos N. y N., que nos han precedido en el signo de la fe y duermen el sueño de la paz.  
A ellos, Señor, y a cuantos descansan en Cristo, concédeles el lugar del consuelo, de la luz y de la paz.

Remember, Lord, those who have died and have gone before us marked with the sign of faith, especially those for whom we now pray, N. and N. May these, and all who sleep in Christ, find in your presence, light, happiness, and peace.

The Latin, **et dormiunt in somno pacis**, retained in Spanish, has given way in English to "especially those for whom we now pray", for reasons explained already in an earlier section.

Nobis quoque peccatoribus famulis tuis, de multitudine miserationum tuarum sperantibus, partem aliquam et societatem donare digneris cum tuis sanctis Apóstolis et Martyribus: cum Ioanne, Stephano, Matthia, Barnaba...  
et omnibus Sanctis tuis: intra quorum nos consortium, non aestimator meriti, sed vaniae, quaesumus, largitor admitte.

Y a nosotros, pecadores,  
que confiamos en tu infinita misericordia,  
admítenos en la asamblea  
de los santos apóstoles y mártires  
Juan el Bautista, Esteban,  
Matías y Bernabé...  
y de todos los santos;  
y acéptanos en su compañía,  
no por nuestros méritos,  
sino conforme a tu bondad.

For ourselves, too, we ask  
some share in the fellowship of your apostles and martyrs,  
with John the Baptist, Stephen, Matthias, Barnabas...  
and all the saints.  
Though we are sinners,  
we trust in your mercy and love.  
Do not consider what we truly deserve,  
but grant us your forgiveness.

This section, quite complex in the Latin, has been considerably simplified and paraphrased in English, not only by omissions of words but also by splitting the whole into three smaller sentences (with the consequent loss of some coherence among the various ideas). In addition, the reference to our being sinners trusting in God's mercies, with which the section begins in Latin, has in English been transferred to near the end.

Per Christum Dominum nostrum,  
per quem haec omnia, Domine,  
semper bona creas, sanctificas, vivificas, benedixisti,  
et praestas nobis.

Por Cristo nuestro Señor.  
Por él sigues creando todos los bienes,  
los santificas,  
los llenas de vida,  
los bendices  
y los repartes entre nosotros.

Through Christ our Lord  
you give us all these gifts.  
You fill them with life and goodness,  
you bless them and make them holy.

Since in all languages the phrase, **Per Christum Dominum nostrum**, with which various sections of the Roman Canon used to conclude is now omitted (to avoid breaking up the unity of the Eucharistic Prayer), it has been necessary in all languages to make some explicit reference to Christ at the beginning of this section, so as to make sense of the words **per quem**. The Spanish follows the Latin revision very closely in this and also in rendering the five verbs which follow. But the English amalgamates the Latin **Per Christum Dominum nostrum, per quem** into one phrase and moreover changes the order of the verbs. The translators considered that it was desirable to put the last verb (the climactic reference to God's giving his gifts to us) in the first place and indeed making it a separate sentence.

It may be noted that the English translators have not tried to solve the ambiguity of the phrase, **haec omnia** - the body and blood of Christ? (but then why **per quem**?); or God's other gifts? (but then why **haec**?) - whereas the Spanish removes the ambiguity by removing the word **haec**.

Per ipsum, et cum ipso, et in ipso,  
est tibi Deo Patri omnipotenti,  
in unitate Spiritus Sancti,  
omnis honor et gloria  
per omnia seacula seculorum.  
Amen.

Por Cristo, con él y en él,  
a ti, Dios, Padre omnipotente,  
en la unidad del Espíritu Santo,  
todo honor y toda gloria  
por los siglos de los siglos.  
Amén.

Through him,  
with him,  
in him,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all glory and honour is yours,  
almighty Father,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.

The English translators, even in this final, gramatically simple section, decided to give one last proof of their independence and refused to be tied too closely to the Latin. **Per... cum... in** were at first "through... in... with" but have now reverted to "through... with... in"; but **omnis honor et gloria** are, in English, "all glory ad honour".



I end on a personal note. There is no doubt at all of the great pastoral advantages of having the Canon in English. I think that this is so not only for those who are ignorant of Latin but for everyone. Yet in the English translation I miss the sonority and dignity of the Latin words and sentences, which I still find in the Spanish version. The English sounds too off-hand, too matter-of-fact.

To what extent is this feeling due to the fact that Latin and Spanish are, for me, foreign languages with therefore a certain glamour attaching to them? To what extent is it due to the fact that Spanish is much more akin to Latin than is English, so that a Spanish translation can be much more literal than the English? To what extent is it due to the need to produce an English text that will satisfy so many countries with so many variations in their way of using the one language?

As we have seen, many words and phrases of the original

have been omitted in the English translation, but nothing essential. The style and rhythm have been simplified and the Latin cadences lost. However one must admit that the translators are probably correct when they assert that something of the original had to be sacrificed in order to produce an English version which would be acceptable throughout the English-speaking world and for the century in which we live.

