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Has the Vatican usurped Vatican II liturgical norms?

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NCR Today

Writes Jerry Filteau, NCR Washington Correspondent: "Another surprise element introduced on the opening day of the bishops' Nov. 16-19 meeting came during initial informational presentation of several supposedly final segments of the new English translation of the Latin Roman Missal.

"As the first of the five final segments was introduced, Bishop Donald W. Trautman of Erie, Pa., rose to ask what had ever happened to the translations of the antiphons ? which the bishops had discussed in the first draft form a couple of years ago, he said, but which had never come back to them in final draft form for actual debate and vote.

"Bishop Arthur J. Serratelli of Paterson, N.J., chairman of the USCCB Committee on the Liturgy, answered that the antiphons did not come back to the bishops for approval because in the meantime the Holy See has taken their translation to itself.

"Trautman asked, 'How does that square with' the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on Sacred Liturgy, which plainly says that vernacular translations of the Latin liturgical texts are the responsibility of the local bishops' conferences.

He cited Paragraph 36.4 of the constitution, which says, 'Translations from the Latin text into the mother tongue intended for use in the liturgy must be approved by the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority,' as a conciliar mandate that, in his view, says no Vatican agency can usurp the role of the local bishops' conference in vetting and approving such liturgical texts.

Serratelli could only reiterate that the Vatican had assumed authority over the English antiphon translations and taken it out of the hands of the English-speaking bishops' conferences around the world.

George ruled Trautman's question out of order in the context of the business at hand, which concerned another set of texts, not the antiphons. When Trautman asked when or how his question might be in order, George assured him that room for his question would be made later in the meeting.

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