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California cathedral meets new missal with indifference

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NCR Today

At the cathedral of the San Jose, Calif., diocese Sunday, the first use of the new translation of the Roman Missal was met with a mix of indifference and creative interpretation.

While the domed ceiling of the mission-style Cathedral Basilica of St. Joseph echoed with a mix of "And with your spirit" and "Also with you" responses from the congregation at several points, many of the other changes went off smoothly, with many parishioners bowing their heads to read from an instruction pamphlet.

Yet in one noted change, the cathedral's pastor told parishioners after his homily that while they'd be saying the Nicene Creed this week, they might not in the future.

Instead, Msgr. J. Patrick Browne said he'd rather use the Apostle's Creed, which is "shorter and easier to understand."

Joking after the recitation of the creed, Browne said that next week "there will be a test on the meaning of the work consubstantial."

After Mass, one parishioner said she thought the new prayers would lead to a deeper appreciation for the Mass.

Ann McInnis, a local kindergarten teacher who regularly attends Mass at the cathedral, said she was initially skeptical of the new translation, but "realized that change was good to grow and to make the prayers fresh for everybody."

The new prayers, she said, would "force us to concentrate and think about what we're doing when we celebrate the Mass."

For his part, Browne didn't seem to be so hopeful. Although in a short interview he said the cathedral had spent the past eight weeks hosting sessions for parishioners on the new translations, the pastor said he "wasn't going to invest a whole of time" worrying about the changes.

Using a real estate analogy, Browne put it this way: "If I were renting space on this issue, it would be a small room on the fourth floor."

Some priests, Browne guessed, will start "being flexible" with the new language "within a year."

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