

1st Draft Liturgy Submission to Plenary Council St Kevin's Parish

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Language of Liturgy –

Submission to change the language of the liturgy

“Either eat this soup or jump out of the window”¹

This is the literal translation of a well known Italian saying. The translation is not very revealing in Australian English as it fails to convey the saying's meaning.

Australians may guess what the translation is getting at, but they cannot be sure. The language is unclear, it is not effective, it does not deliver.

This is analogous to the effect of the current Missal translation in Australia. The language is convoluted and the word for word translation is ineffective in ensuring that the people of God can fully participate in worship.

Pope Francis has called for a re-evaluation of the 2001 Vatican instruction *Liturgiam Authenticam*. We at St Kevin's respectfully ask our bishops to stop adopting the literal translation and to consider other options that are more relevant and meaningful in contemporary Australia. A starting point could be looking at the 1998 translation that was never implemented. This will enable Australian Catholics to fully participate in the liturgy. Language devoid of meaning is futile.

What's a more meaningful Australian translation of the Italian saying above? *“It's this way or the highway.”*

Literal translations are ineffective. To enable full participation in the liturgy we need language that speaks to Australians and engages their mind, hearts and imagination.

Inclusive language in Liturgy

Is inclusive language in the liturgy much to do about nothing? We at St Kevin's believe we shall never achieve “full , active participation in the liturgy” called for in the “constitution on the liturgy “ of 2nd Vatican Council until our language in the liturgy matches lived experience in the day life of our people.

Please remember that even those of middle age have long lived with newspapers ,magazines & TV that use “man” to mean “male”. Yet in our liturgy we are faced with any number of examples such as these we quote.

18th Sunday year B “The whole community of the sons of Israel”I have heard the complaints of the sons...” followed by “ mere men ate the bread of angels”.

St Paul & St James in second reading often commence “my brothers”.

Of course, it is important to distinguish between vertical & horizontal inclusive language. We are not asking for a change to the Blessed Trinity. However, continuing to use sex exclusive titles for human

¹From the Italian: o mangiar questa minestra o saltar dalla finestra.

beings continues to harm the Church's mission. Too many people already find such language offensive & is one of the stated reasons for men & women leaving the practice of their faith.

Inclusive language is no more than a recognition of contemporary culture & changes in the English language. Without this simple change we face the very real problem of becoming more & more out of step & irrelevant.

For how much longer must women pray "for us men and our salvation ".

Sacrament of Penance

A review of the Church's practice of the Sacrament of Penance is necessary

- I. The Third Rite of Reconciliation and General Absolution should return. People have "voted with their feet" and moved away from the practice of the Sacrament of Penance as it is currently celebrated.

The Third Rite of Reconciliation was well received in many places in Australia in the past. The Third Rite consisted a communal celebration of God's love, mercy and forgiveness. Many people participated in these liturgies which included general absolution. People gathered for the purpose of celebrating Christ's forgiveness, hearing the Word of God and a homily, performing an Examination of Conscience, making an act of contrition and making amendment. In November 1998 the practice of the Third Rite was ruled out.²

Now fewer people are availing themselves of individual reconciliation. I have heard priests report that although Confessions are scheduled, on most occasions no-one turns up. Therefore, the reality is that most Australian Catholics do not access any form of Sacramental Penance, ever³. The People of God have not accepted the teaching that the communal rite of penance is "illegitimate".

The Third Rite of Penance and General Absolution should return. The re-establishment of the more ancient communal rite of penance will hopefully mean that, people would again celebrate the Sacrament of God's love, mercy and forgiveness. The Spiritual benefit to people would be a greater number availing themselves of the Sacrament.

- II. The practice of routinely requiring all 8/9-year-old Baptised Catholic children to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance is inappropriate.

The practice of routinely requiring all 8-year-old Baptised Catholic children to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance is inappropriate. While children of this age are beginning to develop an understanding of right and wrong, they are not at the development stage of understanding the concept of sin. I would argue that an 8-year-old is not capable of serious sin. Intervening in a child's psychological and moral growth with a serious negative concept could be damaging if not handled competently and professionally. I argue that such a negative approach is not necessary. In an age in which research into child psychology points to the advantage of using a positive approach to child

² <https://www.catholic.org.au/acbc-media/downloads/public-policy/518-acbc-general-statements-1998-1/file>
See paragraph 45

³ <https://www.thetablet.co.uk/columnists/3/14818/some-of-my-correspondents-said-that-general-absolution-should-return-full-stop>

behaviour management, this Confessional process and the concept of sin seem foreign. A short anecdote may shed light: Recently, on the afternoon of her sister's First Confession, my exuberant granddaughter bounced through my front door exclaiming "Nanna, Nanna, Lucy needs a SIM before tonight for her Confession!" To which I replied, "There is one in my phone she can have if she wants it!" It all seems a strange process in an otherwise contemporary, systematic and integrated Catholic School Curriculum.

Almost all children who celebrate their "First Reconciliation" (unless corralled in or required again by the school or parish) do not take part in the Sacrament again in their life. This is the reality. What else do schools put children through that they will never do again? Schools have the role of preparing children for life.

Confirmation

The sacrament of Confirmation is the opportunity for baptised Christians to renew their baptismal vows and make a decision to link their life to the teachings of Jesus. The age at which confirmation is administered is critical in so far as the life journey being proposed needs to be clearly understood and accepted.

* In the United States , Bishops" after several times tabling a decision on an appropriate age, voted that the normal age of Confirmation is 7 to 18 years . " Therefore if it is accepted that age is a critical factor in when Confirmation is received then a person of teenage years is more likely to understand the commitments being made.

Peer pressure also clouds a teenagers thinking and in this regard small group training for Confirmation would be advantageous. The Bonding and support of each other would be stronger and more supportive. Further a committed teenage is more likely to have meaningful conversations regarding religion and influencing their parents. This could lead to parents renewing their faith.

Having experienced the Rite of Confirmation carried out by the local priest in an outback central Queensland Catholic Church with children from the local schools, the ceremony was more meaningful in that the whole congregation was involved. An example of participation as a small group.**If necessary the Bishop has authority to delegate the celebration of this sacrament to presbyters and deacons. This would have to be implemented if small group training and celebration was introduced.

I have no comment on changing the actual ceremony of the Rite of Confirmation, I think that the preparation and participation of both student and parents need consideration. The current preparation and celebration of Confirmation, of mass numbers, does not appear to bring the participants and families of those being Confirmed back to the Church.

*- Saying P 87 Amen: A Mystagogy of Sacraments -Kathleen Hughes ** - See P82 - Minister of the Sacrament - Amen: A Mastagogy of Sacraments - Kathleen Hughes

Anointing of the sick

We believe that a number of sacraments are in need of review. One such sacrament is "the sacrament of the sick". Vatican II highlighted the change of this sacrament from "The Last Rites" (extreme unction). Unfortunately, 60 years later the majority of Australian Catholics still think of this

beautiful, consoling and encouraging sacrament as “The Last Rites” and rush to have a priest come and anoint their relative even after the “recipient” has died.

We propose a training of ministers for this sacrament. 60 years ago, only the priest distributed Holy Communion at Mass and took Communion to the elderly and “shut ins” once a month on a 1st Friday. Now, weekly, special ministers take Communion to hospitals, nursing homes etc. They can do this because they are taking the host, consecrated by a priest at the Sunday Mass. In the same way, these special ministers would take the sacred oils, blessed by the Bishop at the Annual Mass of Chrism. These ministers have a special relationship with those whom they visit. In chatting, they are in a much better position to communicate the beautiful meaning of the sacrament of the sick.

At present, the priest is sometimes a stranger to the sick/elderly person and so can elicit an unfortunate fear. Sadly, to overcome this concern a lot of people wait until “Mum is comatose and doesn’t know” (or worse has died!). What a terrible image of God this projects that God only takes to heaven, those anointed before death.

We strongly recommend immediate training and implementation of lay ministers, not only for a better use of the sacraments but also its more appropriate use will help to bring about the change of mindset in our people. Thus this sacrament will be seen in its true healing. It will be seen as the gentle Christ caring for the sick person.