

The following was printed in the February 2010 issue of New Earth, the newspaper for the Diocese of Fargo.

English Mass translation, new church and Lent are gifts from God to the faithful

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In this month's column I wish to first extend my gratitude to all those who attended the God's Gift Appeal Deanery Forums. Each year I visit each deanery to speak briefly about the annual God's Gift Appeal, bring people up to date on happenings within the diocese and universal Church, and then field questions that the faithful may have about the diocese or concerns within their deaneries. I always enjoy the visits and meeting with the priests of each deanery.

During my visits, I informed the faithful who attended the meetings that in 2011 we will receive a new English translation of the Mass. The first translation of the Mass for the United States was done in the late 1960s. The translation left much to be desired as it was not that faithful to the Latin text. In addition, two more Latin edition Roman Missals have been published, due to new feast days for new saints and some minor changes in the way Mass is celebrated, and these changes needed to be added to our current English translation

In 2002 the 3rd edition of the Roman Missal was published by the Holy See. At the same time new universal norms for the translation of Latin texts were issued. Furthermore, the Holy See desired only one English translation for all English speaking dioceses throughout the world – including the United States, Great Britain, Australia, Ireland, India, Philippines, etc. In the past there was a different English translation for each conference. As you can imagine, creating one English translation is no small task. Each English speaking bishops' conference was required to review and offer comments on drafts prepared by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy. The U.S. bishops approved the final sections of the English text in November 2009. The Holy See now reviews the translation, makes amendments, and will publish a final approved translation.

For the next several months, beginning with this month's issue of New Earth, there will be articles on the new translation. (See the first article on page ?). There will also be bulletin inserts as well as homilies given on the new translation, so that we understand it more clearly when we begin, sometime in 2011, using it for Mass. There will also be diocesan workshops held for musicians, catechists and interested faithful.

This is a great moment in the life of our diocese and the English speaking world! The new translation will help us to understand better the worship we are to give to the Father through the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. My ardent hope is that our love for the Eucharist and most especially for Sunday Mass will grow and deepen through the teaching we will experience over the next several months.

Second, this past week was a unique time for our diocese in that a new church, Saints Anne and Joachim, was dedicated in the Diocese of Fargo. The parish was established in south Fargo in 1995. There were only around 100 people at the first Mass in 1995 at Discovery School. The parish now has grown to well over 1,300 households. The new church, which took almost two years to build, is truly beautiful. The dedication occurred on the Memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes. Faithful from around the diocese attended as well as those from other dioceses. The parishioners of Sts. Anne and Joachim are to be commended, as well as the pastors, architects, and contractors who all worked together to create a place of beauty that takes our hearts and minds up to the eternal God and to the heavenly liturgy to

which we are called. I encourage you when you are in Fargo to visit the new church, the various chapels and the adoration chapel. The diocese will be blessed for many generations to come with this new church!

Finally, the Lenten Season began on Wednesday, Feb. 17. Each Lenten Season is a time of conversion, to deepen our relationship with the Trinity and to grow in the virtues. Pope Benedict XVI spoke of the weakness in the human being caused by original sin. "Indeed, man is weakened by an intense influence, which wounds his capacity to enter into communion with the other. By nature, he is open to sharing freely, he finds in his being a strange force of gravity that makes him turn in and affirm himself *above* and *against* others: this is egoism, the result of original sin. Adam and Eve, seduced by Satan's lie, snatching the mysterious fruit against the divine command, replace the logic of trusting in Love with that of suspicion and competition; the logic of receiving and trustfully expecting from the Other with anxiously seizing and doing on one's own (cf. *Gn* 3, 1-6), experiencing, as a consequence, a sense of disquiet and uncertainty" (Message of His Holiness Benedict XVI for Lent 2010).

In our society and world today we can observe man giving in to Satan's lies as so many people continue to embrace a culture of death, from the wars that occur throughout the world, to the genocidal destruction of peoples in Africa and elsewhere, to the sexual exploitation of women and men, to the removal of God from any place in a society, to the redefinition of marriage, and most especially to the destruction of innocent human life in abortion and euthanasia. All of these are symptoms, along with many others, of the replacement of the logic of Love, with that of "suspicion and competition." Furthermore this replacement raises the human person to be "god" rather than finding meaning and purpose in the God who is Love. The only remedy to original sin, to this "sense of disquiet and uncertainty," is to embrace the truth, which is a person, Jesus Christ. He alone has the answers to the struggles of the human heart. He alone shows us the path to the Father and to true joy and peace.

During this Lenten Season I encourage each of us to examine our hearts. As members of society and the world our hearts and minds are influenced by this culture of death. In unknown ways we can take hold of principles that are not grounded in the Gospel. We must pray to the Holy Spirit to help us to see our own egoism as God sees it. We must ask God to reveal to us our blindness, where we have acted with "suspicion and competition," where we have embraced lies, and made ourselves "god". This is not to condemn ourselves, for God examines us with eyes of tender love so that we may repent of our sin and turn to him, opening ourselves to Love who can heal us. Only in deep intimate love with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit will we come to know the lies that hold our hearts so that we may leave them behind and put on the mind of Jesus Christ (Phil 2:5).

I encourage each of us during this Lenten Season to return to the frequent reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Not just receiving the sacrament during Lent and Advent but receiving it at a minimum of once a month. One of the great reasons for the advancement of the culture of death in our world is that so many have abandoned regular confession. When we lose our sense of sin, we also lose a sense of the true God. I pray that this Lenten Season will be a time of renewal in our faith in Jesus Christ, in his Church and in his sacraments. May we return to the God who is Love and live according to his way, that we may have life and life abundantly in Jesus Christ (Jn 10:10).