



VATICAN - Catholic Prayers in the languages of the world: (1) LATIN

Vatican City (Fides) - For centuries Latin has been the official language of the Catholic Church especially in her prayers. The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), in its first document, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy Sacrosanctum Concilium issued on 4 December 1963 affirmed "...the use of the Latin language is to be preserved in the Latin rites" (36, § 1). Every Wednesday at the general audience the Pope invites the thousands of people present from all over the world to pray with him the Lord's Prayer or the Our Father, Pater Noster in Latin, since this is the Church's universal language. What is more papal Masses celebrated in St Peter's or in the Square with the faithful from many different countries are always in Latin with readings and prayers in different languages.

To foster "active participation" in the Liturgy of the People of God, the liturgical reform of Vatican II introduced the use of vernacular languages. However to ensure that Latin would not be forgotten Pope Paul VI issued a booklet *Jubilate Deo* containing 'the minimum chant repertoire for every parish'. The booklet was issued by the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship as a "personal gift" of Paul VI to Catholic Bishops of the world and the heads of religious orders, on April 14, 1974, with an accompanying letter. "Presenting the Holy Father's gift to you, may I at the same time remind you of the desire which he has often expressed that the Conciliar Constitution on the Liturgy be increasingly better implemented. Would you therefore in collaboration with the competent diocesan and national agencies for the liturgy, sacred music and catechesis, decide on the best ways of teaching the faithful the Latin chants of 'Jubilate Deo', and of having them sing them and also of promoting the preservation and execution of Gregorian Chant in the communities mentioned above. You will thus render a new service to the Church in the domain of liturgical renewal".

The Church uses Latin as the basic text not only for her prayers but for all official documents. With regard to translations the Sacrosanctum Concilium states: "Translations from the Latin text into the mother tongue intended for use in the liturgy must be approved by the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned above." (SC 36, § 4).

In fact in our request asking the cooperation of Bishops' Conferences or National Directors of the Pontifical Mission Societies to collect and send to us translations of Catholic prayers in as many languages as possible, Fides too is making use of the basic texts in Latin. As the Dossier takes shape the prayers will be made them available on our web site and may be reproduced free of charge.

Today we present Fides Prayer Dossier Section 1 LATIN to be followed by different languages.

To complete this special Dossier Fides relies on and is deeply grateful for the collaboration of the local Churches and National Offices of the Pontifical Mission Societies. For more information or to send prayers please contact Fides French language editor Mgr. Jacques Masson, in charge of the Dossier: french@fides.org (J.M.) (Agenzia Fides 5/10/2006, righe 34, parole 463)

> LINKS

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http://www.fides.org/ita/approfondire/preghiere/prayer_051006_latin.doc: