

# Tridentine Community News

May 9, 2010

## *Beyond the New English Ordinary Form Missal: Other Issues With Approved Translations – Part 2*

With a full column of space to work with, this is an excellent opportunity to compare English translations of the readings. A reasonable example is the Gospel used on the 23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday After Pentecost in the Extraordinary Form, and on Monday of the Fourteenth Week in Ordinary Time, Year II in the Ordinary Form. The reading is from the Holy Gospel of St. Matthew, chapter 9. 18-26.

As this example shows, the sections of Holy Scripture used in the Extraordinary Form are often not the same excerpts used on the comparable feast day in the Ordinary Form.

First, the Douay-Rheims Bible English translation, which is found in most hand missals for the Tridentine Mass:

At that time, as Jesus was speaking to the multitudes, behold a certain ruler came up, and adored Him, saying: Lord, my daughter is even now dead; but come lay Thy hand upon her, and she shall live. And Jesus, rising up, followed him, with His disciples. And behold a woman, who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind Him, and touched the hem of His garment. For she said within herself: If I shall touch only His garment, I shall be healed. But Jesus turning and seeing her, said: Be of good heart, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour. And when Jesus was come into the house of the ruler, and saw the minstrels and the multitude making a tumult, He said: Give place; for the girl is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed Him to scorn. And when the multitude was put forth, He went in and took her by the hand. And the maid arose. And the fame thereof went abroad into all that country.

Second, the Confraternity Bible translation, as found in the transitional 1965 Missal:

At that time, Jesus had not finished speaking to the crowds when, suddenly, a magistrate came along, did him reverence, and said, "My daughter has just died. But please come and lay your hand on her and she will come back to life." Jesus stood up and followed him, and his disciples did likewise. Now a woman who had suffered from hemorrhages for twelve years came along behind him, and touched the tassel on his cloak. "If only I can touch his cloak," she thought to herself, "I shall get well." Jesus turned around, saw her, and said, "Courage, my daughter! Your faith has made you well." That very moment the woman got well. When Jesus arrived at the magistrate's house and saw the flute-players and the crowd making a dreadful din, he said, "Get out of here. The little girl is not dead. She is asleep." At this, they laughed at him. But when the crowd had been put out, he entered, took her by the hand, and the little girl got up. News of this circulated around that entire district.

Third, the New American Bible translation used in the Ordinary Form in the United States:

While Jesus was speaking, an official came forward, knelt down before him, and said, "My daughter has just died. But come, lay your hand on her, and she will live." Jesus rose and followed him, and so did his disciples. A woman suffering hemorrhages for twelve years came up behind him and touched the tassel on his cloak. She said to herself, "If only I can touch his cloak, I shall be cured." Jesus turned around and saw her, and said, "Courage, daughter! Your faith has saved you." And from that hour the woman was cured. When Jesus arrived at the official's house and saw the flute players and the crowd who were making a commotion, he said, "Go away! The girl is not dead but sleeping." And they ridiculed him. When the crowd was put out, he came and took her by the hand, and the little girl arose. And news of this spread throughout all that land.

Fourth, the New Revised Standard Version translation used in the Ordinary Form in Canada:

While he was saying these things to them, suddenly a leader of the synagogue came in and knelt before him, saying, "My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live." And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples. Then suddenly a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, for she said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well." Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well." And instantly the woman was made well. When Jesus came to the leader's house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion, he said, "Go away; for the girl is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. And the report of this spread throughout that district

The message conveyed by the various translations can vary from quite similar to rather different, depending on the subject matter. One can see the evolution from hierarchical verbiage, to a transitional feel, to a more modern and sometimes oddly 1970s-ism idiom. The NRSV even includes some gender-neutral pronouns in certain passages, reflecting the political correctness of our age. (N.B. The Canadian Bishops revised their laudable Catholic Book of Worship hymnal in a similar fashion: Its latest, third edition contains some gender-neutralized hymns.)

Some readers have commented that the Douay-Rheims version can be awkward to read, with outdated sentence structure, odd uses of punctuation, and various constructs that appear to be typos but are not (e.g.: non-capitalization of a sentence that starts after a question mark). However, much like the Latin language, the hierarchical language of the Douay-Rheims is timeless. It conveys its meaning without concern for the ever-changing colloquialisms of the modern vernacular. It is immune to watering down, to mis-translation as ever-evolving new editions are created, to lengthy debate over political issues, and to issues of copyright that complicate broad use of the modern translations. We have an edition that works, indeed whose style is similar to other English translations used by other Christian denominations; we can assume some intelligence on the part of readers. Church resources are arguably better spent on endeavors other than our lectionary.