



NewsLetter

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Holy See Confirms Final Translation of Psalter and Canticles, USCCB Acquires Copyright for Consolidated Texts

The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments has confirmed the definitive translation of Psalms and biblical Canticles prepared for liturgical use in the United States of America. The decree, dated May 3, 2018 (Prot n. 475/16 and Prot. n. 76/16), was consolidated to correspond to two separate submissions of material: a modified edition of the *Revised Grail Psalms* approved by the USCCB in November 2014, and the Old and New Testament Canticles approved in June 2015. (An unofficial English translation of the Holy See's decree is reprinted for the benefit of our readers on the last page of this issue.)

Since their creation, the copyrights to these Psalms and Canticles have been held by the monks of Conception Abbey, Missouri, who prepared the translations; those copyrights have been administered by GIA Publications, Inc. However, in its 2001 Instruction *Liturgiam authenticam*, the Congregation stated the following in no. 117 (internal footnote omitted):

The rights of publication and the copyright for all translations of liturgical books, or at least the rights in civil law necessary for exercising complete liberty in publishing or correcting texts, is to remain with the Conferences of Bishops or their national liturgical Commissions. The same body shall possess the right of taking any measures necessary to prevent or correct any improper use of the texts.

To meet the requirement of *Liturgiam authenticam*, the USCCB has acquired the copyrights to the Psalms and Canticles, with the transfer taking effect July 1, 2019. Signaling the arrival of the definitive state of the translations, and with grateful acknowledgment of the labors of the monks, the two works have now been combined under one new title: *Abbey Psalms and Canticles*.

USCCB Communications is currently preparing a complete edition of the *Abbey Psalms and Canticles*, and information on that project will follow in a future issue of the *Newsletter*. Recent liturgical books have already begun incorporating these translations, as will the forthcoming *Order of Baptism of Children*. Since 2010, some composers have set the Psalms (in their 2010 version) to music. However, widespread use of the definitive texts should not be anticipated until they appear in new editions of the *Liturgy of the Hours* and *Lectionary for Mass* in the coming years. The *Abbey Psalms and Canticles* will likely be part of a future "liturgical Bible," to be approved and published once revisions to the *New American Bible* are completed.

Development of the Psalter and Canticles to their Definitive State

The Latin Church Bishops of the USCCB first approved a new liturgical Psalter, the *Revised Grail Psalms*, in November 2008. Prepared by the monks of Conception Abbey, the Psalter was a revision of the 1963 *Grail Psalter* and was intended to be more accurate with regard to the Hebrew original text and to the *Nova Vulgata*, while also being translated in a manner more conducive to both recitation and singing. The translation was confirmed by the Holy See in March 2010, although the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments also made a number of alterations to the text as part of the confirmation process.

After an initial period of use, it was determined that additional textual modifications would improve the Psalter. Those modifications were approved by the USCCB in November 2014. During these years, Conception Abbey also prepared translations of the Old and New Testament canticles used in the liturgy, especially in the *Liturgy of the Hours*, and the body of bishops approved those texts in June 2015. The modified *Revised Grail Psalms* and the Canticles were both transmitted to the Holy See in 2016 for confirmation.

In early 2018, the Congregation wrote to the USCCB and expressed their hope that the English-speaking world might one day enjoy a common translation of the Psalms and Canticles in liturgical use. To that end, the Holy See shared the texts approved by the USCCB in 2014-2015 with experts from other countries, asking for observations. The feedback received led the Congregation to propose a limited number of emendations to the texts submitted by the USCCB, with the majority of the changes falling into five categories:

1. In place of *righteousness* and *righteous*, the words *justice* and *just* (or other related terms) were preferred in many instances, to avoid a possible pejorative sense in modern English, and for theological concerns.
2. For reasons of inclusivity, the Holy See suggested *the human race* in some cases, instead of *children of Adam*.
3. In place of *awesome* in most instances, the term *wondrous* was suggested, observing that the former is overused in modern English.
4. The term *mercy* was recommended as being more direct than the phrase *merciful love*.
5. In place of *forebears*, *ancestors* was preferred, as being more commonly used in worldwide English.

The USCCB Administrative Committee approved the Congregation's emendations at its March 2018 meeting, expressing its support for the Holy See's initiative to encourage widespread adoption of a common translation of these important texts. With this final step, the Holy See subsequently confirmed both texts on May 3, 2018.

Excerpts from the *Abbey Psalms and Canticles*

A brief selection of texts from the *Abbey Psalms and Canticles* – excerpts from a Psalm, an Old Testament canticle, and a New Testament canticle – are presented here, compared with other Scripture translations currently used in the *Liturgy of the Hours* (1963 *Grail Psalter*) and *Lectionary for Mass* (1970 *New American Bible* psalter). The comparison of these texts can provide a sense of the different approaches taken by their respective translators.

Psalm 114 (113A):1-4

<u><i>Liturgy of the Hours</i></u>	<u><i>Lectionary for Mass</i></u>	<u><i>Abbey Psalms and Canticles</i></u>
When Israel came forth from Egypt, Jacob's sons from an alien people, Judah became the Lord's temple, Israel became his kingdom.	When Israel came forth from Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of alien tongue, Judah became his sanctuary, Israel his domain.	When Israel came forth from Egypt, the house of Jacob from a foreign people, Judah became his holy place, Israel became his domain.
The sea fled at the sight: the Jordan turned back on its course, the mountains leapt like rams and the hills like yearling sheep.	The sea beheld and fled; Jordan turned back. The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like the lambs of the flock.	The sea beheld them and fled; the Jordan turned back on its course. The mountains leapt like rams, and the hills like yearling sheep.

Tobit 13:2-4

Liturgy of the Hours and Lectionary for Mass

Blessed be God who lives forever,
because his kingdom lasts for all ages.

For he scourges and then has mercy;
he casts down to the depths of the nether world,
and he brings up from the great abyss.
No one can escape his hand.

Praise him, you Israelites, before the Gentiles,
for though he has scattered you among them,
he has shown you his greatness even there.

Exalt him before every living being,
because he is the Lord our God,
our Father and God forever.

Abbey Psalms and Canticles

Blessed be God, who lives forever,
and blessed be his kingdom,
for he punishes but also shows mercy.
He leads down to the depths of Hades,
and brings up from ruin by his majesty;
and no one can escape his hand.

Children of Israel, confess him before the nations,
for he has scattered you among them,
and even there has shown you his greatness.
Extol him, then, before every living being,
for he is our Lord and our Father,
he is our God forever.

Revelation 11:17-18

Liturgy of the Hours and Lectionary for Mass

We praise you, the Lord God Almighty,
who is and who was.
You have assumed your great power,
you have begun your reign.

The nations have raged in anger,
but then came your day of wrath
and the moment to judge the dead:
the time to reward your servants the prophets
and the holy ones who revere you,
the great and the small alike.

Finally, some of the most important texts from the new *Abbey Psalms and Canticles* are the Gospel canticles used daily in the *Liturgy of the Hours*. The Canticles of Zechariah, Mary, and Simeon (also known as the *Benedictus*, *Magnificat*, and *Nunc dimittis*, respectively) currently used in the U.S. edition of the *Liturgy of the Hours* are in a translation prepared by the International Consultation on English Texts, an ecumenical group. The *Abbey Psalms and Canticles* translation of the Gospel canticles, presented here, will appear in the *Liturgy of the Hours, Second Edition* and future *Lectionary for Mass*:

Abbey Psalms and Canticles

We give you thanks, O Lord, Almighty God,
you who are and who were.
For you have assumed your great power
and you have begun your reign.

The nations raged, but your wrath has come,
and the time for the dead to be judged,
And to reward your servants the prophets
and the holy ones and those who fear your name,
the small and the great alike.

Canticle of Zechariah (Luke 1:68-79)

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel:
for he has visited his people and redeemed them;
He has raised up for us a horn of salvation
in the House of David his servant,
As he spoke through the mouth of his holy ones,
his prophets from ages past:

To grant salvation from our foes,
and from the hand of all who hate us,

Showing mercy to our fathers,
remembering his holy covenant;

The oath he swore to Abraham our father,
to grant that freed from the hand of our foes,
We may serve him without fear
in holiness and righteousness
all the days of our life.

And you, little child, will be called
the Prophet of the Most High,
For you will go before the Lord
to make ready his ways:
To grant knowledge of salvation to his people
by the forgiveness of their sins;

Through the tender mercy of our God,
the Dawn from on high will visit us,
To shine on those who sit in darkness,
and those in the shadow of death;
to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Canticle of Mary (Luke 1:46-55)

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
For he has looked upon his handmaid in her lowliness;
for behold, from this day forward,
all generations will call me blessed.

He has made known the strength of his arm,
and has scattered the proud in their conceit of heart.
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones
and has exalted those who are lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things,
and has sent the rich away empty.

For the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.
His mercy is from age to age
for those who fear him.

He has helped his servant Israel,
mindful of his mercy,
Even as he promised to our fathers,
to Abraham and his descendants forever.

Canticle of Simeon (Luke 2:29-32)

Now you dismiss your servant in peace,
according to your word, O Master;

A light for revelation to the nations,
and the glory of your people Israel.

For my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you prepared in the sight of all the peoples:

CDWDS Decree of Confirmation for the *Abbey Psalms and Canticles*

CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS

Prot. n. 76/16
Prot. n. 475/16

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

At the request of His Excellency the Most Reverend Joseph Edward Kurtz, Archbishop of Louisville, then-President of the Conference of Bishops of the United States of America, in letters dated January 28, 2016 and September 21, 2016, and by virtue of the faculty granted to this Congregation by the Supreme Pontiff FRANCIS, we gladly confirm the text of the English-language liturgical Psalms and Canticles, as found in the attached copy, to be used in all future liturgical books.

In printed editions, this decree, by which the Apostolic See has granted the requested confirmation, must be inserted in its entirety. Moreover, two copies of the printed text should be forwarded to this Congregation.

All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

From the offices of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, May 3, 2018, the Feast of Saints Philip and James, Apostles.

Robert Card. Sarah
Prefect

✠ Arthur Roche
Archbishop Secretary