



CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF ENGLAND AND WALES

Department of Christian Life and Worship

On the Conclusion of the Collects of the Roman Missal

EXPLANATORY NOTES ON THE DECREE OF 9th NOVEMBER 2020

1. Rationale for the change in the conclusion of the Collects

In a letter of 13 May 2020 to the Presidents of member Episcopal Conferences of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL), the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments addressed a concern about the Trinitarian conclusion of the Collect prayers of the Roman Missal in English.

These prayers may be concluded in one of three manners as laid out in n. 54 of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*. Until now, the Latin words “Deus, per omnia sæcula sæculorum” have been rendered in English as “one God, for ever and ever.”

The addition of “one” could be construed as mistaken or problematic. On the one hand, it could serve to undermine the statement of the unique dignity of the Son within the Trinity which the Latin formulae so strongly convey. On the other hand, it could be interpreted as saying that Jesus is “one God.” Either or both of these interpretations is injurious to the faith of the Church. The “one” risks suggesting that Jesus became a god independent of the Blessed Trinity and is one god among many. Contrary to the Arian heresy, Jesus Christ, who *is* God, did not *become* God. He is God from all eternity, and taking human flesh at his Incarnation, became man. According to the ‘lex orandi,’ what we pray needs to express what the Church believes, requiring that, in liturgical formulae, we uphold the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity.

It is clear from the Latin texts that the doxology emphasises the divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, who as the Incarnate Son, intercedes on our behalf to the Father, the prayer being made “in the unity of the Holy Spirit.” Thus, the Son’s role of priestly mediation is made clear. The doxological phrase was coined in Africa during the fourth century as a means to combat the Arian heresy. The reference of “Deus” is intended Christologically.

French and German translations use *Dieu* and *Gott* respectively; Italian uses *che è Dio*, *Egli è Dio* and *Tu sei Dio*; Spanish uses *y es Dios* and *eres Dios*, while Portuguese uses *que é Deus* and *Vos que sois Deus*. The English translation has, therefore, diverged from those of other major language groups.

Since the addition of the word “one” could be considered to obscure the ‘lex orandi,’ and therefore the ‘lex credendi,’ the Congregation has ruled that it should no longer be used in the translation of these texts into English. It is for Episcopal Conferences, through ICEL, to decide how best to translate these formulae in order to safeguard both their Trinitarian nature, as well as their profession of the divinity of the Son.

2. Implementation of the change to the conclusion of the Collect

As indicated in the Decree, and in harmony with the adjacent English-speaking territories of Scotland and Ireland, as well as with other English-speaking territories, the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales has decided to delete “one” from the conclusion of the Collect prayers of the Roman Missal, and that this change would come into effect from the First Sunday of Advent 2020.

The second part of n. 54 in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* is to be adjusted as follows:

- If the prayer is directed to the Father: **Through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever;**
- If the prayer is directed to the Father, but the Son is mentioned at the end: **Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever;**
- If the prayer is directed to the Son: **Who live and reign with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.**



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