**UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE**

**AND THE NEW TRANSLATION**

The reaction of people to the new translation of the Roman Mesial are astoundingly different. Some see it as a wonderful gift. Others see if as a disaster. Let us look at that again.

The deep insight of the brilliant Jesuit Bernard Lonergan helps me to understand the great divide in this and other matters in our church. Back in the sixties he saw the two different world views that were driving the theological dissension within our church.

Our emotions are so strong in this area because our whole view of life in this world is at stake. These strong emotions keep us from listening to each other and tend to make us see the other as either stupid or bad. These two views differ in their understanding of human beings and what is good. Also these two views differ in the proper approach within the church and the church’s relationship to the world.

One world view is named “classicist”. For those holding this view “human nature” and correct behavior remain the same throughout history. Human values and truth are the same as they were thousands of years ago and will remain unchanged as long as the world exists. Some would hold that there could be superficial change but nothing of depth.

In this view, this unchangeableness is based on the external law of God called “natural law”. Thus “natural law” remains true regardless of cultural or individual circumstances.

This world view would resist theological change or development since all the important matters are set in the eternal law that comes from God.

The other world view is named “historicist”. In this view human culture in everything including religion develops and evolves. This world view is common in our western culture. This is what was behind the debates at the Vatican II council.

The council decided that the way we preach the Gospel and celebrate the sacraments is not fixed and unchangeable. The Gospel is the Gospel but it is to be preached in a way that allows people to hear it. The Apostle Paul did this when he preached the Gospel in a way that the Gentiles could hear it and be drawn into it.

This is why some people see Vatican II as a good thing and others see it as not so good. If we would listen to each other’s perspective and learn from it, we would not only be more peaceful but would understand our faith more deeply.

We now turn to the new translation of the Roman Missal. This is not nearly as important as Vatican II but I believe that these two world views are an influence.

When the Roman Missal was translated into English under Pope Paul VI, the directive given to the translators was to use “dynamic equivalence”. What that means is to understand the meaning of the Latin and then put into English which will best convey that meaning to English speakers.

When the present translation, which began under Pope John Paul II was initiated, the translators were given the directive to use “formal correspondence”. This means that you use the English word that corresponds to the Latin word.

I will use an example of translating from Greek to English. When the Apostle Paul wrote to his congregation he addressed them as “adelphoi”. That word in Greek means brothers. Using formal correspondence the translations would be “dear brothers”. Using dynamic equivalence it would be noted that Paul was addressing both women and men. The translation would be “dear brothers and sisters”.

Another example. In the new translation in the words of consecration Jesus’s blood “will be poured out for you and for many”. The old translation reads “will be shed for you and for all”. Why change “all” to many?

When the early Christians were struggling to understand the crucifixion of Jesus they remembered the suffering servant from the prophet Isaiah who bore the sins of the many. When that was translated into Latin it became just many. Latin didn’t have a “the”.

Using formal correspondence the translation into English became for many. That is the literal translation.

Using dynamic equivalence the translation noted that Jesus died for everyone. That is Catholic doctrine. Realizing that using “many” would mislead many people who didn’t know of the history behind it all, the translation used the word “all” to communication better the meaning that Jesus died for everyone.

What is my take as a pastor?

I want us to get beneath the words so that we will be able to allow the Eucharist to have its transforming power within us. One example.

When I say the Lord be with you, I will be meaning this: I wish you the Love that is God and I bow to that presence within you. When you say and with your spirit, I encourage you to mean this: I wish you the Love that is God and I bow to that presence within you. I believe that as we strive to consciously mean this we will gradually be transformed.

I don’t want the Eucharist to be a place of hostility but a place of transformation.

Smile, God Love You,

Father Clay