

18 February 2021
Thursday after Ash Wednesday

Dear Friends,

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Committee on Divine Worship recently sent a notification of a change to one of our prayers at Mass that just took effect on Ash Wednesday. You may or may not have noticed the change, which occurred in the Collect (Opening Prayer) of the Mass, prayed by the presider. The Collect is described:

“By an ancient tradition of the Church, the Collect prayer is usually addressed to God the Father, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit, and is concluded with a Trinitarian ending...” (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)* no. 54)).

The change to the Collect is fairly slight, but is theologically significant. Previously, the prayer would typically conclude with the following doxology: “...in the unity of the Holy Spirit, **one God**, forever and ever.” Now, the prayer omits the word “one”, and is prayed: “...in the unity of the Holy Spirit, **God**, forever and ever.”

The reason for this change is that the prayers of the Church are written in Latin, and then translated into the languages of the world. In the Latin text for these prayers, there is no mention of “one”. This is already translated this way in other languages.

Furthermore, by praying “one God” as we have been, it makes it seem as though the prayer is referring to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who are together one God. This is true, that we have one God in three Persons. However, in the prayer, the word “God” actually refers to Jesus Christ—not to all Three Persons of the Trinity. Therefore, the reference to “God” is not meant to affirm the *oneness* of God, as much as it is meant to affirm the *divinity* of Jesus Christ.

+++

I will be taking a break from writing letters and filming videos each week during Lent. Please know of my prayers for all of you for a Blessed and Holy Lent!

+++

Let’s keep praying for peace and unity, and let’s keep making personal decisions each day with our own thoughts, words, actions, and prayers that contribute to peace and unity in our world!

Mary, Queen of Peace, pray for us!

Fr. Chad Green