Some Remarks from an Exegete
on the Instruction *Liturgiam authenticam*

On 28th March, 2001 the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments published *Liturgiam authenticam,* its fifth Instruction on the correct implementation of the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. The Instruction gives various directives for the translation of biblical and liturgical texts. Thirty years after the appearance of the first vernacular editions of the liturgical books, it seemed appropriate to revise them in the light of experience. The Instruction also contains the canonical norms to be followed in editing and publishing liturgical books. Not everyone has welcomed the Instruction. Exegetes[1] as well as liturgists[2] have expressed varying degrees of hesitation. In the light of these criticisms I offer here a fresh reading and evaluation of the second part of the Instruction.

If I may begin with a personal recollection: In the 1980's I was working with two other Jesuits in a refugee camp in Southeast Asia. French, American and German, we celebrated Mass together every morning in English. Before Mass, we had prayed the *Liturgy of the Hours* – each of us, in the best Jesuit tradition, by himself - the Frenchman in French, the American in English and I myself, since in those days I was still destined for Patrology, in Latin. In the Mass I would hear again in English the Oratio that I had prayed earlier in Latin. Later on I would often dicuss with the Frenchman about the fact that really the Latin Oratio and its French and English versions provided us with three different prayers. So much for the pleasant illusion that we were all, in the end, offering the same prayer, albeit in different languages. As an

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[1] R. J. Clifford, The Authority of the *Nova Vulgata*: A Note on a recent Roman Document, CBQ 63 (2001) 197-202; B. Repschinski, Anmerkungen zu einigen Thesen von *Liturgiam authenticam*, Protokolle zur Bibel 11 (2002) 71-76.

[2] R. Kaczynski, Angriff auf die Liturgiekonstitution? Anmerkungen zu einer neuen Übersetzer-Instruktion, Stimmen der Zeit 219 (2001) 651-668; to which replied: J. Card. Ratzinger, Um die Erneuerung der Liturgie. Antwort auf Reiner Kaczynski, Stimmen der Zeit 219 (2001) 837-843.

international community, out there in the jungle at that time, we felt that this really was a problem!

The Instruction has five main parts. I limit my remarks to the extensive second part dealing with the principles governing the translation of biblical and liturgical texts. Naturally it is the part relating to Scripture and the Lectionaries that is of the greatest interest to me personally. It is a part that harbours its own quite particular difficulties and has consequently met with criticism in several publications. This I would also like to consider here.

Translating Biblical Texts

Scripture differs from other liturgical texts in at least two important respects. Firstly, the text of Scripture is simply not fixed. There is no such thing as *the* text of Scripture There is the Masoretic text, there is the Septuagint, there are the various text-traditions in the New Testament. The text of the Bible has an inner diversity and an irreducible variability that pose very particular problems. And secondly, of course, the Word of God does not fall within the competence of the Church in quite the same way as other liturgical texts.

The norms for the translation of Scripture and the compilation of the Lectionaries in nos. 34-36 assert the desirability of each language having one single translation of the Scriptures "which will be employed in all parts of the various liturgical books" (no. 36) – Lectionary, Breviary, Rituals. (This is the "Einheitsübersetzung" in the German-speaking lands.) No. 37 deals with the choice of text-tradition for the Lectionary, no. 38 with decisions relating to text-criticism, no. 39 with the division of the pericopes in the Lectionary and nos. 40-44 with the principles governing translation. This division of the material may not have been adequately understood by all the critics.

No. 37 begins with the following instruction:

> If the biblical translation from which the Lectionary is composed, exhibits readings ("lectiones") that differ from those set forth in the Latin liturgical text, it should be borne in mind that the *Nova Vulgata Editio* is the point of reference as regards the determination of the canonical text.

This sentence triggered alarm in not a few exegetes for it does indeed seem to make the Nova Vulgata the norm for decisions about text-criticism in vernacular editions of the Bible which are to be translated from the original languages. I do not, however, believe this to be the case. If it were, then that really would be a problem. The critics say: the *Nova Vulgata* is a translation like any other; it was made for the renewed Latin liturgy, in particular for the Mass and the Latin Breviary. It cannot be set up as a norm for other translations as regards text-criticism and the approach to translation.

That is in essence correct. They go on to say: *Liturgiam authenticam* means to transfer the authority the Council of Trent attributed to Jerome's Vulgate to the *Nova Vulgata*. Trent, however, did not make the old Vulgate normative in any way as regards text-criticism but simply declared it an authentic edition of the Bible, valid for dogmatic argumentation and also specifying the extent of the Canon but not, of course, overruling the authority of the Hebrew and Greek texts and the work of text-criticism. This, too, is correct. Trent did not suppose that text-criticism fell within the competence of the Magisterium.

The first sentence of LA 37, however, does seem, in the eyes of some exegetes, to say exactly that: the Congregation for Divine Worship, by prescribing the decisions of the Nova Vulgate as the norm, is setting a norm for decisions regarding the text-criticism of the Bible.

The impression that the Congregation intended to fix the text of the Bible, if it were indeed the case, would be a most unhappy reminder of the affair of the *Vulgata-Sixtina* of 1590. Pope Sixtus V, in compliance with the mandate of the Council of Trent, undertook a new edition of the Vulgate. It was a matter of great personal concern to him - and for that he is to be praised. His predecessors, in contrast, had not considered the new edition of the Bible to be particularly urgent and had given priority to other things, the *Index librorum prohibitorum,* for example. Sixtus V pressed on with the new edition of the Vulgate but, not being best pleased with the work of his commission of professors and cardinals, he disbanded them. He did not agree with their decisions regarding text-criticism. On 17th November, 1588 he decided to edit the text of the Bible by himself – following his own ideas about text-criticism. He was confident that the special divine assistance he enjoyed as Pope covered text-criticism as well. The experts and a large part of the papal curia were horrified – not least the future saint and doctor of the Church, Cardinal Robert Bellarmine. The Pope appeared to be interfering with the Word of God which, of course, is not subject even to the Magisterium.[3] Everything was done to prevent the distribution of the Sixtine Vulgate. Not indeed with complete success but the Pope soon died and Cardinal Santori at once turned to the Jesuit General Aquaviva with instructions for the Jesuits throughout the world to buy up all available copies of the Sixtine Vulgate at papal expense. On 15th April, 1594, Pope Clement VIII ordered their destruction and saw to a new - this time correct - edition of the Bible, the Sixto-Clementine Vulgate. Looking back later Bellarmine wrote to Clement VIII:

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[3] Bellarmin: (Haeretici) „enim hactenus variis calumniis et imposturis efficere conati sunt, ut populis persuaderetur Romanum Pontificem extollere se supra omne quod dicitur Deus, nunc multo plausibilius effecisse viderentur, si dicerent eundem Pontificem auctoritatem sibi arrogasse supra verbum Dei et corrigere voluisse Spiritum Sanctum, idque prolatis in medium locis depravatis in Sixti V bibliis demonstrarent." (cf. F. Amann, Die Vulgata Sixtina von 1590, Freiburg 1912, 105 Anm. 1).

> Your Holiness still remembers the danger into which Sixtus V of holy memory put himself and the whole Church by wanting to correct the Bible according to his own opinion, and I for one do not know whether a greater danger has ever been run.[4]

If the first sentence of LA 37 really intended to establish a norm for biblical text-criticism that would indeed be a problem for the impression would be created that the Church was claiming authority over the text of the Bible. That is, however, a misunderstanding. In fact the continuation of no. 37 shows that, contrary to this first impression, this paragraph is not about text-criticism at all. For, after the ambiguous first sentence of no. 37, the Instruction continues:

> Thus, in the translation of the deuterocanonical books and wherever else there may exist varying manuscript traditions, the liturgical translation must be prepared in accordance with the same manuscript tradition that the *Nova Vulgata* has followed.

It is not variant readings that are the issue here but the manuscript traditions and how they can diverge from one another, particularly for the deutero-canonical books.

For the first four hundred years the Church read the Old Testament in the Septuagint version. But the text of the Septuagint has never been fixed. There are various editions of the Greek text for several of the books. Tobit, for example, is handed down in one version in both the Codex Alexandrinus and the Codex Vaticanus while the Codex Sinaiticus gives a clearly different, and much longer, version. Since the Church has always included books in the Canon rather than particular versions of them, both versions are, in principle, authentic editions of the canonical book. When Jerome, on Pope Damasus' instructions, was preparing a uniform Latin version of the Bible, he departed from this four hundred year old practice of the whole Church and went back to the proto-Masoretic text. And so, despite Augustine's initial objection, yet another tradition of the biblical text was recognised and accepted as inspired. Augustine holds, like the Evangelists before him, that both traditions of the text are inspired and canonical[5]. And so too does the Catholic Church. For several of the Old Testament books - Daniel, Esther, Tobit, Jeremiah - we have editions that display literary differences, namely editions based on different traditions of the text.

When translating the Bible, therefore, the very first decision is about what version is going to be used. Will I translate the Masoretic text's clearly longer version of Jeremiah or the Septuagint's shorter version - which the Eastern Church uses exclusively even to this day. What version of Tobit will I take as the basis for my translation: Vaticanus or Sinaiticus? This is not at all about deciding between individual

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[4] „La Santità vostra sa ancora il pericolo nel quale messe se stesso e tutta la chiesa la santa memoria di Sisto V in voler correggere la Biblia secondo il suo proprio parere, ed io certo non so se si è corso mai pericolo maggiore."

[5] „Unde etiam ego pro meo modulo vestigia sequens apostolorum, quia et ipsi ex utrisque, id est ex Hebraeis et ex Septuaginta, testimonia prophetica posuerunt, utraque auctoritate utendum putavi, quoniam utraque una atque divina est." (Civ. Dei XVIII 44)

variant readings as in text-criticism. The choice is between two differing editions of the same book. Both are canonical but LA 37 lays down that for the Lectionaries only the one version of such a book is to be used throughout, namely the one adopted by the Nova Vulgata. This is hardly the interference with the biblical text feared by several of the critics.

No. 38, however, does in fact turn to genuine questions of text-criticism. It begins:

> It is often permissible that a variant reading of a verse be used, on the basis of critical editions and upon the recommendation of experts.

So here we have it, stated explicitly: It is not intended that the Nova Vulgata become the norm for text-criticism in other editions of the Bible. This is most important. It would be such a pity if we had once again, as in the Sixtus affair, to mobilize the whole Jesuit order to buy up compromising editions of the Bible at papal expense. The second sentence of no. 38 addresses, nevertheless, a complex issue. The text-criticism of the *Nova Vulgata* does not, indeed, set a norm for other editions. They may well diverge from it and it is often permissible to use a variant reading -

> however this is not permissible in the case of a *liturgical* text where such a choice would affect those elements of the passage that are pertinent to its liturgical context, or whenever the principles found elsewhere in this Instruction would otherwise be neglected.

Sometimes a Latin Scripture text chosen for the Latin liturgy because it suits the liturgical occasion - only suits when taken from the Nova Vulgata! The Instruction would prefer not to see removed from the Lectionaries those very readings that had suggested a Scripture text for its particular liturgical usage. This is a genuine problem. In the Mass of Our Lady, "Beata Virgo Maria, Mater pulchrae dilectionis," for example, Sirach 24, 23 –31 is the appointed reading. In both the Old and New Vulgate verse 24 reads:

> Ego mater pulchrae dilectionis et timoris et agnitionis et sanctae spei.

This verse appears in very few Greek manuscripts but the Latin Sirach just happens to be based on one of them and so the verse has a history of its own in the liturgy of the Latin Church – it is even to be found in the Litany of Loreto. But it belongs in the Greek Bible as little as the famous Comma Joanneum in 1 John or the "quia tuum est regnum et potestas" in Matthew's text of the Lord's Prayer. The variant reading of the Vetus Latina or the Nova Vulgata cannot be simply imported into the Bible. Even the Jerusalem Bible does not have it. One could, at most, taking account of the inner diversity of the biblical text, take the Vulgate text as the basis for this Mass but that would go against LA 36. The classic solution would be to base an antiphon on the stray verse.

The Nova Vulgata itself, at other points, corrected the old Jerome text from the Masoretic text even when this meant removing a variant reading that had contributed to the choice of a particular Scripture text for a specific liturgical occasion. The reading for 8th December, for example, includes the Protoevangelium, Genesis 3:15. Jerome gives :

> Inimicitas ponam inter te et mulierem et semen tuum et semen illius ; **ipsa** (scil. mulier) conteret caput tuum.

This version, according to which the *woman* would crush the head of the serpent, has acquired its own significance in the artistic representation of Mary Immaculate. The Nova Vulgata nevertheless corrects it, strictly following the Masoretic text:

> Inimicitas ponam inter te et mulierem et semen tuum et semen illius, **ipsum** (scil. semen) conteret caput tuum.

And so the reading for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception loses a textual variant that was not insignificant for the liturgical choice of the reading. But it would have been arbitrary, from the point of view of scholarly text-criticism, to have departed from the Masoretic text on just this one point. The Nova Vulgata itself at times has to sacrifice variant readings that have been important in the history of liturgy.

So I see the second sentence of LA 38 as flagging up a problem: Special considerations are called for when a given Scripture reading has obviously found its place in the Liturgy only because of particular variant readings adopted by the Nova Vulgata but, at the same time, the use of these variants in translations of the Bible, which, naturally, have to start from the original text, is problematic from the point of view of biblical scholarship. The sentence might well have been formulated as an invitation as is the following one:

> For passages where a critical consensus is lacking, particular attention should be given to the choices (peculiaris ratio ducatur earum optionum) reflected in the approved Latin text.

The Nova Vulgata ought absolutely to be consulted but in questions of text-criticism it is only a translation like any other. The Magisterium cannot endow it with any special authority in text-criticism nor does it mean to do so. The Instruction, as I read it, would prefer not to introduce any innovation beyond what Trent decided for the Vulgate and what Bellarmine defended in the Sixtine Vulgate affair.

Nos. 40-45, finally, turn to the principles of translation for editions of the Bible. No. 41 seeks to ensure that in choosing target language equivalents account be taken of the theological and liturgical tradition so that

the translation express the traditional Christological, typological and spiritual sense and manifest the unity and the inter-relatedness of both Testaments.

When, therefore, the translator has to choose between various possible renderings he ought to decide for that possibility which corresponds most closely to the ecclesial reception of the text. No. 41a, once again, recommends the Nova Vulgata as the point of reference for this. (Here the text is clearly open to misunderstanding – the otherwise excellent German translator took no. 41 to be still about the choice of variant readings![6]) Here, too, one will have to weigh up each individual case. The Praefatio to the Nova Vulgata says expressly, in no. 3;

> The utmost care must, however, be taken that New Testament teachings are not imported into the Old Testament texts in the process of translation; and likewise that the developments of the later tradition are not brought into the New Testament texts.[7]

Both together will be just right. One will often have good reasons for taking account of the history of the reception of the text in formulating the translation, as in the case of the name of God, which 41c quotes here as a concrete example and to which I shall return. I do not know to what specific problem in the English language projects or elsewhere the Instruction intends to respond here. In any case, no. 41 points out that an individual Scripture passage can have various contexts. Read in the Liturgy the context could be, for example, a feast of Our Lady. It could be that, in the writings of the Fathers, this isolated passage received a particular interpretation. LA would like to see all this taken into account in the decision in favour of a particular possible translation. But, of course, the passage in question belongs first and foremost to the context of its own book. So when a certain word is a key word within a book of the Bible, it must, naturally, as far as possible, be translated consistently in the same way throughout and an exception cannot be made for a given passage just because of a particular liturgical or patristic use of it. That would be to divorce it from its context within the book to which it belongs. No. 42 goes on to emphasize LA's rejection of such a procedure, unknown too in the tradition. For example, in the Tridentine Breviary Psalm 87 appears in the third Nocturn of 1st January, octave of Christmas. Jerome ("iuxta LXX") has the Psalm say:

> Numquid Sion dicet homo et homo natus est in ea,

This verse was the reason for the Christmas use of this Psalm: *homo natus est in ea,* as the Antiphon emphasizes. The Psalterium Pianum, however, adopted for the Bre-

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[6] For „variae rationes" the German text puts „Textvarianten". Correctly in English: "various possibilities (of translation)".

[7] Cavendum tamen omnino erit ne in vertendos textus Veteris Testamenti inferantur doctrinae Novi Testamenti; item ne in textus Novi Testamenti inducantur "explicitationes" traditionis serioris.

viary in the twentieth century, translates Ps. 87 more correctly in terms of the Hebrew: *ʾîš wᵉʾîš* "man by man", every single one is born in her:

> viritim omnes nati sunt in ea.

And, with this, the translation "homo natus est in ea" that was decisive for the Fathers and for the Liturgy disappeared. Fidelity to the intended sense of the original text demanded it. The Breviary had to make do with preserving the Antiphon:

> Homo natus est in ea, et ipse fundavit eam Altissimus.

Our present Breviary, of course, uses the Neovulgata and this text now reads:

> Hic et ille natus est in ea.

As in the Pianum, the decisive "homo natus est" is missing but on 1st January the antiphon accompanying the psalm preserves the old translation, and with it the Christmas reference of the text.

The Nova Vulgata and the Psalterium Pianum are committed to reproducing the sense of the Hebrew original and therefore sacrifice even a translation that had had a special Christological meaning. The old translation is preserved in the antiphon. This seems to me to be a good approach too for exceptional variant readings that have acquired liturgical significance: antiphons, or preaching and catechesis, must do what a responsible text-criticism and an exact translation may not. LA stresses explicitly, in No. 42, that perspectives that must certainly be respected such as those of the history of exegesis, the liturgical tradition, the ecclesial mystery of salvation may in no way be permitted to compromise the fidelity owed to the original text.

No. 41c takes reference to the name of God, the holy Tetragrammaton, as an example of how vernacular translation from the Hebrew needs to be informed by the Jewish and ecclesial reception of the text: the Name is to be rendered by "Dominus"/"Lord". I was particularly pleased to find this concrete directive in the Instruction – not only because we cannot be at all certain of the actual pronunciation of God's name, not only because the speaking of God's name is extremely offensive to Jews but because our own Christian Scriptures require us to render it as "Dominus"/"Lord". The Masoretic text, in its vocalization, demands the reading "Adonai"/"Lord." The Septuagint, consistently, uses "Kyrios". The New Testament unfailingly observes the taboo and, like the Septuagint, gives "Kyrios". We Christians are bound by it quite as much as the Jews.

In certain contemporary perspectives the word Kyrios/Lord would be regarded as too patriarchal for it implies domination and indeed male domination. It seems to me, however, that there is no biblical alternative to it - and the Bible is the highest norm

not only for the Magisterium but for the Faithful as well! For, after all, the New Testament also uses the Kyrios title for Christ, at times deliberately ambiguous as to whether God, the Lord, or Jesus is meant (Lk 1:17,76: Mal 3:1? or Lk 1:43?). The Christology of the New Testament would lose something absolutely essential if God's name were to be rendered by anything whatsoever other than "Lord". The Instruction's directive on this has been long overdue.

Translating Liturgical Texts

We turn now from the norms for the translation of the Bible to the regulations for the translation of liturgical texts. Nos. 19-33 give general principles. No.19 is programmatic:

> The words of the Sacred Scriptures, as well as the other words spoken in liturgical celebrations, especially in the celebration of the Sacraments, are not intended primarily to be a sort of mirror of the interior disposition of the faithful; rather, they express truths that transcend the limits of time and space.

Clearly the point here is to safeguard the "transsubjectivity" of the sacred texts which may not be reduced in translation to subjective simplifications. If I read it aright, the problem of what it means to say that a text must be "understandable" is also being touched on here. Kaczynski's critique of the Instruction takes precisely this point as its main theme. In his view, the Instruction introduces "wrong criteria for the translations." He explains:

> Anyone who has ever translated Latin *Orationes* knows that their brief and concise form of expression cannot be imitated in the living languages if the vernacular text is going to be comprehensible and of spiritual advantage to the community hearing it.[8]

What does "comprehensibility" involve? This is a complex matter. On the one hand, the texts of the Mass are not intended to serve a first catechesis – they are for the initiated. On the other hand, liturgical texts are in fact for not a few people – specifically on occasions like weddings and funerals - their first encounter with elements of Christianity. What does comprehensibility mean in regard to these texts? Does it mean that I must completely grasp and fully exhaust the meaning of a text at the first hearing? The Biblical texts are certainly not of this kind. They are, as the Anglo-Saxon exegetes say, "fool proof compositions," i.e. even the least experienced listener or reader can get a first, superficial, meaning from them. But then such is the subtlety of the texts that at each fresh encounter new levels of meaning open up to the increasingly experienced listener. The text will be more and more fully grasped in all its inner subtlety and wealth of cross-references without ever being definitively

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[8] Kaczynski p. 663.

exhausted. Gregory the Great is so right: "Sacra Scriptura crescit cum legentibus."[9] For the beginner, the infant, it is like milk. For the adolescent it becomes solid food. For the connoisseur, a real delicacy. It grows with the reader, who is never quite equal to it. A good text is "understandable" in the sense that you always understand something, without ever exhausting it completely. A shallow text you exhaust at the first reading. Think of *The Sun* in England or *Die Bildzeitung* in Germany! No, the Biblical texts are not as "understandable" as *The Sun*!

What, then, is the task of a translator? Should he so convey ("trans-late": from the Latin *trans-ferre, tra-ducere*) the text to the addressees that it is immediately fully digestible, immediately totally understood and exhausted. Or ought not the richness of the original be available also in the translation so that the result is a good text with all the complexity and subtlety of the original, in particular the whole wealth of the cross-references? The Biblical translator is not to bring the text down to the comprehension level of the first-time hearer but rather to convey it in such a way that it permits the beginner to understand something and yet is able to draw those who are hearing it for the twentieth, fortieth or fiftieth time up towards the level of the text itself.

The directive in no. 20 establishes in this sense a concrete, difficult, but necessary, requirement. The fundamental principle to be respected is that

> …the translation of the liturgical texts of the Roman Liturgy is not so much a work of creative innovation as it is of rendering the original texts faithfully and accurately into the vernacular language. While it is permissible to arrange the wording, the syntax and the style in such a way as to prepare a flowing, vernacular text suitable to the rhythm of popular prayer, the original text, insofar as possible, must be translated integrally and in the most exact manner, without omissions or additions in terms of their content, and without paraphrases or glosses.

Thirty years ago this fundamental principle was not always sufficiently respected. The translations made at that time did not, as far as I can see, aspire to the kind of ideological creativity apparently being projected in recent years - in all seriousness - in the English-speaking world. The German Missal of 1975, however, does homage - all too often in my view – to a theory of translation in which comprehensibility involves making the meaning immediately and exhaustively available. The complicated and complex Latin text of many of the Collects was – precisely through omissions, additions, paraphrases or glosses – simplified and, consequently, impoverished.

To take a first concrete example: In the Collect of the Second Sunday of Easter we find:

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[9] "Holy Scripture grows with the readers" (Hom. in Ez. I 7; in Iob XX 1).

> ut digna omnes intellegentia comprehendant, quo lavacro abluti, quo spiritu regenerati, quo sanguine sunt redempti.

The German translation wanted to provide a more detailed explanation of that forceful "quo lavacro, quo Spiritu, quo sanguine" ("with what a bath, with what a Spirit, with what blood"). The verbose expansion of the text now reads in German:

> Lass uns immer tiefer erkennen, wie *heilig* das Bad der Taufe ist, das uns gereinigt hat, wie *mächtig* dein Geist, aus dem wir wiedergeboren sind, und wie *kostbar* das Blut, durch das wir erkauft sind.
> (Let us ever more deeply perceive how *holy* the bath of baptism is that has cleansed us, how *powerful* your Spirit from whom we have been reborn, and how *precious* the Blood through which we have been purchased.[10])

The forceful brevity has been lost. The meaning of the text has been displaced. The richness of the Scriptural cross-references has disappeared. The Faithful are urged to reflect on the holiness of the baptismal water. They should then go on to muse on the power of the Spirit and the preciousness of the blood. The translator is simply proposing a meditation of his own devising. The original Latin text with its laconic brevity is, in fact, alluding to two New Testament passages. In Titus 3:5f we find:

> (Deus) secundum suam misericordiam salvos nos fecit per **lavacrum regenerationis** et renovationis **Spiritus** Sancti, quem effudit in nos abunde per Iesum Christum salvatorem nostrum

Given that the *lavacrum*, the *regeneratio* and the *Spiritus* are directly cited in the Collect the echo of this passage is clearly intended and ought to be clearly heard in the background. The point to be grasped here is the unity of God's action. Through the "Salvator Iesus Christus" he pours out the "Spiritus Sanctus" in the "lavacrum regenerationis". We are not being asked to meditate on three different qualities of three different objects but on the unity and inner coherence of these three objects: quo lavacro, quo Spiritu, quo sanguine.

The prayer calls to mind a second New Testament passage: 1 John 5:6-8[11]:

> hic est qui venit per aquam et **sanguinem** Jesus Christus non in aqua solum sed in aqua **et sanguine, et Spiritus** est qui testificatur quoniam Christus est veritas quia tres sunt qui testimonium dant **Spiritus et aqua et sanguis et tres unum sunt.**[12]

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[10] English Missal: God of mercy, you wash away our sins in water, you give us new birth in the Spirit and redeem us in the blood of Christ. As we celebrate Christ´s resurrection increase our awareness of these blessings, and renew your gift of life within us.

[11] In Year B part of this passage is given as the second reading on the Second Sunday of Easter (1 John 5:1-6) - enabling even listeners less well versed in the Bible to recognize the connection.

[12] This is the one who came through water and blood, Jesus Christ, not by water alone, but by water and blood. The Spirit is the one that testifies, and the Spirit is truth. So there are three that testify, the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and the three are of one accord.

This passage confirms what has just been said: the unity of these three elements and their inner coherence are meant to be grasped. "Quo lavacro" – what sort of water bath? One that gives the Spirit. "Quo Spiritu" – what sort of Spirit ? One that is handed over through the blood-witness of Jesus on the Cross. This meditation leads on, then, to a third Scripture meditation - on the three baptisms of Jesus: the baptism in water in the Jordan, which became for him a baptism in the Spirit who eqipped him for his baptism in the blood of which he would say:

> There is a baptism with which I must be baptized, and how great is my anguish until it is accomplished. (Lk 12:50)

It is this mystery of his own insertion into the triple baptism of Christ that the believer is to consider on the Second Sunday of Easter – and not three qualities of three objects! It is precisely this kind of addition, paraphrase and explication that the Instruction rightly intends to forestall. Much too often commonplaces of the translator's own devising are introduced into the text thus vitiating its real purpose, namely the rich interplay of cross-references to the Bible.

Another example is the Collect for Saint Stephen's Day, the second day in the Octave of Christmas (26th December):

> Da nobis, quaesumus, Domine, imitari quod colimus, ut discamus et inimicos diligere, quia eius celebramus natalicia qui novit etiam pro persecutoribus exorare,

The Oratio plays on the twofold meaning of "natalicia" – Stephen born into heaven through his martyr's death and, at the same time, the feast of Christ's birth. This play on the word "natalicia" works because neither Stephen nor Christ is identified by name. The hearer understands first the "natalicia" of the saint of the day, the martyr who was able to pray for his persecutors but then he remembers that the second day of the Octave of Christmas also celebrates the "natalicia" of that other who likewise was able to pray for his persecutors. Following the Acts of the Apostles, the Collect merges the dying Stephen with the dying Christ, and it achieves this by avoiding identifying them or mentioning their names. Both the English and the German translator appear to have found this a problem. I do not know whether or not they grasped the biblical cross-reference but they certainly thought to make the text more understandable by clearly identifying the person spoken of in the prayer. The English Missal has:

> Lord, today we celebrate the entrance of Saint Stephen into eternal glory. He died praying for those who killed him. Help us to imitate his goodness and to love our enemies.

Similarly the German Missal gives:

> Allmächtiger Gott wir ehren am heutigen Fest den ersten Märtyrer deiner Kirche. Gib, dass auch wir unsere Feinde lieben und so das Beispiel des heiligen Stephanus nachahmen, der sterbend für seine Verfolger gebetet hat.
> (Almighty God we honour in today's Feast the first martyr of your Church. Grant that we too may love our enemies and so imitate the example of Saint Stephen who dying prayed for his persecutors.)

Yes, immediately comprehensible - but commonplace and moralizing. Imitation of the New Testament play of assimilating Stephen to Christ is abandoned. The connection between Saint Stephen's Day and Christmas is eliminated. In particular Christ has disappeared unnoticed out of the prayer. Naturally, it is virtually impossible to capture the two-fold meaning of "natalicia" in a single word. Fully to convey every subtlety is always impossible. But an attempt ought to have been made, such as LA 20 now calls for, "without omissions or additions, paraphrases or glosses". Or as LA 28 puts it: "One should not make explicit what is implicit". The richness of the Oratio might have been salvaged by something like: "As we celebrate the feast of him who was able to pray for his persecutors… " ("Da wir dessen Fest feiern, der für seine Verfolger zu beten wusste… ") The directive in no. 20 is very demanding, but highly necessary and to the point. What Gregory the Great says about Scripture ought to apply to liturgical texts as well: "crescunt cum legentibus, crescunt cum audientibus."

Nos. 21-28 talk about altogether permissible adaptations for cultural and pastoral necessities, about ritual language, etc. No. 29 then addresses a problem which is extremely virulent in some places and practically non-existent in others: the demand for a politically correct language. The directives in no. 29 are very cautious and general. Nos. 30 and 31 give more concrete instructions. No. 29 says in very general terms that naturally the texts of the Liturgy do not mean to discriminate against anyone. When the Roman Canon, for example, reads:

> Et omnium circumstantium quorum tibi fides cognita est et nota devotio…

it is referring to all those present standing around the altar. The question of whether they are male or female, black or white, young or old, married or single, can, of course, be asked but it is not the point at issue here. The only point being made in the text is that they are all standing around the altar. Anyone, then, who feels that some particular group is being discriminated against here because it is not explicitly mentioned is introducing into the text a problem that remains completely alien to the text itself. The Roman Canon does indeed make occasional use of "inclusive" language, e.g.: "famulorum famularumque tuarum", but there is nothing artificial about this. No. 29 is not inclined to allow a systematic worrying of the text, with a questionnaire that is completely alien to it, as a ground "for altering either a biblical text or a liturgical text that has been duly promulgated."

Permit me to recount an example from the practice of Biblical translation. A German commentary on Qohelet was recently to be translated into English. Qohelet - a very philosophical book - speaks more than 50 times of 'ādām ("Mensch" in German). The English translation used to be quite simple:

> What profit hath a **man** of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? (1,3)

But nowadays "a man" is a problem! The translator, who was rightly unwilling to mar the poetic beauty of Qohelet with infelicitous terms such as "human being" and the like, adopted, as he thought, a genial solution: he simply used "we" and "our" every time: "What profit have we of all our labour which we take under the sun?" So here we have everyone included, no wounded linguistic sensitivities, everything apparently wonderful! All winners, no losers! Except that the philosopher Qohelet could not have been more seriously distorted into his very opposite! When Qohelet talks of 'ādām he knows only solitary individuals. No "we" appears in Qohelet's thought. By introducing into this "existentialist" thinker a problem that is completely alien to him, the translator has unwittingly distorted him into his exact opposite: keen observer of the individual human being, he is now made to think in terms of "we" and "us"! LA 29-32 is right to caution against letting content become a casualty of what appear to be mere stylistic changes.

After these general statements in Nos. 19-33 come the reflections on Biblical translation in Nos. 34-45 that we have already discussed. In Nos. 46-62 we find more concrete norms for the translation of liturgical texts apart from the Bible. No. 49 now makes explicit what had been largely in the background in the previous considerations: the Biblical reference of the liturgical texts is absolutely to be preserved; it may never be sacrificed to fashion - whether in pursuit of a mistaken notion of comprehensibility, or for political correctness, or for any other consideration whatsoever extraneous to the Liturgy itself. No. 49 specifically lays down:

> The manner of translating the liturgical books should foster a correspondence between the biblical text itself and the liturgical texts of ecclesiastical composition which contain biblical words or allusions.

Liturgical translation cannot be used as a vehicle for pastoral simplification. It must, rather, include the attempt to preserve the whole complexity and subtlety of the interplay of cross-references between the liturgical text and the Bible. This requirement has been much sinned against in the past! For example, Eucharistic Prayer III, in its opening paragraph, immediately following upon the *Sanctus*, quotes Malachi 1,11, a passage of the utmost importance in the history of theology. There the prophet says:

> ab ortu enim solis usque ad occasum magnum est nomen meum in gentibus et in omni loco sacrificatur et offertur nomini meo oblatio munda quia magnum nomen meum in gentibus dicit Dominus exercituum.[13]

From the first century onwards, from the Didache[14] to Justin Martyr[15] and Irenaeus,[16] this passage has been the central biblical reference in which the Apostolic Fathers found a prediction of the Eucharist of the universal Church spread over all the nations of the earth[17], Eucharistic Prayer III echoes the passage as follows:

> populum tibi congregare non desinis, ut *a solis ortu usque ad occasum oblatio munda offeratur nomini tuo*.

The expression "from the rising of the sun, even to its setting" does, of course, mean "from east to west", i.e., "everywhere". But the English Missal's version is quite unacceptable:

> From age to age you gather a people to yourself, so that from east to west a perfect offering may be made to the glory of your name.

The French Missal is even worse:

> Tu ne cesses de rassembler ton peuple, afin qu´il te présente *partout dans le monde* une offrande pure."
> You do not cease to gather your people so that they may present to you *everywhere in the world* a pure offering.

The biblical reference and with it, in this case, a rich patristic tradition simply disappear in the banality of the translations. LA 49 now rightly forbids this kind of simplification.

Another example is provided by the words over the chalice in Eucharistic Prayer IV:

> accipiens calicem ex genimine vitis repletum…

It is not the purpose of the Latin to convey information about the contents of the chalice. But the English and German translations, among many others[18], give precisely that impression:

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[13] For from the rising of the sun, even to its setting, my name is great among the nations; And everywhere they bring sacrifice to my name, and a pure offering; For great is my name among the nations, says the LORD of hosts.

[14] Did. 14.

[15] Dial. Tryph. 28,5; 41,2; 117,1.

[16] Adv. Haer, IV 17,5.

[17] Cf. Karl Suso Frank, Maleachi 1,10ff in der frühen Väterdeutung, ThPh 53 (1978) 70-78.

[18] French.: „il prit la coupe remplie de vin"; Portugese.: „tomou o cálice com vinho"; however, correctly, Spanish: „tomó el caliz lleno del fruto de la vid".

… he took the cup, filled with wine.
… nahm er den Kelch mit Wein.

None of the evangelists tells us in his institution narrative what was in the chalice – that would be altogether banal! Likewise the Liturgy has no purpose in providing us with this information. "ex genimine vitis repletum" is, rather, an echo of Mt 26:29 (cf. Mk 14:25) where Jesus says after the meal:

> Dico autem vobis non bibam amodo **de hoc genimine vitis** usque in diem illum cum illud bibam vobiscum novum in regno Patris mei.

With this cross-reference to the Gospel text the liturgy touches upon several elements of this meal: that it is Jesus' last meal, above all though its eschatological character. Anything other than a literal translation loses the biblical allusion.

No. 56 gives a most explicit directive for translation that, I imagine, will create problems in the Anglo-Saxon world because of the long-established alternative to one particular liturgical expression that, it will be claimed, no one understands any more:

> Certain expressions that belong to the heritage of the whole or of a great part of the ancient Church …are to be respected by a translation that is as literal as possible, as for example the words of the people's response *Et cum spiritu tuo.*

Why do I welcome such an explicit - and to many incomprehensible - directive? Because the greeting is biblical! It was Paul's custom to greet the recipients of his letters with this formula:

> Gal 6,18: gratia Domini nostri Iesu Christi **cum spiritu vestro** fratres. Amen
> Phil 4:23: gratia Domini Jesu Christi **cum spiritu vestro.** Amen.
> 1 Tim 4:22: Dominus Iesus **cum spiritu tuo** gratia nobiscum. Amen.
> Phmn 1:25: gratia Domini nostri Iesu Christi **cum spiritu vestro.** Amen.

You will say: But no one understands what that means. That is quite true. I don't know either. No one knows exactly how to explain what Paul means. He is speaking of a Spirit that belongs to the local church or to an individual office-holder such as Timothy. We may imagine something like a community angel, such as the letters in the Apocalypse repeatedly mention - a heavenly being or even the bishop. Whatever the case, the greeting is specific to the New Testament and should absolutely be retained in the Church. All the more so, if it is an occasion for meditation.

No. 57 insists on retaining, or imitating as exactly as possible, the interconnection of expressions and the order of words. This seems pedantic, but sadly we could have done with it earlier. The words

> Accipite et bibite ex eo omnes. Hic est enim calix sanguinis mei novi et aeterni testamenti, qui pro vobis… etc.

would never have been translated into German as

> Nehmet und trinket alle daraus. Das ist der Kelch des neuen und ewigen Bundes, mein Blut das für euch....etc.
> Take and drink all (of you) from this. That is the chalice of the new and eternal covenant, my blood that will be shed for you...etc.

In the Latin the genitive *testamenti* depends not only on *calix* ("the chalice of the covenant") but also on *sanguinis* ("the blood of the covenant"). This interconnection is destroyed in the German translation: the blood is detached from the covenant. In fact "the blood of the covenant" is a reference to Ex 24:8:

> Then Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, saying, 'This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words of his.'

These were the words that sealed the covenant at Mount Sinai. If Jesus quoted these words, with which Moses sealed the covenant at Mount Sinai, at the Last Supper, then his quotation cannot simply be allowed to vanish in the German translation!

To conclude: The translation of liturgical texts clearly presents a great challenge. The relationship between the text and its hearers does indeed have to be taken into account. However, it is essential that the manifold biblical cross-references, which give depth and richness to the original texts, be faithfully preserved in the translations. The principles for liturgical translation provided by the Instruction support this aim and are a great improvement of the guiding principles so manifest in the earlier translations. In practice, of course, it is not always easy to satisfy the requirements of the Instruction but we may hope that the challenge of observing them will lead to better vernacular texts *qui crescunt cum audientibus* and, especially, to prayer texts which are closer to their biblical inspiration.