

## Fr Raglan Hay-Will - The New Lectionary (adapted)

From the beginning of Advent next (ie next Saturday night 30 November and next Sunday 1 December) we will be hearing a different translation of the readings at Mass.

### What won't be different?

The passages in the Bible that we have now for each Sunday or holyday, or weekday will be the same as they have been for the last (almost) six decades.

### So, what will be different?

Firstly, in the lectionary they will be set out in sense lines, the places we pause, similar to poetry (which will make reading easier for our readers).

Secondly – and this is the big change - **it will be a different translation.** Since just after the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) the readings have been taken from the Jerusalem Bible, published in 1966, using what were then the latest findings of biblical research. That Bible was revised in the New Jerusalem Bible of 1985, and it is that version we have used up to now. A further update was produced in 2019, the Revised New Jerusalem Bible. However, the Bishops of Scotland, England and Wales opted for the English Standard Version (ESV) which they considered closer to the original Bible texts that have come down to us (in Latin, and before that Greek and Hebrew).

There are **two principles** in translating. **The first is to be faithful to the original text.** We can try to phrase things in a way that is appealing, or which we feel will speak to the culture we live in today. If we go too far in that direction, we risk drowning out the original voice of the Bible passage with our own personality. Also, trying to speak in a contemporary way runs the risk that popular expressions often date faster than more neutral language. An example in the Jerusalem Bible might be when we're told in Luke 15:14 that the Prodigal Son "began to feel the pinch". Will everyone in fifty years' time know what that means?

**The second aim of translation is to make something from a different era and culture comprehensible to the people of our time.** When St. Jerome wanted to make the Greek Bible accessible to his contemporaries, he translated it into Latin, the language of the people. He pointed out that it was not a matter of translating word-for-word: in order to capture the original sense, he had to use different expressions, because the languages work differently. The Revised Missal we have used since 2011 aimed at bringing out the solemnity of the original Latin versions. However, in some cases it produced awkward lines that were neither Latin nor English. An example might be the second Eucharistic Prayer for Reconciliation: "You, therefore, almighty Father, we bless..."

**There was a call for the new Lectionary to use inclusive language. This has been done, but not in every case.** Where Jesus says or does something in his humanity, the text stays with him having been male. We may also find that sometimes it was felt too difficult to find a neat inclusive version of a particular line.