NOTES ON THE NEW BICOL TRANSLATION OF THE ROMAN MISSAL

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The Background

It all started with Vatican II. To face the challenges of the modern times, the Church needed to undertake reform. And if there was any aspect in the life of the Church that needed such reform most, it was the liturgy. Thus, the Council Fathers declared, in the now oft-cited quote from *Sacrosanctum concilium*, Vatican II's 1963 Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy:

> *Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy…*[1]

To reinforce this statement, the Council Fathers reiterated the injunction later in the document:

> *The Church, therefore, earnestly desires that Christ's faithful, when present at this mystery of faith, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators. On the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers they should take part in the sacred action, conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration.*[2]

Then it became clear that if ever the *full*, *conscious* and *active* participation of the faithful in the liturgy were to be ensured, it also became inevitable that the Council Fathers encourage the use of the vernacular in the liturgy, that is, the language that people understand and call their very own:

> *A suitable place may be allotted to the vernacular in the Masses which are celebrated with the people, especially in the readings and "the common prayer," and also, as local conditions may warrant, in those parts which pertain to the people…*[3]

Having put forth all these norms, Vatican II effectively directed that the liturgy be changed. Accordingly, a new Missal had to be created to reflect the changes. The Missal for the "*Mass of Paul VI*", also called the "*New Order*" Mass, was first approved by Paul VI in 1969 in the Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum*. The Congregation for Divine Worship declared in 1970 that the "New Order" was

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[1] *Sacrosanctum concilium*, n. 14.

[2] *Sacrosanctum concilium*, n. 48.

[3] *Sacrosanctum concilium*, n. 54.

edito typica, or the Mass everyone is supposed to use. At that time the Roman Missal was officially published only in Latin. A committee called the *International Committee on English in the Liturgy* (ICEL), subsequently published the official English translation in 1973, ten years after the promulgation of *Sacrosanctum concilium.* It was approved by the American National Conference of Catholic Bishops for use in the dioceses of the United States.

The reaction to the norms laid down by *Sacrosanctum concilium* was even more swift in the Bicol Region. In 1966, barely three years after *Sacrosanctum concilium* was promulgated, the *Comision Archidiocesana sa Liturgia*, a group of Bicolano priests composed of A. Reganit of Cáceres, A. Molina of Legazpi and J. Ofrasio of Sorsogon, published the *Bikol na Misal*. Reading the *"Patalastas"* on the inside title page of the missal and signed by Teopisto V. Alberto, then Archbishop of Caceres, one discovers that the three bishops in Bicol then that included besides Alberto, Flaviano Ariola of Legazpi and Arnulfo Arcilla of Sorsogon, agreed that this was going to be used as the official missal in Bicol. This new Bicol missal, however, contained only the prayers and readings for Sunday masses, without those of the daily masses and the Holy Week liturgy. Furthermore, it also contained a Bicol translation of the canon (eucharistic prayer) since up until that time the Latin canon was still being used even if the mass was already being said in Bicol. The Weekday Bicol Missal was published much later but its date of publication can no longer be ascertained as only a fragment thereof exists to this day.[4]

When the Roman Missal was officially created in 1969, Ofrasio, this time working alone, published that same year his own *Misal Romano sa Bikol.* Subsequently, with the official declaration of the Roman Missal by Paul VI as the *editio typica* in 1970, Ofrasio revised and published his work in 1971. Two years later, in 1973, he complemented this work with the publication of his own version of the *Leccionario sa Bikol*, which successively came out in three volumes. This time, Ofrasio had obtained only the *imprimatur* from Arnulfo Arcilla, then Bishop of Sorsogon, for both the missal and the lectionary. Ofrasio claimed, as can be seen from the cover page, that his translation was done *"ex decreto Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratum auctoritate Pauli VI promulgatum."*

Very much unlike other versions of the missal, particularly the English Sacramentary and Lectionary, these early attempts were all printed in mimeographed form. Humble in their appearance, they were no less truly monumental if only because of the great effort expended to produce them. For one thing, they were pioneering works that only the above-mentioned Bicolano

[4] One such fragment is found at the Barlin Library of the Holy Rosary Major Seminary in Naga City.

priests dared to do at that time. For want of other translations, the earliest 1966 "official version" was widely used in the whole Bicol Region, except in Sorsogon where Ofrasio's 1971 missal remained the preferred text until 1980, when T. Pacis published in Legazpi his *Bagong Pagmisa* which on close inspection was a revision of these earlier works. Henceforth, Pacis's translation has become the "received text" (*textus receptus*) as it were, up until this was replaced by the new translation in 2008.

A cursory examination, in particular, of the *Order of the Mass* as translated in these works, shows that there was an effort to make the Latin text as the basis of the translation. For one thing, titles of the different parts of the mass and the "*rubrics*" (though printed in black mimeographing ink) were all in Latin. The Latin form of the priest's greeting "*Dominus vobiscum*" was preserved to read "*Mapasaindo an Kagurangnan*" in the 1966 missal and "*An Kagurangnan mapa-saindo*" [5] in Ofrasio's 1969/1971 translation. There were, however, also instances of the use of dynamic equivalents. For example, the people's response "*Et cum spiritu tuo*" was translated "*Asin mapasaimo man*" in the 1966 version and "*Siring man mapa-saimo*" in Ofrasio's translation.

But one thing was sorely missing in these early works, and nobody, not even the bishops at that time, seemed to have minded. While the 1966 missal had the official approval of the three Bicol Bishops at that time, acting in a collegial manner as it were, and Ofrasio's work had the *imprimatur* of Bishop Arcilla in his capacity as Bishop of Sorsogon, they never enjoyed the official *recognitio* from the Apostolic See. No one at that time must have thought that this was necessary, and no one must have thought either that any translation of the liturgy in fact required the approval of the Apostolic See. On the other hand, the Council Fathers explicitly stipulated that:

> *Adaptations which are considered useful or necessary should then be submitted to the Holy See, by whose consent they may be introduced… To ensure that adaptations may be made with all the circumspection necessary, the Apostolic See will grant power to this same territorial ecclesiastical authority to permit and direct, as the case requires, the necessary preliminary experiments over a determined period of time among certain groups suitable for the purpose.*[6]

In any case, even if the process of obtaining the Vatican *recognitio* were to be observed at that time, the question of course remained as to whether these works would have stood and passed the rigorous scrutiny of the Apostolic See. Perhaps, it was yet too early for that. Perhaps, there was need as yet to experiment on the "new" vernacular texts.

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[5] To this day, this latter form of the greeting remains in use in Sorsogon.

[6] *Sacrosanctum concilium*, n. 40.

And an experiment, indeed, it has become for *forty five* years! If there was anything that characterized subsequent versions of the Bicol Sacramentary and Lectionary, they were all experimental, none of which bore the collective and official approval of all Bicol Bishops and more importantly that of the Holy See. The more significant versions that followed the pioneering works of Reganit, Molina and Ofrasio included the following:

> *Bagong Pagmisa*, trans. by T. Pacis, 1980.
> *Misal na Bikol,* 10 vols., ed. by G. Balatan, 1989-1995.
> *Bagong Pagmisa,* trans. by T. Pacis and expanded by R. Barquez, 1992.
> *Mga Misa sa Aroaldaw*, 4 vols., trans. by H. Sarmiento, no date.
> *Misal na Bikol* (sanctoral) trans. by F. Caindec, 1994.
> *Sacramentario/Leccionario,* ed. by J. Rojas, 1995/1996.
> *Misal na Bikol,* 3 vols., ed. by P. Beriña, 2005-2006.

Looking at all these works, the blatant and glaring fact is that until now, forty five years after *Sacrosanctum concilium*, there has never been any officially approved Bicol text of the Roman Missal – a rather anomalous situation considering the length of time that has already passed since *Sacrosanctum concilium*. This is all the more made conspicuously anomalous with the issuance by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, on May 7, 2001, of the instruction *Liturgiam authenticam*, on the use of vernacular languages in the publication of the books of the Roman liturgy. This latest Roman document clearly stipulated the following:

> *For this reason, it is not permissible to publish, for the use of celebrants or for the general public, any liturgical texts that have been translated or recently composed, as long as the recognitio is lacking… The recognitio of the Apostolic See is intended to ensure that the translations themselves, as well as any variations introduced into them, will not harm the unity of God's people, but will serve it instead.*[7]

Strictly speaking then, there is no authorized Bicol text as yet that may ever be used anywhere in the Bicol Region since not one of the translations already mentioned has ever obtained the *recognitio* of the Holy See. If the norms of *Liturgiam authenticam* were to be strictly enforced, only the Latin or English text may be used. Neither, it seems, can any of the Tagalog (or other Filipino) versions be used since none of them had also been officially approved by the Holy See.

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[7] *Liturgiam authenticam*, n. 80.

It is obvious, however, that at this point and for pastoral reasons, it would have been counterproductive and highly detrimental to the faithful had one stopped using the now-replaced Bicol text and used the Latin or English text instead since the faithful have already been so accustomed to this provisionary vernacular text. Otherwise, how else could the mass have ever been said in Bicol? But if this grave disadvantage had, thus, justified the continued use of said Bicol text, it would no longer justify in any case postponing further efforts to draft a new Bicol translation in accordance with the norms of *Liturgiam authenticam*. Indeed, the task has become an imperative, that is, so that the necessary approbation from the Apostolic See might be sought to eventually produce an authorized Bicol text.

Meanwhile, in 2002, the Holy See published the *editio typica tertia* of the Roman Missal, making it all the more urgent to produce a Bicol translation based on this latest official Latin text. With this updated Latin text, the present Bicol text has become even more outdated. Further scrutiny of this text will show that it is much closer to the English text produced by the ICEL than to the subsequent 1975 *editio typica altera* of the Roman Missal, making it in many parts *a translation of a translation*. For example, *"Asin mapasaimo man"* is really an equivalent of *"And also with you"* more than it is a translation of *"Et cum spiritu tuo"*. As a consequence, the Bicol text shared much of the weaknesses and inaccuracies of the English text.

The breakthrough came in 2005, when during the Second Bicol Priests' Congress, the Bicol priests in attendance passed a resolution, to which all Bicol Bishops concurred, expressing the common sentiment that a new Bicol translation of the Roman Missal be made, occasioned as this was after all by *Liturgiam authenticam* (2001) and the *editio typica tertia* of the Roman Missal (2002). The concrete result of this resolution was the formation of a team of translators in the Archdiocese of Caceres which initially took the task of translation. The enormity of the task confined the team's work in the meantime only to the *ordo missae.* After several months of intensive work, the team produced a draft which was presented to the priests' assembly in Palsong, Bula (Camarines Sur) on January 27, 2007. The draft was accompanied by annotations explaining the changes that were made to the Bicol text currently in use. In that assembly, the priests agreed to use the text by Easter of 2007. The consensus was to experiment on this text to elicit comments from both the clergy and the laity.

In the meantime, the same draft was presented to the Bicol Bishops in their meeting held in Pasacao, Camarines Sur, on February 5, 2007. In this meeting, the bishops also agreed to introduce the new draft in their respective dioceses so as to draw comments from the people and test its acceptability among the faithful. The bishops favorably endorsed the whole project of translation,

eventually paving the way for the creation of a regional committee to review and improve on the initial draft, work on whatever comments that might be elicited from its experimental use, and further continue the work of translation of the whole Roman Missal. After several months of collaborative effort, the committee produced what may now be called the "*regional text*" of the new "*An Pasunod-sunod sa Misa*" (ordo missae) in 2007, as a first step in translating the whole Roman Missal. Presented at the meeting of the Bicol Bishops held in Labo, Camarines Norte, on February 2, 2008, the new regional text was approved by the bishops for publication and use throughout the Bicol Region. The new text was finally available for distribution on Holy Thursday, March 20, 2008.

Despite many revisions and improvements to this initial draft, some texts remain ticklish, if not actually contentious, and open to misunderstanding, thereby requiring detailed explanation. It is to some of these texts that attention must now be drawn.

Et cum spiritu tuo

One *liturgical formula* of the Latin rite of the Mass that has evoked so much discussion as far as its translation into the English language is concerned is *Et cum spiritu tuo.* Such discussion also proves to be instructive as far as translating the same Latin expression into other native languages such as Bicol or Tagalog.

It should immediately be noted that except the English, which (for a long time now) has "*And also with you*" instead of "*And with your spirit*", other major European languages prefer the literal translation of the Latin. In French, it reads: *Et avec votre esprit*; in German: *Und mit deinem Geiste*; in Italian: *E con il tuo spirito*; and in Spanish: *Y con tu espiritu*. Based on the initial draft that has been submitted in 2005 by ICEL, the formula is now translated *And with your spirit*.

The story of how the ICEL got to this translation is rather long. In 1970, the International Consultation on English Texts (ICET) proposed this translation (in *Prayers we have in common*): "*The Spirit of the Lord be with you…And also with you.*" ICET added the comment "If *spirit* is used in the greeting, it need not be used in the response." However, this translation was not universally well received, and in light of comments made, ICET in 1972 changed its translation of the greeting to: "*The Lord be with you.*" ICET, however, did not change the people's response, so the dialogue now does not contain the word *spirit*.

In 1988, the English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC), ICET's successor, revised ICET's work, but left this dialogue unchanged, saying that the 1972 version had found widespread acceptance. They cited with approval the theory

that *cum spiritu tuo* means no more than *tecum* and that *your spirit* is a Semitism for *you*. Prominent among these is Joseph Jungmann, the wide availability of whose book on the Mass gave this opinion great influence.[8]

Of those who wrote on this subject during the late 1960s, most rejected Jungmann's view. For instance, Dom Henry Ashworth wrote: "The people's response *Et cum spiritu tuo* is also a prayer for God's accredited minister. It is a prayer which asks that the creative activity and power of the Holy Spirit may fill his *pneuma* and enable him to obey Christ's command *'Do this in remembrance of me'*."[9]

Before anything else, it might be helpful to look into the usage of the expression in Scriptures. Paul uses it as a greeting to conclude his letters. Thus, in Galatians (6,18), he writes: "*May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be* ***with your spirit****, brothers, Amen."* In Philippians 4,23 and Philemon 1,25, he uses the same expression: "*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be* ***with your spirit****."* Then finally in 2 Timothy 4,22, he winds up with the same greeting: "*The Lord be* ***with your spirit****. Grace be with you all."*

According to Ceslas Spicq, for Paul, the spirit (Greek *pneuma*) is "the spiritual part of man that is closest to God, the immediate object of divine influence, and in particular the receptacle of the Spirit of God."[10] Thus, it is clear that the greeting is loaded with profound spiritual meaning and significance, far from just being an ordinary and *common* (casual) greeting.

This is certainly what one finds from how such meaning has further evolved in the Apostolic Tradition. In particular, (at least) since the time of Hippolytus (d. 236), the response *Et cum spiritu tuo* has been reserved to occasions when an *ordained minister* presides. The Fathers certainly understood this sentence to be a reference to the presence of the gift of the Holy Spirit in terms of the gift of ordination in the presbyter or bishop.

In this context, *Et cum spiritu tuo* has become a response which can only be made by a Christian assembly ***to an ordained man*** since the reference is to the spirit of holy ordination which is central in his celebrating the holy Eucharist/Mass aright in Christ's name. Thus, the *sensus plenior* of the response has long been held to include an allusion to the presence of the Holy Spirit in the minister who has uttered the greeting. The classic articulation of this interpretation is given by St. John Chrysostom in the following passage:

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[8] See J. JUNGMANN, *The Mass of the Roman Rite, Its Origins and Development*, trans. by J.F. BRUNNER, 1959.

[9] Cf. H. ASHWORTH, "Et cum spiritu tuo", in *The Clergy Review* 51 (1966), 122-130.

[10] Cf. C. SPICQ, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament,* Hendrickson Publishers, 1997.

> *If there were not Holy Spirit, there would be no shepherds or teachers in the Church, since they come to be through the Spirit, as Paul says: "In which the Holy Spirit set you as shepherds and overseers"* (Acts 20,28 – not the currently received Greek text). *Do you see that this* [i.e. the Eucharistic celebration] *also takes place through the Holy Spirit? Had the Holy Spirit not been in this man, our common father and teacher, when a short while ago he went up to this holy sanctuary and gave peace to all of you, and you all answered him together "And to your spirit", then, not only would you not reply with these words when he goes up, and when he speaks to you, and when he prays on your behalf, but also when he stands beside this holy table as he is about to offer that tremendous sacrifice; for those who have been initiated know the saying: he does not touch the oblations before he himself invokes on you the grace that comes from the Lord, and you answer him "And to your Spirit", reminding yourselves by those words that the man who is present does nothing, and that the gifts set before you are not achievements of human nature, but that it is the Spirit's grace, present and descending on all, that prepares that mystical sacrifice. Do not therefore look to the nature of what is seen, but recognize the grace that is unseen. Of the things that take place in this holy sanctuary, nothing is human. If the Spirit were not present, the Church would not assemble; and if the Church does not assemble, then it is clear that the Spirit is present*.[11]

On account of this, some theologians argue that to translate the expression to *And also with you* would be to ignore this Apostolic usage and in effect blur the unique vocation/ordination of the Christian priesthood of the person it is being addressed to, perhaps on the basis that after all *"in baptism all Christians receive all possible ministries in potential."* Thus, the translation of *Et cum spiritu tuo* as *And also with you* may have become familiar in the English-speaking world, and a change in the people's response would no doubt occasion some temporary discomfort. Nevertheless, the continuous literal translation of this response in all major liturgical traditions, whether Semitic, Greek, or Latin as well as in virtually every other modern language, constitutes a historical consensus and an imperative that can no longer be set aside. The old English translation *And also with you* inappropriately situates the exchange on a purely horizontal level, without an apparent distinction in the roles of those who speak; the literal translation in its historical context has always been understood in relation to the crucial distinction of liturgical roles between the priest and the people. Weighty considerations such as these necessitate that the English translation at last be brought into conformity with the usage of the other language groups, and with the tradition, as is also prescribed now in the Congregation's recent Instruction *Liturgiam authenticam*.

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[11] ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Sermon on Pentecost*, 4, PG 40, 458f.

Indeed, *Liturgiam authenticam* (n. 56) reminds translators that "Certain expressions that belong to the heritage of the whole or of a great part of the ancient Church, as well as others that have become part of the general human patrimony, 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,* or the expression *mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa* in the Act of Penance of the Order of Mass."

It is in view of all this that *Et cum spiritu tuo* has also been rendered in Bicol as *Asin sa saimong espiritu* in the proposed new translation. Indeed, this is not at all a Bicolano greeting. It is not meant to be! It is not even an English, French, German, Italian or Spanish greeting. It is rather a biblical and liturgical and therefore *specifically Christian* greeting as has been demonstrated above. From the specific context in which it is used, i.e., the liturgy, it is not meant to be a *common everyday* expression in *ordinary conversation* for it did not evolve from that context to begin with. All this is reinforced by the fact that the greeting *Dominus vobiscum,* to which *Et cum spiritu tuo* is meant as a response, is in the first place also a liturgical Christian greeting and not something commonplace that requires a response of this same genre.

But more ought to be said about the objection that *Asin sa saimong espiritu* is not a Bicolano expression. The task of liturgical translation is not so much *to turn* or *transform* liturgical expressions (coming and evolving from a source-culture) into *native* or *local* expressions, as though they inherently or spontaneously emanate from within the culture of the native language (the recipient culture). Rather, the task of (liturgical) translation is to make a local culture express the intent, message and spirit of the original liturgical text. In other words, the question is how to express a liturgical text in the local culture, without altering the original intent of the text, not to the point of making the text appear necessarily as though it were already a native/local expression. While this latter tendency might make the translation understandable (comprehensible) and acceptable in the local culture, it does move such translation away from the very source-culture, thereby also to the point of radically changing the spirit and intent of the original text.

In this connection, the *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith* (in a different context)[12] suggests that in the process of transmitting the faith to another culture (a function that is also inherent to liturgical translation), one must aim to transform (enrich) culture itself, saying: "*Through the inculturation of the Christian message, Greek culture itself underwent a transformation from within and was able to be*

[12] See CDF, *Notification on the Works of Father Jon Sobrino, S.J.: Jesucristo liberador, Lectura histórico-teológica de Jesús de Nazaret* (Madrid, 1991) and *La fe en Jesucristo. Ensayo desde las víctimas* (San Salvador, 1999).

used as an instrument for the expression and defense of biblical truth." Thus, an expression may not properly belong to a receiving culture, but it contributes to the development and growth of this culture when assimilated and expressed within this culture. That is because it somehow already becomes part of this culture.

Furthermore, there is no way that *every* liturgical (theological) expression or concept can be exactly expressed in a receiving culture, without this culture having to import or borrow something from the source-culture. For example, *Tataramon na nanilaman (nanitawo)*, even while literally translating *Word made flesh,* remains foreign to Bicol thought (it is not a Bicol concept). Furthermore, *Aki nin Tawo* does literally translate *Son of Man,* but it is not strictly a Bicolano expression. It is simply presumed that any *tawo* is *aki nin tawo,* without this being explicitly articulated in ordinary conversation. Both translations borrow foreign conceptual constructs (ideas) that are mainly biblical (theological) and remain difficult to understand without the accompanying theological explanation and catechesis. It is difficult to imagine if one could even find dynamic equivalents of these expressions. Thus, there is no other way but to employ literal translation, even if doing so does not produce the typical Bicolano expressions that are so desired.

In any case, it has also become clear from the discussions that *Et cum spiritu tuo* is not just an expression intended to reciprocate a greeting (the conjunction that is used is simply *et/asin* and not *etiam/asin…man*), as it is *a fortiori* an *expression of faith*. Thus, *Asin sa saimo man* and even the old *Asin mapasaimo man* (which plainly sound more as *expressions of reciprocity*), while admittedly more solemn, elegant and easily understandable as they are common expressions, do not express the original richness and depth of *Et cum spiritu tuo*.

The apprehension though that the new translation can cause confusion is valid. It is true that *espiritu* as used in Bicol is an assimilated term referring *almost always* to the Holy Spirit. But this understanding is *not really exclusive* since Bicolanos also speak of *maraot na espiritu* (evil spirit), *nasaniban nin espiritu* (possessed by a spirit) and *espiritista* (one who drives away evil spirits). Besides, when it is modified by the pronoun *saimong* (*espiritu*), then it becomes clear that the greeting is addressed to the minister and not to the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, it is true that to refer to the interior life of the person Bicolanos would rather use *kalag* or *boot.* But how does one bring this out for neither is this expressed in the old text (i.e., *asin mapasaimo man*)? Given the rich and profound theological meaning of *Et cum spiritu tuo,* it is difficult to justify dropping the word *espiritu* in the new translation. To do otherwise would seem to give more priority to rules of linguistics and mere cultural sensitivity than to sound liturgical and theological hermeneutics.

The potential confusion, however, can further be avoided in two ways. First, in referring to the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, the adjectives *Santo* and *Banal* are almost always used so that without these adjectives *espiritu* might, though not necessarily, refer to something else. Second, *espiritu* should be spelled with a small *"e"* to differentiate it from *Espiritu Santo* that is spelled with a capital *"E"*. This, however, is not enough since unscrupulous readers usually do not pay attention to these little details. Besides, the greeting is meant to be *spoken* (and *heard*) and not to be simply (silently) *read*.

Thus, the ultimate solution has been stipulated by *Liturgiam authenticam* (n. 29): "It is the task of the homily and of catechesis to set forth the meaning of the liturgical texts… Similarly, it is the task of catechists or of the homilist to transmit the right interpretation of the texts…" Furthermore, in n. 43, *Liturgiam authenticam* states:

> It should be borne in mind that a literal translation of terms which may initially sound odd in a vernacular language may for this very reason provide inquisitiveness in the hearer and provide an occasion for catechesis.

Other provisions of *Liturgiam authenticam* that have become the basis of the new translation are the following:

> n. 19: "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 dispositions of the faithful; rather, *they express truths that transcend the limits of time and space.*"
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> n. 20: "…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."
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> n. 47: "While the translation must transmit the perennial treasury of orations by means of language understandable in the cultural context for which it is intended, it should also be guided by the conviction that liturgical prayer not only is formed by the genius of a culture, but itself

> contributes to the development of that culture. *Consequently it should cause no surprise that such language differs somewhat from ordinary speech.*"
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> n. 59: "Since liturgical texts by their very nature are intended to be proclaimed orally and to be heard in the liturgical celebration, *they are characterized by a certain manner of expression that differs from that found in everyday speech.*"
>
> n. 74: "…a suitable period of catechesis should accompany the publication of the new text."

Incidentally, as a whole, *Liturgiam authenticam* discourages the use of *dynamic equivalence*, which was prescribed in the instruction *Comme le prévoit* (On the Translation of Liturgical Texts for Celebrations with a Congregation, Consilium for Implementing the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, issued January 25, 1969) in favor of the *formal equivalence* method of liturgical translation.

As an afterthought, it should indeed be recognized that translation is an *art of negotiation* as there is in any translation something to gain (in meaning) and something to lose. But in the present case, in doing only a purely linguistic translation, there is just so *little* to gain and *so much* to lose. Clearly, whatever this gain might be, it does not outweigh that which is inevitably lost.

Per omnia saecula saeculorum

An ending that is frequently used in most liturgical prayers is the ascription of glory to the ever-blessed Trinity expressed by the Latin formula *"per omnia saecula saeculorum"*. This has been rendered in English in two ways, i.e., *"world without end"* and *"for ever and ever"*. In the new translation of the *editio typica tertia* of the Roman Missal, ICEL retains the formula "for ever and ever".

Both English equivalents, however, did not escape criticism from liturgical experts, who find them as inaccurate translations of the original Latin. For instance, the Byzantine Catholic, *Serge Keleher*, writes:

> *In Latin, there is nothing wrong with it* (per omnia saecula seculorum). *But the usual Roman Catholic translation is either "world without end", which is sheer nonsense, or "forever and ever", which isn't much better. Translating a noun with an adverb surely requires a serious explanation.*[13]

[13] Cf. http://www.byzcath.org/forums/ubbthreads.php/ubb/showflat/Number/247441/fpart/5 (the parenthetical insertion has been supplied).

Another author, *Charles Leadbeater*, opines somewhat ambivalently:

> *It calls for no comment beyond the remark that "world without end" is a somewhat unsatisfactory translation of per omnia sæcula sæculorum; which clearly means exactly what it says: "throughout all ages of ages". The conception of the aion or dispensation as the title of a long period of time was perfectly familiar to the Greeks and Romans, as was also the further idea of a still far greater period called an æon of æons--as we might poetically call ten thousand years a century of centuries. So "through all ages of ages" is equivalent to "throughout all eternity".*[14]

Although, Leadbeater correctly points out that *"world without end"* (a negative formula) is somewhat unsatisfactory, it remains to be seen if *"through all ages of ages"* is indeed equivalent to *"throughout all eternity"* as will be discussed below.

Significantly, at least four other languages adopt the equivalent of the English "through all ages of ages". The French translation uses *"pour toutes les siècles des siècles"*, the Italian version has *"per tutti i secoli dei secoli"*, and very similarly the Spanish equivalent is *"por todos los siglos de los siglos"*. Meanwhile, the Dutch translation has two forms, a) *"door alle eeuwen der eeuwen"* (through all ages of ages), and b) *"en tot in eeuwigheid"* (and into eternity). Resembling this latter Dutch form, the German version simplifies the formula to read *"in alle Ewigkeit"* (in all eternity). It is significant to note that unlike the English "world without end" all the above translations preserve the positive form of the original Latin.

Given these observations, it seems no better to translate *per omnia saecula saeculorum* into Bicol as *"sa panahon na daing kasagkoran"* as this was otherwise done for the past so many years. Clearly, *sa panahon na daing kasagkoran* matches the English "world without end", except that the English translates the Latin *saeculum* to "world"[15] while the Bicol translates it to *"panahon"* (time). Furthermore, while *sa panahon na daing kasagkoran* might at first glance match "for ever and ever", that is not really the case. For while "for ever and ever" (a positive expression) connotes time that is eternal, *sa panahon na daing kasagkoran* (a negative expression) does not strictly have that sense insofar as it simply

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[14] See http://www.users.rcn.com/donlav/cath-mass/f-page303.htm#page32.

[15] On the interpretration of *saeculum* as *world*, see J. SCHALL, "Secularity: On Benedict XVI and the Role of Religion in Society" in http://www.ignatiusinsight.com/features2007/schall_secularity_jan07.asp: "Some of the older readers will recall the oft-heard Latin ending to prayers and invocations that went *per omnia saecula saeculorum*. This phrase was usually translated into English as 'world without end, Amen.' Literally, it means through 'ages of ages'. A *saeculum* is generally the period of a man's life. So it comes to mean the generations of man down the ages, the length of our time on this earth. Thus *saeculum* means the world."

connotes time "without end" and not necessarily time "*without beginning* and end", which is what eternity is all about. If "time eternal" is what the Latin expression indicates, then this might as well be rendered in Bicol as *"sa panahon na daing kapinonan asin daing kasagkoran* (*katapusan*)*"*. But that would perhaps be already interpolating too much, besides sounding even more liturgically awkward.

On close inspection, however, that is not what the Latin formula is all about. Rather, it points more to the fact that God is *omnipotent* whose *reign is universal*, He being the God "of all times", i.e., "through all ages of ages",[16] rather than to the fact that God is God of "time without end" – though admittedly, this latter adverbial expression of time does not necessarily contradict the former.

On account of all this, it would seem more accurate to use the more literal translation *"sa gabos na kapanahonan kan mga panahon"* to preserve the original sense of *per omnia saecula saeculorum* to mean "through all ages of ages". Not only is it faithful to the literal sense of the Latin formula, it also preserves the same formula as a "positive" expression, compared to *"sa panahon na daing kasagkoran"* which turns it into a "negative" expression. Besides, *sa panahon na daing kasagkoran* raises three difficulties. First, it omits the idea of *"omnia"*, whenever this occurs in Latin.[17] Second, it speaks of time in the singular (*sa panahon*) as opposed to the Latin plural (*saecula*). To remedy these first two difficulties, while insisting on the old Bicol formula, one will have to say *sa gabos na (mga) panahon na daing kasagkoran*, which is all the more awkward, if not outright nonsense! Third, the beautiful Hebrew superlative genitive expression (*saecula saeculorum*) is lost in *sa panahon na daing kasagkoran* as will be further expounded below.

Of course one can always raise the objection once again that *"sa gabos na kapanahonan kan mga panahon"* is not a typical expression in Bicol or that the expression is foreign to the Bicol language so that to use it would mean introducing something new to Bicol thought that is difficult to understand. But what is wrong with introducing something new into a language? Is this not how a language grows (and ought to evolve)?[18] Otherwise it remains impoverished! The fact, however, is that it is not entirely true that introducing the expression into the liturgy makes it difficult to understand, as if there is no way it could be

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[16] See Wikipedia on "in saecula saeculorum": *"L'espressione viene utilizzata per rinforzare l'idea dell'onnipotenza di Dio, al quale nella preghiera va l'adorazione dei fedeli, che riconoscono il suo regnare universale per tutti i secoli dei secoli."*

[17] "Omnia" does not occur in the doxology, n. 125 in the *ordo missae* which simply uses *"in saecula"* (translated *"sa mga kapanahonan"*) and in the prayer thereafter (n. 126) which uses *"in saecula saeculorum"* (translated *"sa kapanahonan kan mga panahon"*).

[18] See *Liturgiam authenticam*, n. 47.

made understandable. First of all, *mga kapanahonan* and *mga panahon* are Bicol words, very much unlike *Amen, Alleluia, Hosanna,* and even *Eucaristia*, which are all foreign words, but have become understandable in Bicol due to constant use. If these foreign words have eventually been assimilated into the vernacular liturgy and became understandable in the course of time, what more of *"sa gabos na kapanahonan kan mga panahon"*, if this also be constantly used and more so if properly explained.

Second, as already previously mentioned, the task of liturgical translation is not to turn Latin expressions (liturgical formulae) into typically vernacular (Bicol) expressions. That is not just possible all the time. In fact, what should be avoided is to turn these formulae, given their sacred character, into colloquial and pedestrian expressions. Consider other examples such as *Et cum spiritu tuo* (asin sa saimong espiritu) that has been amply discussed above, *agnus Dei* (Cordero kan Dios), *ad cenam Agni* (sa pamanggi kan Cordero), etc. These expressions are not only liturgical, they are *a fortiori* biblical and cannot just be translated by a dynamic equivalent to make them sound typical in the vernacular without radically changing their original meaning and sense.

It is in view of all this that *per omnia saecula saeculorum* has been rendered in Bicol as *"sa gabos na kapanahonan kan mga panahon"* in the new translation. Indeed, just like *"Asin sa saimong espiritu", "sa gabos na kapanahonan kan mga panahaon"* is not at all a Bicolano expression. It is not meant to be! It is rather a liturgical and an *specifically Christian* formula.

As a liturgical formula, *per omnia saecula saeculorum* borrows its form from its source-language, something that *"sa gabos na kapanahonan kan mga panahon"* cannot also avoid borrowing. It is the style from Hebrew to repeat words to express the superlative. Think of "holy of holies" or "king of kings". Hebrew lacks a simple superlative form, so words are either used in this way in the genitive or repeated three times, e.g., "S*anctus, sanctus, sanctus"* in the preface, a style that is also adopted in Bicol, i.e., *"Banal, banal, banal"* as in all other languages. Other examples include the threefold repetitions of *"mea culpa"* in the confiteor, the *kyrie* in the penitential rite, the *alleluia* in the gospel acclamation during Easter, and the *agnus Dei* in the communion rite. Seen from the perspective of this original grammatical context, *sa gabos na kapanahonan kan mga panahon* becomes a rich and beautiful expression extolling the greatness of Jesus Christ as God, and as God indeed "of all ages".

On close scrutiny, *per omnia saecula saeculorum* (*sa kapanahonan kan mga panahon*) is part of a Trinitarian formula that concludes the Collect in which the divinity of Jesus Christ is affirmed. Taken as a whole, the formula means that there has never been a time (an age) that Jesus did not live, that there has never been a

time (an age) that Jesus (as King) did not reign, and never a time (an age) that Jesus was not God, because "with [the Father]" and "in the unity of the Holy Spirit," "he lives and reigns," and "he is God", through all ages of ages (*sa gabos na kapanahonan kan mga panahon*).

Benedicimus te/Glorificamus te

One expression in the Latin liturgy which could be misleading if translated literally in the vernacular is *Benedicimus te,* one of the acclamations which occurs in the *Gloria*. Without much thought, it could be instantaneously translated *Benebendicionan mi ika* (i.e., *We bless you* in English). But to translate it this way does not seem to sound correct since "*te*" refers to God, and it is not for any human being to "bless Him" (*magbendicion Saiya*), as though man becomes a source of blessing himself. In other words, the expression becomes improper for human beings in relation to God within the vernacular's pattern of thought. To translate the Latin to the vernacular would therefore mean looking into what it means and how it is used in the whole context of the *Gloria*.

The *Gloria* is known as the *Great Doxology*. It is used in the Catholic Latin liturgy and in the services of many other Christian churches. It is also called the *Hymnus angelicus* or *Laus angelorum* because it begins with the words sung by the angels as part of the announcement of the birth of Jesus to the shepherds (Luke 2,14): "*Gloria in excelsis Deo*!" The *Vulgate* uses *altissimis* (generally meaning physically highest) instead of *excelsis* (lofty, high, elevated, or a height).

The scene then that comes to mind is Luke's narrative of Jesus' nativity. In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified....And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, *praising God* and saying, *"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will."* (Luke 2: 8-9; 13-14)

This opening verse continues with other verses added to make a proper doxology. The whole song was originally in Greek and goes back very far in the history of Christianity. The tradition is that it was translated into Latin by St. Hilary of Poitiers (d. 366). It is quite possible that he learned it during his exile in the East (360) and brought back a version of it with him.

Another form of the song goes to at least the third century, if not to the first. A longer version dating to the fourth century is still sung in the Greek Orthodox church. This version is not used in the standard liturgy of the church. In any case, the Latin version differs from the present Greek form. They correspond

down to the end of the Latin, which however adds: "*Tu solus altissimus*" and "*Cum sancto Spiritu*". The Greek then goes on: "*Every day I will bless thee and will glorify thy name for ever, and for ever and ever*" and continues with ten more verses, chiefly from the psalms, to the *Trisagion* and the *Gloria Patri*.

In the Roman Catholic Mass, the Gloria is sung on Sundays and Solemnities after the Kyrie and before the Collect. It is omitted during the seasons of Advent and Lent, except on feasts and on Holy Thursday. It is also not sung at funerals or memorial masses.

Looking now at the text, the *Gloria* is a *hymn of praise* addressed to each Person of the Holy Trinity in turn, although the clause about the Holy Spirit is very short (*cum sancto Spiritu*) and is evidently an afterthought. The clauses are arranged in parallels with a certain loose rhythm.

The text of the hymn is as follows:

Gloria in excelsis Deo,
et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis
Laudamus te.
Benedicimus te.
Adoramus te.
Glorificamus te.
Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.
Domine Deus, Rex caelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens.
Domine fili unigenite, Jesu Christe.
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius patris.
Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Qui tollis peccata mundi suscipe deprecationem nostram.
Qui sedes ad dexteram patris miserere nobis.
Quoniam tu solus sanctus.
Tu solus Dominus.
Tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe.
Cum Sancto Spiritu in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

The entire hymn, it can be seen from the text, is composed of various *acclamations of praise* and *supplications for mercy*. It ends with a Trinitarian statement. Actually, it would be difficult to find in any Liturgy a more beautiful example of poetry than this lyrical hymn.

It is within this whole context that *Benedicimus te* ought to be understood. *Benedicere* comes from two Latin words, *bene* and *dicere* which literally means to "*say well*" or "*to say something good*" of a person. To say something good of a

person is nothing else but to *praise* him. Thus, in this sense, it is almost synonymous with *laudare*.

This literal meaning of the Latin also matches the Greek noun *eu-logia* (ευλογια) which means *"good saying"* and therefore it means *praise*, *laudation*, *panegyric* (of Christ or God), and the verb *eu-logeo* (ευλογεω) which means *to praise* or *celebrate with praise*. It can also mean to invoke blessings or to consecrate a thing with solemn prayers.

In English, it came to mean *to bless* which, broadly, eventually also came to mean so many things, as follows:

1. to consecrate or sanctify by a religious rite; to make or pronounce holy.
2. to request of God the bestowal of divine favor on: *Bless this house.*
3. to bestow good of any kind upon: *a nation blessed with peace.*
4. to praise, to extol as holy or to extol for excellences; to glorify: *Bless the name of the Lord.*
5. to protect, to keep or guard from evil (usually used interjectionally): *Bless you! Bless your innocent little heart!*
6. to make the sign of the cross over or upon: *The Pope blessed the multitude.*
7. To make happy, blithesome, or joyous; to confer prosperity or happiness upon; to grant divine favor to.
8. To express a wish or prayer for the happiness of; to invoke a blessing upon; -- applied to persons.
9. To invoke or confer beneficial attributes or qualities upon; to invoke or confer a blessing on, -- as on food.
10. To esteem or account happy; to felicitate.
11. To wave; to brandish. Bless me! Bless us!
    an exclamation of surprise.
12. To bless from, to secure, defend, or preserve from.
13. To bless with, to be blessed with, to favor or endow with; to be favored or endowed with; as, God blesses us with health; we are blessed with happiness.

It is very clear then that in the *Gloria*, *benedicere* whose object is *te* (God) means to praise God, to extol Him as holy, to glorify Him, to pronounce His name holy – given the fact that the whole *Gloria* is an accalamation of praise.

This meaning is somehow corroborated in another hymn where *benedicimus te* occurs, the *Te Deum*, which is also sometimes called the Ambrosian Hymn because of its association with St. Ambrose. It is a traditional *hymn of joy* and *thanksgiving*. First attributed to Sts. Ambrose, Augustine, or Hilary, it is now accredited to *Nicetas*, Bishop of Remesiana (4th century). It is used at the

conclusion of the Office of the Readings for the Liturgy of the Hours on Sundays outside Lent, daily during the Octaves of Christmas and Easter, and on Solemnities and Feast Days. Towards the end of the hymn, one reads the following responses:

> V. Salvum fac populum tuum, Domine, et benedic hereditati tuae.
> R. Et rege eos, et extolle illos usque in aeternum.
> V. Per singulos dies *benedicimus te*.
> R. Et *laudamus nomen tuum* in saeculum, et in saeculum saeculi.
> V. Dignare, Domine, die isto sine peccato nos custodire.
> R. Miserere nostri, Domine, miserere nostri.
> V. Fiat misericordia tua, Domine, super nos, quemadmodum speravimus in te.
> R. In te, Domine, speravi: non confundar in aeternum.

Benedicere as used in this hymn clearly means *to thank* (the Lord), coupled with the act of praising the name of the Lord (*laudamus nomen tuum*) precisely as an expression and act of thanksgiving.

Based on all this, *benedicimus te* could be translated *inoomaw mi ika* or *rinorokyaw mi ika*. In the old text, however, *benedicimus te* was translated *binabantog mi ika,* which means *we make you widely known* (*famous*). It is immediately clear that *binabantog mi ika* translates *benedicimus te* only by implication in that it is only *conceptually inclusive of the meaning* of *benedicere.* That is, to make someone *widely known* (the idea of *binabantog*) means to praise him, to speak well of him, to extol his name or when applied to God, to pronounce His name holy, etc. Thus, compared to *binabantog mi ika, inoomoaw mi ika* or *rinorokyaw mi ika* is a more direct translation.

Another proposal is to translate *benedicimus te* to *minamarahay mi ika*. *Minamarahay* means *to deem it good* (*right*) or implicitly *to have a good impression,* thus *to speak well* (*something good*) of a person. Understood as such, *minamarahay* is not the same as *pinapakarahay* (*pinaparahay*), a word which suggests that something is wrong, out of order or not functional that needs to be repaired, restored or rectified (straightened). *Pinapakarahay* or *pinaparahay* is certainly something that cannot have God as its object. It has been rightly pointed out, however, that *minamarahay mi ika* is actually a hanging expression and in effect does not evoke any *complete* sense at all.

Thus, viewed alongside the other acclamations that go with it in the *Gloria*, it is most appropriate to translate *benedicimus te* to *rinorokyaw mi ika*. First, because the idea of praising God is better expresed instead by *inoomaw mi ika* which translates *laudamus te.* Meanwhile, the old text translated *glorificamus te* to

Rinorokyaw mi ika, whereas *glorificare* really literally means to give glory to God, which is better expressed in the vernacular as *pagpamurawayon an Dios.* Thus, *Gloria…Deo* should read *Kamurawayan sa Dios* and *glorificamus te* should read *pinapamuraway mi ika*.

As it is in the old text, *glorificare* is also translated *pag-omawon*, that is, in the opening line *Gloria…Deo* (*Pag-omawon an Dios*), thus ignoring the difference between *glorificare* and *laudare.* Given the new translations, the three dictinct Latin verbs of *glorificare*, *benedicere* and *laudare* also become distinct in the vernacular to mean: *pagmuraway*, *pagrokyaw* and *pag-omaw,* respectively.

In labiis tuis/Labia mea

There are two places where the Latin *labium*, *labii* (second declension, neuter) occurs, that is, both in n. 14 of the *Ordo missae,* in the prayer of blessing recited by the priest and given to the deacon who will read the Gospel and who asks for it:

> *Dominus sit in corde tuo et in labiis tuis; ut digne et competenter annunties Evangelium suum: in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti.*

and in another prayer recited by the priest or by the deacon just before reading aloud the Gospel:

> *Munda cor meum ac labia mea, omnipotens Deus, ut sanctum Evangelium tuum digne valeam nuntiare.*

Both prayers are recited in a low voice, if not silently. In the first text, the ablative *plural* form of the word (*in labiis tuis*) is used as it is governed by the preposition *in*, while in the second text, the accusative *plural* form (*labia mea*) is used as it is the object of the verb *to clean* (mundo, mundare). In English, *labium* means *lip* thus, in both liturgical texts the translations read *"your lips"* and *"my lips"*.

In Bicol, *labium* literally means *ngabil*, but there is reluctance, if not resistance, to the use of this Bicol term in liturgy. Thus, the old Bicol translation read:

> *An Kagurangnan mapasaimong puso asin dila: tanganing ipagrokyaw mo an saiyang Evangelio siring sa maninigo: sa ngaran nin Ama, asin nin Aki, † patin nin Espiritu Santo.*
>
> *Dios na makakamhan, linigi an sakong puso asin dila, tanganing magkanigo akong magrokyaw kan saimong Evangelio.*

In these lines, *dila* (tongue) becomes a substitute for *ngabil*. The reason for the substitution and for the reluctance/resistance to use *ngabil* is the appropriateness of *dila* over *ngabil*. Furthermore, it is said that Bicol culture is a repressed culture, which is the reason why there are many vulgar terms in this culture that are truly offensive to the ears. *Ngabil* is supposedly one of these vulgar terms, more so because it also connotes "*talkativeness*" and even "*ugliness*". Thus, *dila* is deemed more appropriate and elegant a word than *ngabil*. It is suggested then that appropriateness, rather than literal translation, be the rule of thumb, for translation of liturgical texts.

Appropriateness for sure in the sense it is argued above is certainly desirable as it is necessary. But one should remember that, following *Liturgiam authenticam*, fidelity to the text is precisely one of the main criteria that determines appropriateness. Moreover, there are other considerations in determining the appropriateness of a word other than the way a word simply sounds. *Dila* may be appropriate and elegant as it sounds, but is it the best choice, the most appropriate? In other words, the decisive point at issue is, what is to count for appropriateness?

The fact is, the use of *ngabil* is ambivalent. It is not a *nice* and *pleasant* word to a good number of people, although it is also simply *neutral* to others. But it is specially vulgar (with sexual connotation) in the province of Sorsogon. Its use in the liturgy is simply intolerable in this part of the Bicol Region.

But why not *dila* when this is more elegant? First, in the whole context of liturgy, while *dila* fits the sense contained in the prayers under consideration (if this might be called a dynamic equivalent), it can pose problems in the translation of other liturgical formulae. For instance, in the Liturgy of the Hours, the *lauds* and *compline* open with these lines: "*O Lord, open my lips. And my mouth shall declare your praise.*" If liturgical language were to be consistent, *dila* is simply out of place here. One does (and can)not open the *dila*! *Ngoso* (mouth) or *ngimot* would indeed be more *appropriate*, only that it will have to be repeated twice in this short introductory prayer. Going back then to the prayers of the priest and the deacon at mass (n. 14), *ngoso* or *ngimot* might even be more *appropriate* alternatives, that is, if *ngabil* proves to be truly repulsive. Thus, the prayers in question could read this way, as it is now translated from the *editio typica*:

> *An Kagurangnan mapasa puso mo asin ngimot* (*ngoso*)*: tanganing maninigo asin mahusay mong irokyaw an saiyang Evangelio: sa ngaran kan Ama, asin kan Aki, † asin kan Espiritu Santo.*

> *Dios na makakamhan, linigi an sakong puso asin ngimot* (*ngoso*)*, tanganing maninigo akong makapagrokyaw kan banal mong Evangelio.*

Second, but by no means is this the strongest argument, not only is *dila* not the literal meaning of *labium,* using it is also tantamount to changing the form of the Latin original, that is, from the use of the plural (*labiis* and *labia*) to the singular (*dila*). There can only be one *dila*! It is on the reverse of this shift that *Liturgiam authenticam* (n. 31) has something to say:

> *In particular: to be avoided is the systematic resort to imprudent solutions such as a mechanical substitution of words, the transition from the singular to the plural, the splitting of a unitary collective term into masculine and feminine parts, or the introduction of impersonal or abstract words, all of which may impede the communication of the true and integral sense of a word or an expression in the original text.*

(There would also be a problem, of course, if *ngoso* or *ngimot* were to be preferred over *ngabil* because it is also in the singular form. *Ngimot*, however, has the advantage of being a collective noun which, though singular in form, is plural in meaning.)

Finally, to substitute *ngabil* with *dila* is an effort towards elegance. Not that this is not desirable. For sure, all this effort is necessary so far as it is possible, but on this *Liturgiam authenticam* (n. 27) has another word of caution: "*In translating biblical passages where seemingly inelegant words or expressions are used, a hasty tendency to sanitize this characteristic is likewise to be avoided.*"

If there is any language that should sanitize the present text in consideration, it should be Latin itself. *Labia* (especially as this sounds to most Filipinos) always evokes allusions to that part of the female sexual organ called *labia maiora*! But liturgy is not the place for such trifles. Thus, inspite the unfortunate association, *labium* (particularly its plural *labia*) remains part of liturgical language.

While taking this norm into account might justify the use of *ngabil* in the present text, it still seems not prudent to use it after all given its exceedingly vulgar meaning in some places. *Liturgiam authenticam* speaks of inelegant words alright that need not hastily be sanitized, but *ngabil* is not just inelegant, it is also vulgar, *rapsak* as it is described in Bicol. *Ngoso* and *ngimot* remain the only appropriate alternatives. The choice of *ngoso* might be justified in that it can be taken as a metonym, but *ngimot* seems to be the best choice since in some places it can also mean the outer part of the mouth, the lips in particular.

Donec venias/Adveniat regnum tuum

In the liturgy, the idea of "*coming*" is expressed in two common Latin words, namely, the simple *venire* and the construct *advenire* (the root verb *venire* with a prefix, the preposition *ad*). *Venire*, in particular, occurs in the Eucharistic Prayer, in that part where the Mystery of Faith (*Mysterium fidei*) is proclaimed: a) "*Mortem tuam annuntiamus, Domine, et tuam resurrectionem confitemur, donec venias*"; b) "*Quotiescumque manducamus panem hunc et calicem bibimus, mortem tuam annuntiamus, Domine, donec venias*".

Advenire, on the other hand, occurs in the Our Father (*Pater noster*): "*Pater noster, qui es in caelis, sanctificetur nomen tuum, adveniat regnum tuum, fiat voluntas tua…*"

Venire simply means *to come*, while *advenire*, as it is combined with the preposition *ad* as its prefix, means *to come to. Advenire* can also mean *to arrive* and *to reach*. Both verbs have been translated in English as *to come* in those parts of the mass where they occur. Thus, in the *Mysterium fidei* proclamation one reads "until you come" and in the *Pater noster,* "your kingdom come".

In Bicol, the idea of coming is expressed in several ways: *mag-igdi* (to come here), *mag-abot* (to arrive), *magdatong* (to come) and *magpasiring (sa)…* (to go to, to come to). What is outright clear is that from the way they are used in the liturgical texts, *venire* and *advenire* do not mean *mag-igdi* or *magpasiring*. Both Bicol verbs have the connotation of a specific direction (locus) which the Latin verbs do not necessarily have. *Venire* and *advenire* therefore can be translated *mag-abot* or *magdatong*. *Donec venias* can either read *sagkod na ika mag-abot* or *sagkod na ika magdatong* (*dumatong*) and *adveniat regnum tumm* can read *mag-abot an kahadean mo* or *magdatong an kahadean mo*.

The proposed new translation, however, prefers *sagkod na ika magdatong* (*dumatong*) over *sagkod na ika mag-abot* because *mag-abot* sounds *too conversational*. Besides, *mag-abot* almost always also means "to arrive" rather than simply "to come", the latter being much the sense of the Latin verbs as they are used in the liturgy. The same reason is given for the choice of *magdatong an kahadean mo* over *mag-abot an kahadean mo.*

Those who object to the use of *magdatong* argue that the term is (already) archaic and no longer functional in the Bicol lexicon as this has been replaced by *mag-abot*. As such, the term is familiar only to priests and old generation catechists. This, however, is simply not true. *Magdatong* is in current use, indeed not in ordinary conversation but in the liturgy and in Sacred Scriptures. And if such is the case, how can it not be familiar to the faithful as well? In fact, *magdatong* also

occurs in many songs *currently* in use and sung by many in the liturgy, especially during the time of advent.

The fact that *magdatong* is not (no longer) used in ordinary conversation and that it occurs solely in the liturgical texts only strengthens its advantage over *mag-abot*. That indeed is sufficient reason to say that *magdatong* has become "not archaic" but rather peculiarly, if not strictly liturgical and has become part of liturgical language itself. In fact, if one examines its usage in Bicol liturgy, *magdatong* is almost always exclusively used to refer to the coming of the Lord and of His kingdom. What could be more liturgically appropriate than that?

In this regard, *Liturgiam authenticam* once again has much to say (n. 27):

> Even if expressions should be avoided which hinder comprehension because of their excessively unusual or awkward nature, the liturgical texts should be considered as the voice of the Church at prayer, rather than of only particular congregations or individuals; thus, they should be free of an overly servile adherence to prevailing modes of expression.
>
> If indeed, in the liturgical texts, words or expressions are sometimes employed which differ somewhat from usual and everyday speech, *it is often enough by virtue of this very fact* that the texts become truly memorable and capable of expressing heavenly realities. Indeed, it will be seen that the observance of the principles set forth in this Instruction will contribute to *the gradual development, in each vernacular, of a sacred style that will come to be recognized as proper to liturgical language.*
>
> Thus it may happen that a certain manner of speech which has come to be considered somewhat obsolete in daily usage may continue to be maintained in the liturgical context. In translating biblical passages where seemingly inelegant words or expressions are used, *a hasty tendency to sanitize this characteristic is likewise to be avoided*. These principles, in fact, should free the Liturgy from the necessity of frequent revisions when modes of expression may have passed out of popular usage.

Then again, in two other paragraphs, *Liturgiam authenticam* reiterates:

> "While the translation must transmit the perennial treasury of orations by means of language understandable in the cultural context for which it is intended, it should also be guided by the conviction that liturgical prayer not only is formed by the genius of a culture, but itself contributes to the development of that culture. *Consequently it should cause no surprise that such language differs somewhat from ordinary speech.*" (n. 47)

> "Since liturgical texts by their very nature are intended to be proclaimed orally and to be heard in the liturgical celebration, *they are characterized by a certain manner of expression that differs from that found in everyday speech.*" (n. 59)

Finally, *magdatong* may no longer be used in ordinary conversation, but it is far from being a word that is difficult to understand. Much less is it an expression which, in the words of *Liturgiam authenticam*, hinders comprehension because of its excessively unusual or awkward nature. Quite the contrary, *magdatong* is perfectly understood. In fact, it *may* even have the added liturgical sense of that "coming" that is eagerly awaited and the object of great Christian hope and expectation.

Sub tectum meum

One of the Latin phrases used in Liturgy that is most troublesome when translated in other languages is *sub tectum meum,* found in the prayer recited by both the priest and the faithful in preparation for the reception of holy communion. The full text in Latin is as follows: "*Domine, non sum dignus, ut intres* ***sub tectum meum****, sed tantum dic verbo, et sanabitur anima mea.*"

This prayer is of biblical origin as it is derived from two parallel Gospel passages, that is, Luke 7,6-7 and Matthew 8,8. The passage from Luke (7,6-7) in the Latin Vulgate[19] reads: "*Domine, noli vexari: non enim sum dignus ut* ***sub tectum meum*** *intres: propter quod et meipsum non sum dignum arbitratus ut venirem ad te: sed dic verbo, et sanabitur puer meus.*" The Nova Vulgata's text[20] is only very slightly different in that it merely replaces *sanabitur* with *sanetur*.

Matthew 8,8, on the other hand, reads: "*…et respondens centurio ait Domine non sum dignus ut intres* ***sub tectum meum*** *sed tantum dic verbo et sanabitur puer meus.*"

There has been no difficulty, it seems, in translating these biblical texts *literally* into English. In fact, the literal English translation has been universally accepted. The Lucan passage, in particular, reads: "*Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come* ***under my roof****; therefore I did not presume to come to you. But only speak the word, and let my servant be healed.*" The text in Matthew, on the other hand, is a bit shorter, also corresponding to the short Latin text: "*Lord, I am not worthy to have you come* ***under my roof****; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed.*" Both translations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version.

[19] Translated from the Hebrew and Aramaic by Jerome between 382-405.
[20] Bibliorum sacrorum editio, editio typica altera, 1999.

In contrast, translating the same text (the Lucan text in particular) to Bicol has not been without complication. There have been at least three versions. First, T. Pacis's translation reads: "*Kagurangnan, dai na kaipuhan na magdagos ka pa, huli ta si isay man ako na lumaog ka* ***sa sakong harong****? Dai ngani ako nangahas na dumulok saimo, alagad magtaram ka lamang asin an sakong sorogoon maoomayan."*[21]

Secondly, the Philippine Bible Society (PBS) translates the whole text differently but follows the same translation for *sub tectum meum* with a slight change in Pacis's' word order to read: "*Kagurangnan, dai ka na magpagal huli ta alangan akong lumaog ka* ***sa harong ko****; kaya dai ako nangahas na magdolok saimo. Alagad magtaram ka sana asin maoomayan an sorogoon ko."*[22]

Finally, N. de los Santos, translating the original Greek text, prefers a more literal translation that equally resembles the Latin Vulgate: "*Kagurangnan, dai ka na magsibot; ta alang-alang ako na maglaog ka* ***sa sirong kan sakong bubongan***,[23] *kaya ngani dai ako nangahas magdulok saimo; isabi mo sana an tataramon, asin maumayan [mabulong] an sakong surugoon!"*[24]

Thus, in Bicol, the choice is between *sa sakong harong* (*sa harong ko*) and *sa sirong kan sakong bubongan. Sa harong ko* appears to be a sense translation of *sub tectum meum,* that is, taking *sa harong ko* as a metonym, following the principle that the whole is inclusive of its parts (that is, *bubongan* or *atop* is always part of *harong*), for after all that was what the centurion really meant. On the whole, *sa harong ko* sounds better to many and more in keeping with the Bicolano mode of speaking since that is what Bicolanos use in welcoming people to their homes. *Bubongan*, on the other hand, is what *tectum* literally means. Not only does it faithfully correspond to the Latin *tectum*; it is also an accurate rendering of the Greek *stége* (στέγη).

In any case, the choice of either *harong* or *bubongan* does not alter the sense of the biblical text in any substantial way since both terms fit the storyline according to physical logic as is clear from the whole context, namely, the story of the centurion, a Roman pagan, who approached Jesus begging that his servant, who was ill and near to death, be healed. In saying that he was not worthy for Jesus

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[21] T. PACIS, trans., *An Marahay na Bareta ni Jesucristo*, St. Paul's Publications, Pasay City, 1980.

[22] *Marahay na Bareta sa Satuyang Panahon*, Philippine Bible Society, Manila, 1992, *An Bagong Tipan*, 96.

[23] In Greek, Luke 7,6 reads: "Kyrie, me skyllou, ou gar hikanos eimi hina *hypo ten stegen* mou eiselthes." (E. NESTLÈ-K. ALAND, eds., *Novum Testamentum Graece,* 26th ed., Deutsche Bibel-stiftung, Stuttgart, 1981.)

[24] *Banal na Biblia sa Bikol*, St. Pauls, Makati, 1997, 111; cf. *An Bâgong Tipan sa Bikol*, SSP, Makati, 2001, 111; *An Banal na Biblia*, rev. ed., Paulines Publishing House, Pasay City, 2007, Bagong Tipan, p. 114.

to come *sub tectum meum,* he was acknowledging that the Lord's power was not confined by time and space. He knew that Jesus could heal from a distance, because somehow, through the action of grace, he recognized the true nature of Christ's authority.

Furthermore, authority was a topic this centurion knew quite well: *"For I am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this,' and he does it."* (Mt 8:9) Little is known about this admirable man. He was a Roman military man, the representative of a pagan occupying power. But from what he said, it is quite clear that he did become a believer. His words further showed that he faithfully carried out the orders of his military superiors, just as he expected his subordinates to obey him, and just as he anticipated that the forces of nature would obey Jesus. Indeed, acquainted by his position with the force of a command, the centurion expressed faith in the power of Jesus' mere word. He respected authority, and more than that, one could surmise, he even loved authority. All this only points to the fact that the centurion's humble plea, more than just demonstrating his own humility, was an expression of *profound faith in Jesus*.

It is this profound faith of the centurion that the Church wishes to echo when his very own words are repeated in Liturgy. As the Catechism explains, "Before so great a sacrament, the faithful can only echo humbly and with ardent faith the words of the Centurion: '*Domine, non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum, sed tantum dic verbo, et sanabitur anima mea*'..."[25] Indeed, what a powerful image this supplicant Roman is. It is but fitting that he should be held by the Church as the model of humble faith. His words truly deserve such rightful place in the Church's liturgy.

But when such words are adopted in Liturgy, that is when the problem begins. The context as a consequence is changed and turned into a metaphor that no longer follows the physical logic found in the original biblical context. What actually brings about textually this shift in context is the replacement of *puer meus* (in the biblical text) with *anima mea* (in the liturgical text). As is obvious, this textual shift is called for in the actual context, i.e., the reception of holy communion. Given this liturgical context, *sub tectum meum* no longer refers to the physical structure that is the *house* (of the centurion in the biblical context) but rather to the very *person* receiving the sacred species in communion. It is no longer a third person (*puer meus*) whose healing is being sought but rather that of

[25] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 1386. The Catechism continues: *"And in the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom the faithful pray in the same spirit: O Son of God, bring me into communion today with your mystical supper. I shall not tell your enemies the secret, nor kiss you with Judas' kiss. But like the good thief I cry, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."*

the very subject (*anima mea*) who is making as his or her own, as it were, the words of the centurion. No doubt, given this explanation, *the liturgical text has become a paraphrase of the biblical text,* but it remains nonetheless a metaphor that is truly rich in biblical imagery.

It is perhaps on account of all this that ICEL paraphrased the Latin to read: *"Lord, I am not worthy to receive you but only say the word and I shall be healed."*[26] Furthermore, the original ICEL translators may have found the literal translation of the original Latin as awkward in the context of liturgy and therefore opted to use a formula which they considered to be a dynamic equivalent of *sub tectum meum* that did not alter in any substantial way what the original Latin text was meant to convey.

Subsequently, the ICEL translation has become the standard English text. But although it has already been in use for so many years now, it has come under sharp scrutiny and criticism in light of the new norms prescribed by *Liturgiam authenticam*. First of all, given its background, it is not difficult to see that the current text is a paraphrase of a paraphrase, moving it even farther away from the biblical source. In effect, critics say, the rich Latin original has been impoverished, turned as it was into a bland and weak text. Not only did *sub tectum meum* disappear, but *anima mea* also vanished with it. As a result, critics contend that the present text has become a gross mistranslation which only succeeded in emptying the prayer of its rich scriptural echoes. Indeed, by comparison, the Latin text reflects a biblical passage that is not so recognizably evoked by the current English translation.

This is all the more unfortunate since stripped of such biblical allusion, the present text becomes no fitting match to another scriptural reference just before communion, when the priest shows the Host to the faithful, and invites them by saying in Latin, "*Ecce Agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccata mundi. Beati qui ad cenam Agni vocati sunt*." Once again, this text clearly echoes John 1,29, where the Baptist says at the Jordan, "*Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world*," and Revelation 19,9, in which the angel instructs St. John the Evangelist to write, "*Happy are they who have been invited to the supper of the Lamb*." ICEL paraphrased the second part of the text to read, "*Happy are they who are called to his supper*", replacing *ad cenam Agni* (*to the supper of the Lamb*) with the shorter formula *to his supper*, thereby weakening once again its connection with the biblical text.

Given all these objections and in light of the provisions of *Liturgiam authenticam,* a new literal translation has been proposed by ICEL that now reads: "*Lord, I am*

[26] The French translation followed the same pattern: "*Seigneur, je ne suis pas digne de te reçevoir; mais dis seulement une parole et je serai guéri.*"

not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed." The new text this time evokes the same Latin metaphor.[27] Many Catholics welcomed the new translation, seeing in it a clear allusion to the centurion's plea (prayer) in Luke 7,6 and Matthew 8,8, and the restoration of its intimate connection with Sacred Scriptures. On the whole, the new text calls to mind Christ's meeting with the Roman centurion who asked him to heal his dying servant. The great faith that the centurion had which Jesus recognized is what the faithful is called upon to imitate as they recite these words before communion. The overall effect is that the richness of the Latin text is restored, with the beautiful reference to the healing presence of the Lord.

Curiously though, most of the negative reactions to the new translation came from the U.S. bishops. One bishop, for instance, who looked sensitive to the fact that the laity's reservoir of good will has nearly run dry after years of sexual scandal in the U.S. and who seemed fidgety about giving Catholics another issue to be angry about, said, "I feel we have put our people through a great deal these past few years. They have handled the abuse crisis very well. (But) I don't think they will handle *'Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof'* very well at all." Still, other bishops thought that people would either not understand, or resist changes to what they have already been habitually reciting these past so many years. It would be pastorally unsettling and harmful, they argued, to make them abandon the form they have already been so much accustomed to.

But many Catholics were equally swift in their reactions to the bishops' apprehensions, some of them bordering on parody. Some have challenged the bishops cynism, reminding them that these are the words of the Gospel – that in fact most of the prayers of Holy Mass are taken from the Scriptures – so why should any Catholic have any problem with them? The text in question contains the *direct words of Scripture* spoken by the centurion to Christ and for these words Christ heaped praise upon him – "I have not seen such faith!" So why should it be difficult to repeat literally the centurion's words? Some have resented being branded implicitly by some of the bishops as Scripturally ignorant, as though the laity is just too stupid to learn the faith. And to the extent that this might be true, does this not rather point to the negligence of the bishops themselves who have failed to fulfill their responsibility as the primary teachers of the faith? To succumb to the bishops' apprehensions would seem to suggest that the liturgy might as well be dumbed down even more, eventually stripping it of its depth and richness.

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[27] Incidentally, the German translation has kept the Latin metaphor ever since, seemigly without much objections: *"Herr, ich bin nicht würdig, daß du eingehst unter mein Dach, aber sprich nur ein Wort, so wird meine Seele gesund."*

All this lively, if not heated discussions certainly give insight into how the present text in question should be translated into the vernacular. The current Bicol translation reads: "*Kagurangnan, alang-alang ako na lumaog Ka "sa sakong daghan", alagad magtaram Ka lamang, an sakong kalag maoomayan..*" *Sa sakong daghan*, as used here, might better be translated into English as *into my bosom* rather than *into my chest* or *into my breast*, both of which sound a little too physical and even awkward, if not funny in the context of communion. From the meaning itself of the phrase, it is obvious that it is not a literal translation, but rather an allegorical and figurative interpretation of the meaning of *sub tectum meum.* A literal translation of the phrase would read either as *sa sirong kan sakuyang atop* or *sa sirong kan sakong bubongan,* the latter being N. de los Santos' translation of the Greek text in the Gospel of Luke and Matthew.

Some commentators prefer the figurative interpretation to the literal translation of the original Latin because it sounds *more to the point* and *more faithful to the context of communion*. *By being literally unfaithful*, it is argued, *a translator can actually be truly faithful to the source text*. Furthermore, *the countless homeless people in Bicol and those whose houses have roofs that are easily damaged by rain and storm, might even find the* (literal) *translation distracting, if not disturbing.* That may likely be the case, but for the *man of humble faith,* which the centurion eloquently represented, this could be a great opportunity for poor people to all the more find resonance in the centurion's disposition. Their lowly physical condition (homelessness) can even serve to heighten more their faith and humility, which is what the centurion's words were all about. To paraphrase the words of St. Augustine (see below), a person in such condition can truly say: "*To receive you into my poor house, oh so prone to ruin, is an honor I do not deserve!*" How else should a man of faith and profound humility more meaningfully and beautifully say it?

But the real problem with *sa sakong daghan* is that these were not the words of the centurion. The purpose why his words are recited in liturgy is precisely for the communicant to own the centurion's words, and to replace these words defeats such purpose and risks vitiating their true impact. Otherwise, not only is the literal sense corrupted, so is the metaphorical context also lost. Once again, the intimate connection with scriptures is weakened if not altogether abandoned. For one thing, the phrase does not correspond at least to the translation of the three available Bicol versions of the New Testament, all of which do not use *sa sakong daghan*. It should be recalled that the current English text has been criticized precisely on account of the same weakness. In any case, it seems logical enough to suppose that texts taken from Sacred Scriptures should reflect the wording of the same approved version used in the Lectionary. Of course, there is yet no officially approved Bicol Lectionary either, nor is there even an officially approved Bicol Bible. But should these two books be finally produced and officially approved by the Holy See, it is

hard to imagine how *"daghan"* could ever find its way into any Bicol translation of the Matthean and Lucan verses in question here.

Furthermore, *sa sakong daghan* might sound *to the point*. [28] Unfortunately, that is precisely what makes it a weak translation of *sub tectum meum* because by being to the point (explicit) or by making it too obvious, nothing is left of the rich and beautiful metaphor evoked by the original Latin text. Thus, far from being faithful to the *whole broader context* (and not just the physical context of receiving communion), *sa sakong daghan* moves one even farther away from it. In this regard, *Liturgiam authenticam*, n. 28 comes to mind:

> *Translators should therefore allow the signs and images of the texts, as well as the ritual actions, to speak for themselves; they should not attempt to render too explicit that which is implicit in the original texts.*

Besides, if being to the point is what really matters, then one might as well opt for *sa sakuyang puso* or *sa sakuyang hawak,* or even *sa sakuyang buhay,* which are more direct descriptions of what is actually taking place during communion. But again, this is not what the centurion said and neither is this what the Latin text is saying.

This leaves the choice to two alternatives: either *sa sirong kan sakong bubongan* (*sakuyang atop*) or *sa sakong/sakuyang harong* (*sa harong ko*). *Bubongan* (*atop*) has the advantage of being the strict literal meaning of *tectum* and thus choosing it ensures fidelity to the Latin text. However, it seems that the whole expression *sa sirong kan sakong bubongan* (*sakuyang atop*), in the context of communion, sounds culturally unpleasant and germaine, if not outright funny.

Therefore, without literally departing from the Latin text, *sa sakong (sakuyang) harong* seems most appropriate since it remains literally inclusive of *bubongan* or *atop.* Not only is it literally inclusive. Understood as the dwelling place of *sakong/sakuyang kalag*, it also preserves the rich metaphor found in the Latin text. The choice of *harong* also prompts the use of *na ika magdagos* instead of *na ika maglaog* (*na ika lumaog*). Both Bicol verb-forms literally translate the Latin *ut intres*, but *magdagos* sounds more culturally appropriate as it is a typical expression used by Bicolanos to welcome guests into their homes.

Incidentally, the choice of *harong* also finds support in St. Augustine's reflections. Although it seems anachronistic to invoke St. Augustine here to address the issue (for indeed translation of the biblical text was not what this great Doctor of Grace was concerned about), he did say something full of insight that might help settle

[28] Though not everybody will agree with this since food does not really settle down in one's *"daghan"*! The stomach does better to function as the receptor of food. Thus, to make it even more to the point, should one rather say: *"sa sakong tulak"* rather than *"sa sakong daghan"*?

the issue. In his letter to Paulinus of Nola (cf. ep. 27.1), he wrote, "…quo modo ergo non doleam, quod nondum faciem tuam novi, hoc est *domum animae tuae*, quam sicut meam novi?" And commenting on the same passage of Matthew 8,8 (Sermon 62), he explained:

> *Audiuimus, cum euangelium legeretur, fidem nostram in humilitate laudari. ad domum quippe centurionis cum se promitteret dominus Iesus iturum, ut puerum eius sanaret, ille respondit: {non sum dignus ut sub tectum meum intres: sed tantum dic uerbum, et sanabitur.} Dicendo se indignum, praestitit dignum; non in cuius parietes, sed in cuius cor Christus intraret. Neque hoc diceret cum tanta fide et humilitate, nisi illum, quem timebat intrare in domum suam, corde gestaret…*

Augustine's imaginative interpretation of the Centurion's prayer naturally flows precisely from the Latin metaphor (En. Ps. 46,12):

> '*Just say the word, then, and my servant will be healed, for to receive you into my house is an honor I do not deserve*.' He trembled at the thought of bringing Christ within his four walls, yet Christ was already in his heart. The Centurion's heart was already Christ's throne, for he who was seeking out the humble had already taken his seat there.

It is with this same thought and disposition that the faithful ought to approach Jesus in communion as they pray: "*Kagurangnan, bako akong maninigo na ika magdagos sa sakuyang harong: alagad magtaram ka sana, asin an sakong kalag maoomayan.*"

Conclusion

The implementation of the new Bicol translation of the Roman Missal, particularly the *ordo missae*, is sure to prompt many Bicolano Catholics to ask why there is a new translation at all and why there is a need to replace the old one. The old Bicol text has been used for so many years now that it would seem not only difficult, but more so confusing and counterproductive, to part with it. These notes have been an attempt to address all these questions and apprehensions.

Moreover, to overcome such difficulties in the implementation of any new translation, the Holy See's instruction *Liturgiam authenticam*, on the use of vernacular languages in the publication of the books of the Roman liturgy, has explicitly stipulated that every such implementation must always be accompanied,

as it is absolutely required, by adequate catechesis.[29] These notes have also been an attempt to offer an explanation for some of the Latin texts that are difficult to translate into Bicol, an attempt that might help precisely in the task of catechesis and allow the catechists and most of all the faithful to better understand and appreciate the new translation. The texts included here are by no means the only ones that require detailed explanation. There are indeed many more of them not covered by these notes. Here then is but an initial and humble effort to provide a material in aid of catechesis on the new Bicol translation of the Roman Missal. It is hoped that more of this should be forthcoming.

Finally, it is perfectly understandable that reciting the new text can cause initial discomfort. In fact, the prospect of change to the old text is always viewed with skepticism. It seems this is an inevitable consequence of changing what people have already been so accustomed to and have even committed to memory. But this is not enough justification why changes should not be welcomed even if they are necessary in order to produce a more faithful and liturgically apt text. In the end, the present efforts to observe the new norms and principles laid down by *Liturgiam authenticam* in the new Bicol translation should be seen as a contribution to what *Liturgiam authenticam* itself calls the gradual development of a *"sacred style"* in Bicol that will come to be recognized as proper to liturgical language.[30]

[29] See especially *Liturgiam authenticam*, n. 29 and n. 74, among others that have already been mentioned elsewhere in these notes.
[30] *Liturgiam authenticam,* n. 27.