

Besides, infantile servility or fear in lay people doesn't help a priest. Most priests feel frustrated in such circumstances and a few of us may, God forgive us, relapse into clericalism ('only the priest has the right to decide'), paternalism ('I know better than you do') or, worse still, hypocrisy or pomposity. Yes, we can be tempted if we are spoiled by misplaced respect.

Most Catholics nowadays worry about falling numbers – fewer people at Mass, fewer vocations to priesthood and religious life, fewer marriages, fewer children (and incidentally, less income for parishes and dioceses at a time of increasing expenses). These concerns produce explanations galore and (fewer) solutions – materialism, individualism, relativism, selfishness, hedonism, influence of the media, peer pressure, we should pray more, have less boring Masses, do more for youth and for families, provide better marriage preparation.

I do not want to discuss these explanations or remedies. There are other occasions to do so, occasions, I am afraid, to make ourselves feel depressed or guilty. Let us be content with saying that we are aware of these negative developments, that we regret them and are not complacent but that we shall simply try to give witness to what we believe, to the faith we have received – and leave the situation in the hands of the God who is in charge and in whom we trust.

'Jesus said, "Do you also want to go away?" Simon Peter answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the message of eternal life and we believe".'

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

ICEL

An important task that came my way as bishop was to be the Scottish representative on the Episcopal Board of ICEL. The International Commission on English in the Liturgy was established by English-speaking Bishops' Conferences during the Second Vatican Council when it became obvious that the vernacular languages would be permitted in the liturgy. Since the recommendation was that there should be one translation for countries using the same language, an organisation like ICEL was needed, a mixed commission with representatives from the various Bishops' Conferences requiring English translations.

The basic work in ICEL was done by teams of experts in various disciplines, charged with the responsibility of producing translations that would be faithful to the Latin original – but not so literal as to be stilted; and suitable for proclamation and for public prayer. The translators' work was examined and, if necessary, revised by an Advisory Committee which then passed their texts to the Episcopal Board (eleven bishops each representing his Bishops' Conference: Australia, Canada, England and Wales, India, Ireland, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Scotland, Southern Africa and the United States of America). Once the Episcopal Board had approved the texts, they were sent to the Bishops' Conferences. Each Conference could then give formal approval (with any changes if it felt they were required; formal rejection was also possible). Finally the Conference, when satisfied, would send the document to the Roman Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments seeking *recognitio*; once this last was given, the text could be published for use in that particular country.

That summarises the process but it was a process that demanded and received meticulous attention by many experts and authorities, debate and discussion and possible admission of amendments or alternative translations – a long, careful and demanding process.

The documents which ICEL translated comprised the rites of all the sacraments, the various liturgical books (RCIA, reconciliation, care of the sick, funerals ...) but, of course, the principal texts were those of the Roman Missal (the unchanging 'Order of Mass', prefaces, eucharistic prayers, presidential prayers for Sundays, feasts, commons, votive Masses) – an enormous production of more than 2,000 texts even without the scripture readings (which ICEL did not translate as various versions in English already exist and from which each Conference makes its choice).

During the years that I was involved with ICEL, most of our work was on the revised translation of the Missal. The first English translation, issued in 1973, needed revision because it had been done very quickly. The language was spare, the style sometimes 'bitty', and it was clear that, in many parts of it, more accurate translations could be made. In addition to its translating work, ICEL had also been charged with providing 'original texts' i.e. not translations of Latin texts, but directly composed in English, especially for the Alternative Opening Prayers on Sundays and for new votive Masses.

As an Episcopal Board member and, later, as one of the three-man Executive Committee of the Board, I was frequently throughout each year sent bundles of texts for study and report. So our work was by no means limited to our annual meetings in Washington.

ICEL had its headquarters in that city where the ICEL Secretariat (six or seven persons headed by the Executive Secretary) did wonderful things not only in managing the work of all the experts and bishops but also in providing us with background information and advice, the result of their intimate knowledge of the history of the Latin liturgy, of the situation

regarding other languages (French, German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese) and of the particular problems and possibilities associated with the various texts. I found the work extremely interesting, even fascinating; very time-consuming but time given gladly because we were serving English-speaking Catholics all over the world.

There was another aspect that made me very happy – the comradeship that grew up among us, bishops, priests, religious, lay people, men and women. We came from a variety of countries, we had a wide range of skills and expertise and we respected each other's work and enjoyed each other's company, especially when we met. I miss the work and the meetings but, thanks be to God, the friendships and the occasional contacts continue.

By the time our work on the revised translation of the Missal was completed in 1997, I had succeeded Archbishop Daniel Pilarczyk of Cincinnati as chairman of the Episcopal Board of ICEL. The various English-speaking Bishops' Conferences were sent the finished product and all but one approved it with overwhelming majorities; the one exception was the United States. A minority of the bishops of that Conference did vote against the revised translation but, even so, the majority there was sufficiently large to secure its approval for the whole nation.

However, the entire scene was to change and our revised translation, on which we had worked so hard and of which we were proud, was to be rejected, not by the Bishops' Conferences but by Rome.

The problem became apparent in 1996 with the arrival of the Chilean Cardinal Jorge Arturo Medina Estévez to be Prefect (i.e. head) of the Roman Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments. Although with some previous prefects relations between the Congregation and ICEL had been strained, the difficulties were to do with specific matters. For some years before Cardinal Medina, relations were cordial and ICEL had some useful and very friendly meetings in Rome with officials of the Congregation.

Whether due to Cardinal Medina or whether only concomit-

ant with his appointment, things changed and at ICEL we began to feel very threatened. The change, as I say, may have been of the Cardinal's making or he may have been advised, either by higher authority or by some Congregation officials, to 'bring ICEL to heel'.

At any rate, I (as ICEL chairman) began to receive letters from Cardinal Medina, couched in formal, seemingly courteous language, either deploring some of ICEL's activities or 'requesting' changes or announcing new regulations. Letters were exchanged between us, the tone was always superficially polite in an old-fashioned way but there was no real dialogue or attempt to hear our views and consider them. Decisions had been made, consultation was not on the agenda.

I remember one occasion in particular when I wrote to the Cardinal to say that I would be happy to go to Rome if he would be willing to meet me. The reply was that, as a bishop I was welcome to go to Rome and he would receive me – as he would any bishop – but I would not be received as chairman of ICEL to discuss its concerns.

(Some years earlier I did have a private meeting with the Cardinal but discussion was difficult as he does not speak English and conversation in Spanish about translation from Latin to English is not very satisfactory. So perhaps the snub to which I have referred merely avoided another frustrating encounter.)

What is good translation? A simple question but not an easy one to answer. Fidelity and accuracy to what is being translated, yes; but also the result must be acceptable for those who have to use it. The two extremes, both unacceptable, are, first, a translation that is so 'word for word' that it is stilted and artificial; and, second, a translation that is so 'free' that it is paraphrase rather than translation. The good translation, and this is true for the liturgy as well as everything else, lies somewhere between the two extremes.

To enable the translators to know just where the right 'middle way' lies, some authoritative guidance is necessary. This

guidance was provided until 2001 by a document issued in 1969 by the 'Consilium' established by the Holy See after Vatican II for this – and other – reasons. The document is called *Instruction on Translation of Liturgical Texts* and was used by ICEL in its work.

Although there were rumours that another document was under preparation in Rome, ICEL was told by Congregation officials that work done before its publication, including the revised translation of the Missal, would be judged not by its norms but by those of the 1969 Instruction.

After a long delay, the new document, called *Liturgiam Authenticam* (from the first two words of its Latin text), was finally published in May 2001 – after ICEL's revised Missal had been completed and approved by the English-speaking Bishops' Conferences. Despite previous assurances, ICEL was told that the revised Missal was subject to its norms! This seemed not only like changing the goalposts but changing them after the game was over. Or again, if a new 30 mph speed limit is introduced on a road, should motorists who, before the new law is enacted or known, exceeded that limit, be found guilty of its infringement?

Liturgiam Authenticam is a long and prolix document, produced without any consultation either with mixed commissions such as ICEL, or even with Bishops' Conferences. It is a document that has been widely and severely criticised. It certainly requires translation from Latin to be closer to 'word for word' rather than a somewhat freer style that is faithful to the meaning and sense of the Latin but nearer an English that is both intelligible and usable, prayerful and proclaimable.

In addition to its stricter norms for translation, *Liturgiam Authenticam* also lays down rules for mixed commissions such as ICEL; for example, all those who work for ICEL must, unless they are bishops, have prior authorisation from the Roman Congregation; only translation work may be undertaken and not, as hitherto, the composition of original extra prayers even if requested by Bishops' Conferences; ecumenical contacts have to be discontinued.

These developments took place against a background of expressions of dismay from many liturgical and theological scholars and, on the other side, of attacks on ICEL (especially from a number of very conservative publications and letters) which condemned the mixed commission as anything from arrogant and disobedient to heretical.

I realise that, as a leading member of ICEL, I tend to see the dispute from one point of view. Was the Congregation justified in its denial of its *recognitio* to the revised translation of the Missal and in its generally hostile and very critical attitude to ICEL? Opinions do, and will, vary on this. In order to be as fair as I think possible, let me say that ICEL may sometimes have appeared intolerant or arrogant (but ICEL did use the very best people it could find – liturgists, theologians, scripture scholars, Latinists, English writers – and in this sense its scholarly resources were second to none and inevitably superior to those which the Congregation for Divine Worship could employ). Again, one could admit that, apart from their one bishop representative on ICEL's Episcopal Board, some Bishops' Conferences did not normally take an active part in ICEL's work; but neither did the Congregation, despite our frequent invitations to do so. In fact, various 'Progress Reports' were issued by ICEL – we were not secretive about our work – and these reports were sent to Bishops' Conferences and also to Rome. If our work was so unacceptable to Rome, why was it not stopped sooner? Or why, at least, were we not contacted?

Wherever the blame lies, the whole business has been extremely sad and, to those who are aware of its details, unedifying and even scandalous. Many years' serious work has been wasted and still the people wait, bewildered by the delay, for the promised revised Missal in English.

Radical changes took place in ICEL's statutes, leadership and procedures at the Episcopal Board meeting in July 2002. Both the Chairman (myself) and the Executive Secretary (Dr John Page) left ICEL, the latter resigning because he felt he could not continue under the new ways of working and I not standing for re-elec-

tion because I was 76 years old and due to retire as bishop of the diocese; I felt that it was not appropriate for ICEL to be led by a retired bishop, especially one with cancer. Unfortunately, it so happened that, at the same meeting, several of the Episcopal Board were newcomers. Nevertheless, the Board elected a new chairman, a new executive secretary and a new executive committee of the Episcopal Board, abolished the Consultants' (formerly Advisory) Committee (as required by the Congregation) and accepted all the directives in *Liturgiam Authenticam*. We shall have to wait for a revised Missal but look forward to it eagerly and with our good wishes to those who have the task of producing it.

I have already spoken about the activities of the Roman Congregation for Divine Worship and about its criticisms of ICEL. I have also said that there are those who consider those criticisms to be justified.

However, there is another player in the drama – the English-speaking Bishops' Conferences. I believe that they ought to have played a much stronger part in the whole affair and not only because they had all approved the ICEL revised translation of the Missal yet, without any complaint or question, allowed the Congregation, in denying its *recognitio*, to overturn their approval. The *recognitio* is not the same as a further 'approval'; it is rather 'ratification' and is supposed to be only a way in which the Congregation recognises the Conferences' decision and accepts it (or not – but this last merely and only for very serious reasons such as heresy or similar grave error). Moreover, *Liturgiam Authenticam* arrogates to the Congregation certain powers which properly belong to the Conferences, especially the right to set up mixed commissions such as ICEL, to approve their statutes, their personnel, their programmes and their way of working. All of these duties are declared by *Liturgiam Authenticam* to belong to the Congregation – and the Bishops' Conferences have meekly accepted this.

Not only is all this against the original statutes of ICEL but it goes against the ecclesiology that was taught by Vatican II:

collegiality, the authority of bishops (who are not merely Rome's branch managers), subsidiarity. Much has been written in recent years of the increasing power which the Roman Curia is giving itself – and all this is a further example of the centralisation of authority (or, if you like, power).

In my opinion, things need to be rectified to recapture the spirit and the teaching of the Second Vatican Council. Ecclesiology is the main problem (and the liturgical situation is a sad illustration of the problem). And specifically, the Roman Curia needs that reform which recent Popes have acknowledged but not achieved.

EPILOGUE

Retirement

A retired bishop used to be an unusual thing. Bishops just kept on as diocesan leaders until death. But since the introduction of the new *Code of Canon Law* in 1983, 'a diocesan bishop who has completed his seventy-fifth year of age is requested to offer his resignation from office to the Supreme Pontiff who, taking all the circumstances into account, will make provision accordingly' (Canon 401#1).

I offered my resignation to the Holy Father in a letter dated 6 May 2001 (having reached seventy-five on the previous day). My resignation was soon accepted with the phrase *nunc pro tunc*, i.e. accepted but to be effective later. In fact, I ceased to be bishop of Galloway only when my successor's appointment was published on 7 April 2004.

The following month, in *The Galloway Newsletter* for May 2004, I gave my retiring reflections:

Going, Going, (Almost) Gone!

Since the announcement, on 7 April, that Pope John Paul II had appointed Mgr John Cunningham as my successor, many people have congratulated me on my retirement (after a delay lasting almost three years, since I became seventy-five on 5 May 2001). Usually, people added, 'You must be delighted' but a few have asked whether I am sad to be retiring. That question challenges me.

I want to say that I truly welcome my retirement, partly for my sake and certainly for the sake of the diocese. Not only will the diocese benefit from new and fresh leadership but the uncertainty that has lasted three years has been unset-