



THE CATHEDRAL OF SAINT PAUL

SLIGHT ADJUSTMENTS TO THE FORMULA OF ABSOLUTION BEGINNING ASH WEDNESDAY 2023 AT THE CATHEDRAL

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, together with other English-speaking conferences of bishops from around the world, have been undertaking a re-translation project for several years now under the guidance of the Holy See, in order to make our liturgical texts more faithful to the original Latin. Thus, many of us remember when the *Third Typical Edition* of the *Roman Missal* entered into use in 2011 and we had pew cards for several years, to help us learn the new responses and common texts for Holy Mass. (I still prefer to read along while reciting the Creed, as I easily lapse into the old version even 11+ years later!)

Ever since the new edition of the *Roman Missal*, changes have also been made to the Rites of Baptism, Marriage, and various other liturgical texts, with others still in progress.

The latest change, then, is to the Rite of Penance: priests and bishops will soon have to get used to reciting a slightly altered Formula of Absolution in English – and all of us, priests and bishops included, will have to get used to hearing it!

This change, like the others made in recent years, is a good one. It is also very slight. Moreover, it will hopefully provide an opportunity for priests or bishops who have not been using exactly the right words to begin doing so, as they review and commit a changed formula to memory.

The adjusted formula *may* be used starting on Ash Wednesday (February 22, 2023) – Father Adams and I will begin doing so then. It *must* be used starting on Divine Mercy Sunday (April 16, 2023). Therefore, do not be surprised if, in the intervening time, you hear some variety, depending on which priest you confess with and where. Here follows the adjusted formula, with the two small changes in bold/underline:

God, the Father of mercies,
through the death and resurrection of his Son,
has reconciled the world to himself
and **poured out** the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of sins.
Through the ministry of the Church,
may God **grant** you pardon and peace.
AND I ABSOLVE YOU FROM YOUR SINS,
IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, ✠ AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. Amen.

The Latin verb rendered now as “poured out” (effúdit) is the same as what is used in the consecration of the chalice at Holy Mass, when the priest refers to Christ’s blood, which *will be poured out* (effundétur) for the forgiveness of sins. The translation will now be both more accurate and more consistent across various liturgical texts.

And the Latin verb rendered now as “grant” (tríbuat) is also used in one form or another in many of the principal orations (the Collect, Post-Communion, etc.) of the Mass, and implies the hoped-for outcome of having made a formal request. Perhaps there is not much difference between “give” (old translation) and “grant” (new), but it is nevertheless more accurate. *Also, incidentally, many priests have already been saying “grant” for years now by mistake, perhaps because it is the more intuitive thing to say in context!*

We will be adjusting our confessional signage, not only to help Father Adams and me remember the new words accurately, but also for the benefit of any visiting priests. As always, please do not hesitate to speak to either of us should you have any questions or concerns. – **Father Bryan W. Jerabek** – Feb. 10, 2023