

## **September 17, 2011: St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church**

**Presented by: Paul M. Vance**

Introduction:

Anyone over the age of 6 knows that change happens all the time, everywhere. Just when things seem set, life throws us something new. Now for the first time in nearly forty years, the Church is instituting some changes in the Mass.

To reduce the surprise and uncertainty of the upcoming changes and to help us understand some of those changes coming to the Mass, Father Kevin has asked me to be here as the first of several presenters over the next several weeks to help introduce the changes that will occur in the Mass on the first Sunday in Advent this coming November.

The purpose of today's brief talk is an attempt to understand why the change is happening. To begin, I present the question: How should we understand God?

The Church describes God as the True, the Good, and the Beautiful.

We have heard the Truth in the Word of God just proclaimed.

We share the Goodness of God when we participate in the Eucharistic Meal.

And we experience the Beauty of God throughout the whole Liturgy of the Mass each weekend. It is within this realm of the Beautiful that I wish to focus my comments today.

We all know that the Church instructs us to participate in the Mass each Sunday. Why? The purpose of the Mass and the importance of it is key to our faith as Roman Catholics.

The Mass is the highest form of prayer in our faith. This is true because the Mass brings about communion in a particular way with God, especially in the Eucharist. But the Mass also brings about communion in a special way in our community here at St. Mark's and with Catholics throughout the world in the universal Church.

I believe that the changes occurring reflect three important points.

First, the fullness of Truth does reside in our Church. And this Truth does not change.

Secondly, while the Truth does not change, our understanding of it does grow and develop, especially in prayer and in community.

Finally, the changes that are occurring this year seek to more appropriately reflect the Beauty of God, the Beauty of God's Life, especially that Beauty as it is expressed in the Life of the universal Church and the Beauty of our own community here at St. Mark's.

The changes we will experience are not changes in the structure of the Mass. They are changes in the words we say, not what we do.

They are new and rich and beautiful words and phrases. These words will help us understand that Mass is not a "show" that we come to watch and hope that the message will entertain us.

No, the new words and phrases will help us understand that the Mass is a real and meaningful way to actually participate in the very Life of God, to thank God for that Life and to glorify Him in way that is appropriate for that Life.

As an example, lets look at the Gloria both today's version and the new version:

Today we say:

***Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to his people on earth.***

***Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship  
you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.***

In the new text, we will say:

***Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to people of good will.***

***We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give  
you thanks for your great glory,***

***Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.***

All the changes in the Mass are similar to this. Over the next several weeks at each Mass, a parish member will present and explain a particular portion of the Mass to familiarize you with the various changes.

So, there is no need to stress out or get uncomfortable. If you do start to feel overwhelmed about these things, just relax, take a deep breath, and think about how confused all those poor souls who just show up on Christmas and Easter are going to feel. That should make you feel a little better.

In any case, I believe and I hope you will agree that these changes will help us to see in a deeper way the True and Good and Beautiful God we worship when we gather together as the Family of God.