

FAQ's

Why do we sing Latin during Lent at Mass?

Latin is the universal language of the liturgy. It deserves a special recognition in our celebrations. As part of the tradition of liturgy we do ourselves a favor by learning some parts of Mass in this beautiful language. Actually, we use Latin and Greek. The *Kyrie eleison* [Lord have mercy] is Greek.

It is a way of demonstrating that we are part of something much bigger than our neighborhood. "But didn't the Second Vatican Council change all that Latin stuff?" Not really. The Council permitted the Mass to be celebrated in the vernacular [language of the people] but never desired that we never use Latin. The *Kyrie*, *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei*, are regular parts of the Mass and all know what the words are saying. The *Deo gratias* and *Laus tibi Christe* may be new, but we all know what we are saying.

Every Mass is a celebration of the heavenly liturgy. It is you and me joining with all our Catholic sisters and brothers on earth and everyone in heaven to praise God. Using this little bit of Latin once in a while can help broaden our horizons. And in addition, when the Pope comes to SVdP we'll be ready.

Why do we sing the *Lamb of God* so many times at Mass?

The *Fraction Rite* [breaking of the bread] follows ancient tradition as a preparation for Communion. In the earliest liturgies the bread used was usually a loaf that needed to be broken into many smaller pieces. While this fractioning was taking place the congregation would sing the Lamb of God until all the loaf was broken and prepared for distribution.

At some Masses we need more time to "break" the bread, i.e. getting the many ciboria readied for distribution of the Eucharist. Following the ancient tradition we also sing the Lamb of God until we are ready.

Why has our Church told us not to use *Yahweh* any more?

The Sacred Congregation for the Sacred Liturgy [the Church's official authority on liturgical matters] issued an explanation and guidelines on the use of the ancient Hebrew Tetragrammaton often translated as YHWH.

"In accordance with immemorial tradition, which indeed is already evident in the above-mentioned Septuagint version, the name of almighty God expressed by the Hebrew Tetragrammaton and rendered in Latin by the word *Dominus* is to be rendered into any given vernacular by a word equivalent in meaning.

The venerable biblical tradition of sacred Scripture, known as the Old Testament, displays a series of divine appellations, among which is the sacred name of God revealed in the Tetragrammaton YHWH (see PDF file). As an expression of the infinite greatness and majesty of God, it was held to be unpronounceable and hence was replaced during the reading of sacred Scripture by means of the use of an alternate name: *Adonai*, which means *Lord*.

The Greek translation of the Old Testament, the so-called Septuagint, dating back to the last centuries prior to the Christian era, had regularly rendered the Hebrew Tetragrammaton with the Greek word *Kyrios*, which means *Lord*. Since the text of the Septuagint constituted the Bible of the first generation of Greek-speaking Christians, in which language all the books of the New Testament were also written, these Christians too from the beginning never pronounced the divine Tetragrammaton.

Avoiding pronouncing the Tetragrammaton of the name of God on the part of the church has therefore its own grounds. Apart from a motive of a purely philological order, there is also that of remaining faithful to the church's tradition from the beginning that the sacred Tetragrammaton was never pronounced in the Christian context nor translated into any of the languages into which the Bible was translated. "

How does word spread that the Catholic bishops have made a stronger position statement regarding heroic measures, IVs and tube feedings, in end of life care?

The Texas Catholic Herald carries local and national Catholic news. One can find information on various issues by checking out the diocesan paper when it is delivered to your home.

There are a few good Catholic websites that succinctly give updates on a daily basis. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has a summary of new documents and issues. There is a side bar taking you to specific areas. It can be reached at <http://www.nccbuscc.org/>. Two other good sites are www.catholicculture.org/news/ and www.zenit.org. Both of these sites give a broad overview of issues and documents. Zenit lists more of our Holy Father's meetings and addresses.