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TENSIONS IN TRANSLATING: THE CASE OF THE *MISA NG BAYANG PILIPINO*[1]

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Abstract. The *Misa ng Bayang Pilipino* (MBP) is an attempt at liturgical inculturation. Yet the inaction of the Roman Curia in the 1990s regarding the MBP is partly explainable by the MBP's use of the dynamic equivalence theory of translation and inculturated expression at a moment when norms on translation promoted by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments were shifting towards the formal equivalence theory. As a result, it appears that the MBP came into tension with the policy changes for liturgical translation at the time. In a certain way, the translational differences between the MBP and the *Aklat ng Pagmimisa sa Roma* reflect the differences in the liturgical norms of translation between *Comme le prévoit* (1969) and *Liturgiam authenticam* (2001).

Keywords: inculturation, liturgy, *Misa ng Bayang Pilipino*, translation

Introduction

Sacrosanctum Concilium states "*Attamen Liturgia est culmen ad quod actio Ecclesiae tendit et simul fons unde omnis eius virtus emanat* (the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows)."[2] Still, liturgical studies is partially a field of tensions in the Church, and one

[1] GenAI Disclosure Statement: GenAI was not used in any aspect of this paper.

[2] Cf. Second Vatican Council, *Constitutio De Sacra Liturgia Sacrosanctum Concilium* (December 4, 1963), § 10, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 56 (1964), p. 102; Vatican Archives,

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liturgical issue highlights something worth further examination. The *Misa ng Bayang Pilipino* (MBP) is an attempt at liturgical inculturation. Yet the inaction of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (CDWDS) in the 1990s regarding the MBP is partly explainable by the MBP's use of the dynamic equivalence theory of translation and inculturated expression at a moment when norms on translation promoted by the CDWDS were shifting towards the formal equivalence theory. As a result, it appears that the MBP came into tension with the policy changes for liturgical translation at the time. In a certain way, the translational differences between the MBP and the *Aklat ng Pagmimisa sa Roma* reflect the differences in the liturgical norms of translation between *Comme le prévoit* (1969) and *Liturgiam authenticam* (2001). In what follows, I present (1) liturgical translation efforts in the Philippines, (2) a description of the *Aklat ng Pagmimisa sa Roma*, (3) a history of the *Misa ng Bayang Pilipino*, (4) some translational nuances between the two, (5) a discussion of the dynamic and formal equivalence theories of translation, (6) and an evaluation of the *Misa ng Bayang Pilipino* through the lenses of Church documents, focusing on *Comme le prévoit* and *Liturgiam authenticam*. To be clear, I do not presume to discern in every respect the wisdom of the magisterium or question it without regard for magisterial prerogatives; instead, I intend overall to promote greater love and appreciation for the liturgy.

Liturgical Translation Efforts in the Philippines

Early translation efforts in the Philippines occurred with the Spanish missionary attempts to use the languages of the natives, which differed structurally from Romance languages, thereby creating linguistic challenges. Fr. Jose Mario C. Francisco, SJ contends that a cultural reading of translation efforts in the Philippines suggests that the process of translating was marked early on by a more fluid or flexible approach necessitated by the different linguistic characteristics between

https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html, no. 10.

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the Romance and native languages.[3] Consequently, works of translation like the *Doctrina Christiana en lengua española y tagala* emerged. While not strictly set in a liturgical context, these translation attempts helped foster the basis for religious sensibilities, phrasing, and terminologies in Tagalog that would broadly structure liturgical vernacularization in later times. Vicente Rafael adds that "for the Tagalogs, translation was a process less of internalizing colonial-Christian conventions than of evading their totalizing grip by repeatedly marking the differences between their language and interests and those of the Spaniards."[4] It does not mean that there was always an active effort to differentiate when translating into Tagalog. Rather, the dynamic influence of fluidity and flexibility was historically imbued in the translation efforts. Francisco highlights the challenge of ensuring fidelity amid fluidity and flexibility, which entails conveying:

> The 'meaning of the original' by subsequently expressing it in the new language: 'this absolute criterion [of what would count as good translation] would be the same meaning, written somewhere on the top of and between the original text and the target text This third text would be the bearer of the identical meaning, supposed to move from the first to the second' (*On Translation* 34).[5]

A general purview of translating theological words is helpful to examine the process. Stanislaw Schabowicz, citing Wojciech Kluj, lays out four principles for effective translations: dual faithfulness between Christian doctrine and local culture, cultural reference to the local language, dynamic language, and communal meaning.[6] In the context

[3] Jose Mario C. Francisco, S.J., "Fidelity in Translating Religious Practice: Illustrations from Filipino Christianity," *Kritika Kultura* 21/22 (2013/2014): 204-209, doi:10.13185/1656-152X.1507.

[4] Vicente L. Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society under Early Spanish Rule* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1988), 211.

[5] Francisco, "Fidelity in Translating Religious Practice," 207.

[6] Stanisław Schabowicz, "Translating the Sacraments of Christian Initiation: A Linguistic and Cultural Analysis in the Tagalog Context," *Studia Ełckie* 27, no.

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of the Philippines, Tagalog can have a variety of translations for the same Latin word. Schabowicz gives the example of *Kaligtasan*, which can theologically mean "salvation" but also means "medical alleviation." One notable characteristic of Tagalog is that it is open to adopting foreign words changed into Tagalog spelling and pronunciation. *Communion* easily becomes *komunyon*. What is interesting is determining whether to retain the linguistic roots or use an entirely different local word. *Baptism* could be either *bautismo* or *binyag*. Yet the former is very rarely used in common speech, while the latter is prevalent. It is worth remembering that certain theological words or phrases may not translate well if the linguistic roots are retained. Alternatively, others may not translate well either if an entirely different local word is used.

Aklat ng Pagmimisa sa Roma

The liturgical reforms were implemented in the Philippines following the Second Vatican Council. Efforts at liturgical inculturation have been undertaken by Filipino liturgists like Fr. Anscar J. Chupungco, OSB. It is arguable that translating texts is a form of inculturation because it is an exercise in conceptual transcultural mediation. The official work of translation of liturgical texts was undertaken by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines through the Episcopal Commission on Liturgy (ECL).[7] The ECL would form the National Liturgical Commission (NLC) in 1975 for the purpose of translating the Roman Missal and other texts into Tagalog. Under the NLC was the Regional Commission on Tagalog in the Liturgy, coordinated by Ricardo Cardinal Vidal and headed by Msgr. Moises Andrade. Every diocese in the Tagalog region sent a representative. The Commission began the work of translation on 11 March 1975.[8] The bishops of the

2 (2025): 211-228.

[7] Dennis C. Amarante, "A Survey of Literatures on Post-Vatican II Liturgical Reforms in the Philippines," *Philippiniana Sacra* 57, no. 173 (May–August 2022): 275–94.

[8] Ricardo Cardinal Vidal, "Philippines: Notes on the Tagalog Translation of the Roman Missal," *Notitiae* 18, num. 6-7 (1982): 367.

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Tagalog region approved the Ordinary of the *Aklat ng Pagmimisa sa Roma* (ANPSR) on 18 April 1978.[9] The Commission submitted their work and other translated texts on 9 June 1978 to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (CDWDS). The CDWDS gave its confirmation on 13 July 1979 to the ANPSR.[10] Later on, the Holy Week Rites and other parts of the ANPSR were submitted on 30 June 1981, and the CDWDS gave its confirmation on 8 August 1981.[11] The whole ANPSR was completed and approved by 1981. Three years later, the CDWDS reported:

> While Tagalog has practically all the liturgical books, except the Rite for Christian Initiation of Adults and Liturgy of the Hours, in official translations confirmed by the Apostolic See, Ilocano, Bikol, Pampango, Pangasinan, Cebuano, Samarenyo, and Hiligaynon have the Order of Mass, Baptism for Children, and Rite of Marriage in official vernacular renditions with [the] Apostolic See's confirmation.[12]

Fr. Chupungco and Fr. Florencio P. Salvador argued that the liturgical use of the vernacular has led to increased participation and enrichment among the faithful.[13] Meanwhile, Fr. Amelito Racelis, SDB notes that the Rite of Baptism of Children, Rite of Marriage, and

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[9] Ibid., 367.

[10] Ibid., 368; Cf. also Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (CDWDS), "*Libri Liturigici Officiales*," *Notitiae* 18, num. 12 (1982): 815.

[11] Cf. CDWDS, "*Acta Congregationis: Summarium Decretorum*," *Notitiae* 18, num. 184 (1981): 537; Vidal, "Philippines: Notes on the Tagalog Translation of the Roman Missal," 368.

[12] *Congregazione per il Culto Divino* [Congregation for Divine Worship], *Atti del Convegno dei Presidenti e Segretari delle Commissioni Nazionali di Liturgia* (Padova: Edizioni Messaggero Padova, 1986), 539.

[13] Anscar J. Chupungco, OSB, "The Liturgical Reform of Vatican II: The Philippine Experience," *Asian Perspectives in the Arts and Humanities* 1, no. 2 (2011): 79-80; Florencio P. Salvador, "The Eucharist in the Philippines: Lay Ministry and Active Participation," in *The Constitution on the Liturgy and its Impact on the Philippine Church* (Manila: CBCP Episcopal Commission on Liturgy, 2012), 38.

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Funeral Liturgy have also been translated into other local languages, such as Kapampangan, Ilocano, Pangasinense, Bicolano, Cebuano, Hiligaynon, and Binisaya (Waray).[14] As recently as 2025, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of San Fernando completed and began using a Kapampangan translation of the third *editio typica* of the *Missale Romanum*.[15] As yet, there is still no official Roman Curial approval for it, and there are also other local languages without translation. For reference, there are over 100 languages in the Philippines. It would be impractical to translate liturgical texts into many of them as per *Decem iam annos*, which warns against translating into languages with few speakers to avoid fragmentation.[16] But, in principle, there is pastoral consideration to explore more avenues for liturgical translations. Arguably, the liturgical translation process is still an open work with much to consider.

Critiques followed the liturgical translation process. As early as 1983, Msgr. Sabino Vengco, HP questioned several translational decisions made concerning the ANPSR at the time.[17] For instance, in the opening prayer for the First Sunday of Advent, the Latin "*regnum… cæléste*" was translated into *pinaghaharian*.[18] Yet the absence of the Tagalog equivalent of the adjective *cæléste* (heavenly), for Vengco, misses

[14] Amarante, "A Survey of Literatures on Post-Vatican II Liturgical Reforms in the Philippines," 284-285, citing Amelito Racelis, SDB, "The Impact of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* on the Celebration of Baptisms, Marriages and Funerals in the Philippines," in *The Constitution on the Liturgy and its Impact on the Philippine Church* (Manila: CBCP Episcopal Commission on Liturgy, 2012), 58-59.

[15] Tonette T. Orejas, "Kapampangan Language Finds New Life in Liturgy," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, February 2, 2025, https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/2030530/kapampangan-language-finds-new-life-in-liturgy.

[16] CDWDS, "*Epistola ad presides conferentiarum episcopalium de linguis vulgaribus in sacram liturgiam inducendis (Decem iam annos),*" *Notitiae* 12, num, 8-9 (1976): 300-302.

[17] Sabino Vengco, "*Aklat ng Pagmimisa sa Roma: A Critique,*" *Philippine Studies* 31, no. 2 (1983): 253–271.

[18] Cf. Vengco, "*Aklat ng Pagmimisa sa Roma: A Critique,*" 255. The original Latin of the said opening prayer is as follows: "*Da, quǽsumus, omnípotens Deus, hanc tuis*

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the eschatological dimension of the phrase.[19] Overall a recurring refrain for him is that some of the Tagalog translations in the ANPSR are not adequate in conveying certain theological nuances in the Latin, like not including at the end of the long form presidential prayers *Dominus noster, Filius tuus*, which highlights the mediatorship of Jesus.[20] Additionally, Vengco thought that the ANPSR takes unwarranted liberties in rhyming and innovations. He claimed the presidential prayers of the ANPSR begin with *Ama namin* or Our Father intending to establish a link with the Lord's prayer and the Jewish eighteen benedictions, despite weak evidence for such a link.[21]

History of the *Misa ng Bayang Pilipino*

Whereas the ANPSR is the normative and Roman Curia-approved translation of the *Missale Romanum*, there is another locally approved liturgical text in the *Misa ng Bayang Pilipino* (MBP).[22] It is alternatively known as *the Misa ng Sambayanang Pilipino*. Preparations began in 1974 at the Maryhill School of Theology under the direction of Fr. Anscar Chupungco. The following documents guided the process: The General Instruction on the Roman Missal, *Au Cours des Deniers Mois* (1968), *Comme le prévoit* (1969), the Rescript for India (1969), and *Eucharistiae Partipationem* (1973). On August 21, 1975, the translated text, based on the second *editio typica* of the *Missale Romanum*, was submitted to consultants. Three major revisions occurred by the next month. The

fidélibus voluntátem, ut, Christo tuo veniénti iustis opéribus occurréntes, eius déxteræ sociáti, regnum mereántur possidére cæléste. Per Dominum."

[19] Ibid. He compared the Latin original with that of the ANPSR: "*Ama naming makapangyarihan, bigyan mo kami ng paninindigang tumahak sa landas ng kabutihan. Sa pagdating ni Kristo makasalubong nawa kaming may mabubuting gawa upang kapiling niya sa gawing kanan kami ay makapisan sa iyong pinaghaharian sa pamamagitan niya kasama ng Espiritu Santo magpasawalang hanggan.*"

[20] Vengco, "*Aklat ng Pagmimisa sa Roma*: A Critique," 263.

[21] Vengco, "*Aklat ng Pagmimisa sa Roma*: A Critique," 259.

[22] Anscar J. Chupungco, O.S.B., *Toward a Filipino Liturgy* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1976), 88-93.

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draft was then examined by the National Liturgical Commission, which, as will be recalled, was also working on the ANPSR in the same time period. In January 1976, the text was accepted by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP).[23] Five months later, the final text was reviewed by an ad hoc committee of bishops and then submitted under the title "Roman Order of Mass for the Dioceses in the Philippines" to Rome for approval. After revisions following Roman Curial feedback and inspiration from the *Missel Romain pour les Diocèses du Zaïre* (1988), the CBCP submitted the MBP once more for Roman Curial approval in July 1991.[24] The revised version of the MBP aligned more with the *Missale Romanum*. Notably, the MBP has only two Eucharistic Prayers. To date, the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (the CDWDS renamed) has still not given its *recognitio* to it, but the MBP has been occasionally used in the Philippine Conference on New Evangelization. I advance later that the 1991 inaction of the CDWDS for the MBP might be partly explained by its reliance on dynamic equivalence at a time when magisterial norms were gradually shifting towards formal equivalence, preferring fidelity to the *Missale Romanum* over dynamic expressions. Unfortunately, public documents on the issue are sparse, but circumstances may reveal truth on the matter. While the MBP is an inculturated rite with local practices integrated into the liturgy, what is of interest here are the texts. Since the translated texts in the 1976 MBP predate the ones in the approved 1981 ANPSR by some years, some of their wordings differ. Chupungco wrote that:

[23] Fr. Florencio Testera, OP, "The CBCP at Work: A Systematic Compilation of the Major Decisions Taken by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines – January 1964 – July 1979," *Boletin Eclesiastico de Filipinas* 54, nos. 602-603 (January-February 1980): 41. "The *Misa ng Bayang Pilipino*, prepared by the Maryhill School of Theology, had been accepted by the bishops at their meeting in January 1976. The bishops made one further change, then accepted the text unanimously, and forwarded it to Rome for confirmation. It is still under study by Rome."

[24] Anscar J. Chupungco, OSB, "Shaping the Filipino Order of Mass," in *Worship: Beyond Inculturation* (Washington, DC: Pastoral Press, 1994), 129-156.

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> Language plays an essential role in the liturgy. The liturgy is made up of two basic elements, namely proclaimed texts and gestures. As regards the language of the *Misa*, much effort was made, including several consultations with experts in the Tagalog language, in order to ensure that the texts, when proclaimed or sung, are clear, dignified, and prayerful. The language is also slightly poetic, and often observes terminal as well as internal rhyme. Filipinos have a predilection for sentences that rhyme and place value on rhythmic cadence in solemn speech. Because of the cultural value of idioms, the Misa is attentive to idiomatic speech.[25]

Some Translational Nuances between the ANPSR and the MBP

The liturgical structure between the ANPSR and MBP is largely similar. However, the ANPSR employs a formal form of Filipino that is faithful to Latin syntax, theological precision, and traditional liturgical formulas, thereby emphasizing the universality of the Roman Rite and ensuring doctrinal consistency. On the other hand, the MBP uses a more colloquial, poetic, and dialogical Filipino, drawing heavily from Filipino cultural expressions, oral styles, and communal speech. The translation is made to sound like the prayer of the people themselves rather than a direct translation of the Latin liturgical texts. As an example of the translational nuances between them, the following table compares their Eucharistic Prayer 1 (The Roman Canon) with the *Missale Romanum*.[26] Some select corresponding portions are identifiable

[25] Anscar J. Chupungco, OSB, "Inculturation of Worship: Forty Years of Progress and Tradition," *Institute of Liturgical Studies Occasional Papers* (2003): 8, http://scholar.valpo.edu/ils_papers/5.

[26] The English translation of the Eucharistic prayer 1 excerpt is as follows: "Be pleased, O God, we pray to bless, acknowledge, and approve this offering in every respect; make it spiritual and acceptable, so **that it may become for us the Body and Blood of your most beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ**. / On the day before he was to suffer he took bread **in his holy and venerable hands,** and with eyes raised to heaven to you, O God, his almighty Father, **giving you thanks** he said the blessing, **broke the bread and gave it to his disciples, saying**: / Take this, all of you, and eat of it: For this is my body which will be given up for you. / In a similar way, when supper was ended, **he took this precious chalice in his holy and venerable hands**, and once more giving you

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with the following order: (1) bold, (2) underline, (3) bold, and (4) bold with underline.

Missale Romanum, Editio Typica Altera	**ANPSR**	**MBP[27]**
Quam oblatiónem tu, Deus, in ómnibus, quáesumus, benedíctam, adscríptam, ratam, rationábilem, acceptabilémque fácere dignéris: ***ut nobis Corpus et Sanguis fiat dilectíssimi Fílii tui, Dómini nostri Iesu Christi.***	*Ama namin, basbasan mo ang mga handog naming ito. Marapatin mong sambahin ka namin sa Espiritu at katotohanan, kaya para sa amin ito ay gawin mong* ***maging Katawan at Dugo ng pinakamamahal mong Anak, ang aming Panginoong Hesukristo.***	*Amang makapangyarihan, ipagkaloob mo sa iyong Simbahan ang Espiritu ng kabanalan: isinasamo namin na lukuban niya at italaga ang tinapay at alak na aming alay upang ang mga ito'y* ***maging katawan at dugo ng aming Panginoong si Hesukristo.***

thanks, he said the blessing **and gave the chalice to his disciples, saying**: / Take this, all of you, and drink from it: For this is the Chalice of my blood, the blood of the new and eternal covenant, which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in memory of me."

[27] The MBP texts found in the table were used in the context of the Philippine Conference on New Evangelization. As such, they reflect the changes made after 1991 following Roman Curial feedback. In other words, they are not the original texts drafted by the Maryhill School of Theology in 1974. The original texts were the following: "*Ama naming Mapagmahal, ipagkaloob mo ang iyong Espiritu Santo upang kanyang lukuban at basbasan ang mga alay na ito, sapagka't tandang-tanda pa namin, noong gabing ipagkanulo siya habang silay nagsasalu-salo sa huling pagkakataon kinuha niya ang tinapay. nagpasalamat sa iyo, hinati-hati iyon at ibinigay sa kanyang mga alagad na ang wika: Tanggapin ninyong lahat ito at kanin: ito ang aking katawan na ihahain nang dahil sa inyo. Gayon din naman, kinuha niya ang kalis, muling nagpasalamat sa iyo at nagpuri na ang wika: Tanggapin ninyong lahat ito at inumin: ito ang aking dugo, dugo ng bago at walang-hanggang tipan na sa inyo at sa lahat ay ibububo sa ikapagpapatawad ng mga kasalanan. Ipagdiwang ninyo ang hapunang ito bilang pag-aalaala sa akin.*" See: Chupungco, *Toward a Filipino Liturgy*, 106.

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Qui, prídie quam paterétur, accépit panem **in sanctas ac venerábiles manus suas**, *et elevátis óculis in caelum ad te Deum Patrem suum omnipoténtem*, **tibi grátias** *agens benedíxit,* **fregit, dedítque discípulis suis, dicens**:	*Noong bisperas ng kanyang pagpapakasakit para kami at ang lahat ng tao ay masagip, nakisalo siya ngayon sa mga alagad niyang iniibig. Hinawakan ni Hesus ang tinapay* **sa kanyang banal at kagalang-galang na mga kamay**. *Tumingala siya sa langit, sa iyo, Diyos Ama niyang makapangyarihan,* **at nagpasalamat siya sa iyo**. **Pinaghati-hati niya ang tinapay, iniabot sa kanyang mga alagad at sinabi**:	*Sapagkat tandang-tanda pa namin, noong gabi bago siya magpakasakit, habang siya at ang kanyang mga alagad ay nagsasalu-salo sa huling pagkakataon, hinawakan niya ang tinapay,* **pinasalamatan ka niya, pinaghati-hati niya iyon, iniabot sa kanyang mga alagad at sinabi**:
Accipite et manducate ex hoc omnes: Hoc est enim corpus meum. Quod pro vobis tradetur.	*Tanggapin ninyong lahat ito at kanin: ito ang aking katawan na ihahandog para sa inyo.*	*Tanggapin ninyong lahat ito at kanin: ito ang aking katawan na ihahandog para sa inyo.*
Símili modo, postquam cenátum est, accípiens et hunc præclárum cálicem **in sanctas ac venerábiles manus suas**, *item tibi grátias agens benedíxit,* **dedítque discípulis suis, dicens**:	*Gayun din naman, noong matapos ang hapunan, hinawakan niya ang kalis na ito ng pagpapala* **sa kanyang banal at kagalang-galang na mga kamay**, *muli ka niyang pinasalamatan,* **iniabot niya ang kalis sa kanyang mga alagad at sinabi**:	*Gayun din naman, pagkatapos ng hapunan, hinawakan niya ang kalis, muli ka niyang pinasalamatan,* **iniabot niya iyon sa kanyang mga alagad, at sinabi**:

Accipite et bibite ex eo omnes: Hic est enim Calix Sanguinis mei, novi et aeterni testamenti: mysterium fidei, qui pro vobis et pro multis effundetur in remissionem peccatorum.	*Tanggapin ninyong lahat ito at inumin: ito ang kalis ng aking dugo ng bago at walang hanggang tipan, ang aking dugo na ibubuhos para sa inyo at para sa lahat sa ikapagpapatawad ng mga kasalanan. Gawin ninyo ito sa pag-alala sa akin.*	*Tanggapin ninyong lahat ito at inumin: ito ang kalis ng aking dugo ng bago at walang hanggang tipan, ang aking dugo na ibubuhos para sa inyo at para sa lahat sa ikapagpapatawad ng mga kasalanan. Gawin ninyo ito sa pag-alala sa akin.*

The consecratory words of both are the same for sacramental validity. But the MBP takes liberties elsewhere in translation to promote an inculturated liturgy. While the topic of inculturation is quite broad, it can be seen above in limited terms how cultural attitudes characterize translation. Anscar Chupungco framed the original Eucharistic Prayer 1 of the MBP as expressing "values that Filipinos traditionally cherish: reciprocity (*pagtitiwala*, *utang na loob*, *pagpupuno ng kakulangan*) and solidarity (*pakikisama*, *pakikiramay*)."[28] Nevertheless, compared with other parts of the Eucharistic Prayer, Edward Foley observes:

> The central core of the Eucharistic Prayer—consecratory epiclesis, institution narrative, anamnesis, offering, and communion epiclesis—follows more closely the formulae found in the Roman Missal. Notable nuances occur in the consecratory epiclesis, which prays for the Spirit to be given to the church (*ipagkaloob mo sa iyong Simbahan ang Espiritu ng kabanalan*, 'Grant to your Church the Spirit of Holiness') and not simply to come upon the elements of bread and wine as in the official Latin text. This inculturated epiclesis also seems to mirror the prefaces' emphasis on relationality. The use of *ipagkaloob* ('grant') is significant as it 'contains the sense of giving a gift (*kaloob*) … that comes from one's heart (*loob*).' As there is no equivalent word in Filipino for '*epiclesis*,' the text uses *lukaban*, which 'literally means 'to hatch' [or take under the wing], an action which is

[28] Anscar J. Chupungco, OSB, *Misa ng Bayang Pilipino: A Study on Liturgical Indigenization* (Manila: Benedictine Abbey, 1975), 18.

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> transferred here to the action of the Holy Spirit on the gifts.' Similar language is employed in the communion *epiclesis*, during which 'the priest stretches out his arms towards the people.' *Ipagkaloob* is again invoked, implying that the Holy Spirit is a 'heart' gift. *Lukuban* also again appears here, which Malit translates as the Spirit taking us 'lovingly under his wings.'[29]

Additionally, outside the consecratory words, the other translated words in the ANPSR maintain a more formal sacramental language. For example, the ANPSR uses the more descriptive words: "*Hinawakan ni Hesus ang tinapay sa kanyang banal at kagalang-galang na mga kamay. Tumingala siya sa langit, sa iyo, Diyos Ama niyang makapangyarihan, at nagpasalamat siya sa iyo*" and "*na ito ng pagpapala sa kanyang banal at kagalang-galang na mga kamay*." One illustrative point of dispute was that the word "*Hinawakan*" was deemed less preferable than "*Kinuha*," which local liturgists thought more accurate to the Latin "*accepit*."[30] On the other hand, the ones in the MBP frame the Eucharist more within a context of shared experience, emphasizing communal faith and memory. For example, the MBP uses: "*ipagkaloob mo sa iyong Simbahan ang Espiritu ng kabanalan*" and "*Sapagkat tandang-tanda pa namin*." Interestingly, both the ANPSR and MBP either do not translate some parts of the *Missale Romanum* or they include parts not found there. Both begin with an invocation of the Spirit, which is not in the *Missale Romanum*. Both also omit to translate "*agens benedixit*." The reasons for these are not entirely clear. To better grasp the significance of these translational nuances, they must be evaluated not only linguistically but also in terms of their theoretical underpinnings.

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[29] Edward Foley, "Liturgical Inculturation: Decolonization or Decolonialization? Examining *Misa ng Bayang Pilipino,*" *Asia Journal of Theology* 35, no. 1 (April 2021): 96, citing Jesus Malit, "From *Berakah* to *Misa ng Bayang Pilipino*," (EDMin Thesis-Project, Catholic Theological Union, 2001), 109, 111, 113-114 and *Supplement to the Roman Sacramentary for the Dioceses of the Philippines* (Pasay City: Paulines Publishing House, 1999), 160, 171 and 199.

[30] Timoteo Jose M. Ofrasio, S.J., "The New Translation of the Roman Missal and Liturgical Renewal," *Loyola School of Theology*, February 14, 2012, https://lst.edu/articles/the-new-translation-of-the-roman-missal-and-liturgical-renewal-t-ofrasio-sj/.

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Theories of Translation

As was earlier mentioned, the MBP did not receive *recognitio* from the CDWDS in the 1990s. I advance that one of the possible reasons (i.e., not entirely) for such inaction is that the texts found therein did not align as well with the magisterial preference on translation at the time of submission. For clarity, the first translated texts of the MBP and ANPSR drew on the second *editio typica* of the *Missale Romanum*, but the former resorted to dynamic equivalence theory more so than the latter. It will be recalled that the two equivalence theories on translation are formal and dynamic (functional). Both theories of translation have their strengths and weaknesses, and a given context largely influences which of the two is the more appropriate one to use. Eugene Nida introduced the two theories in *Toward a Science of Translating*. There, he described formal equivalence as "focus[ing] attention on the message itself, in both form and content."[31] Meanwhile, Nida viewed dynamic equivalence as emphasizing the meaning of a text in ways that "the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptor and message."[32] These two theories are relevant to scriptural and liturgical translations. In the context of the latter, formal translation emphasizes an accurate or as proximate as possible word-for-word translation of the *editio typica* of the *Missale Romanum*, while dynamic emphasizes more the naturalness of expression, if at the occasional expense of the original wording and/or syntax.

Through the Lenses of Church Documents

The foundational document for liturgical translation is the 1963 Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. Therein, active lay participation is highly desired. Some of the more relevant sections regarding translation are:

[31] Eugene Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1964), 159.

[32] Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating*, 159.

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> Paragraph 36.2: But since the use of the mother tongue, whether in the Mass, the administration of the sacraments, or other parts of the liturgy, frequently may be of great advantage to the people, the limits of its employment may be extended. This will apply in the first place to the readings and directives, and to some of the prayers and chants, according to the regulations on this matter to be laid down separately in subsequent chapters.
>
> Paragraph 36.4: Translations from the Latin text into the mother tongue intended for use in the liturgy must be approved by the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned above.[33]

Six years after the promulgation of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (and six years prior to the drafting of the MBP), the document *Comme le prévoit* (CLP) was published in 1969.[34] However, CLP was published solely by Consilium, an *ad hoc* commission tasked by Pope Paul VI in 1964 to implement the principles of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. The commission was headed by Fr. Annibale Bugnini and would soon merge with the CDWDS in 1969. As a matter of approach, CLP is generally concerned with making the translated texts as smooth as possible for the people to understand as per the dynamic equivalence theory.

The Roman Curia (through the Sacred Congregation of Rites, but renamed as the Congregation of Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments from 1969 onwards) issued five instructional documents on how to further apply the principles of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. These documents were: *Inter Oecumenici* (1964), *Tres abhinc annos* (1967), *Liturgicae instaurationes* (1970), and *Varietates legitimae* (1994). Finally, in 2001, the CDWDS published the fifth instruction, *Liturgiam authenticam* (LA).[35] One other Church document related to translation

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[33] *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 36.

[34] Consilium for Implementing the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, "*Comme le prévoit*: On the Translation of Liturgical Texts for Celebrations with a Congregation," *Liturgy Office England and Wales*, January 25, 1969, https://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Missal/Information/Comme-le-Prevoit.pdf.

[35] Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Liturgiam Authenticam*, May 7, 2001, Vatican Archives, https://www.vatican.va/

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is the *motu proprio* apostolic letter *Magnum principium* (2017) by Pope Francis. For purposes here, I will focus on the last two instructions in relation to CLP, particularly as the context in which the MBP was resubmitted in 1991 for Roman Curial approval. A presentation of the events and texts of the time will prove to be helpful in discerning Roman Curial inaction.

The *status quo* at the time of the resubmission of the MBP was the following: the prevailing instruction on translation was *Liturgicae instaurationes*, which inclined towards the dynamic equivalence theory. So, the MBP was submitted at a time when the dynamic equivalence theory was still in vogue. However, the MBP was resubmitted three years before the publication of *Varietates legitimae* (VL), which was on inculturation but hinted at a gradual shift from dynamic equivalence towards formal equivalence. Consider the following two paragraphs. VL paragraph 53 states: "Different literary genres are to be respected, and *the content of the texts of the Latin typical edition is to be preserved*; at the same time the translations must be understandable to participants (cf. above No. 39), suitable for proclamation and singing, with appropriate responses and acclamations by the assembly (italics added)."[36] VL paragraph 54 adds:

> For the celebration of the eucharist, the Roman Missal, 'while allowing ... for legitimate differences and adaptations according to the prescriptions of the Second Vatican Council,' *must remain* '*a sign and instrument of unity*' *of the Roman rite in different languages* (italics added).'[37]

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roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_20010507_liturgiam-authenticam_en.html.

[36] Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Principal Sacraments, "*Varietates Legitimae*: Inculturation and the Roman Liturgy," *Adoremus*, January 25, 1994, https://adoremus.org/1994/03/instruction-inculturation-and-the-roman-liturgy/.

[37] *Varietates Legitimae*, no. 54.

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The proximity to the publication of VL suggests that the MBP was resubmitted to a CDWDS moving to formal equivalency.[38] This notion was reinforced when discussions on a new instruction began in 1997. These would culminate four years later with the publication of LA, which put in clearer terms the preference of the CDWDS for fidelity to the Latin texts of the *editio typica* of the *Missale Romanum*.

Reflecting Tensions Between *Comme Le Prévoit* and *Liturgiam Authenticam*

The MBP and ANPSR were drafted when CLP was one of the principle guiding texts for translation. However, only the ANPSR received *recognitio* from the Roman Curia. For that reason, there is a liturgical expectation that it aligns with magisterial norms on translation. The MBP, on the other hand, is still pending in the Roman Curia. Understandably, since the Roman Curia already approved the ANPSR, it cannot allow two official translations to coexist simultaneously in a particular Church. Why the Roman Curia did not give it *recognitio* in the 1970s and 80s is beyond the present scope. After all, as an inculturated expression of the Roman rite, there are many factors to consider, among which translation is only one. By the 1990s, a gradual shift from dynamic equivalence represented by CLP towards formal equivalence theory represented by LA would have placed the MBP at a disadvantage for approval by the CDWDS. Even with their current versions, the differences between the MBP and the ANPSR remain, which arguably warrant continuing caution and examination from the CDWDS. Of course, the translational theories by themselves cannot fully explain the inaction of the CDWDS regarding the MBP. Yet because the MBP was designed to be inculturated, the translated texts retain more of the dynamic equivalence espoused by CLP. Because the ANPSR was designed to be more faithful to the *Missale Romanum*, it was more acceptable to the Roman Curia. In a sense, the tensions in translation between the MBP and ANPSR reflect those of CLP and

[38] Jonathan Y. Tan, "Beyond *Sacrosanctum Concilium*: The Future of Liturgical Renewal in the Asian Catholic Church," *Studia Liturgica* 44 (2014): 295.

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LA. For clarity, tensions are not necessarily negative. When handled properly, they reveal the richness of liturgical life.[39]

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