

Ukrainian Catholics: Four Translations of the Divine Liturgy Some Early Translations

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Abstract

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The author discusses four English translations of the Divine Liturgy by Ukrainian Catholics (1950, 1973, 1988 and 1996). He discusses problematic words and phrases, especially the rendition of the expression "unto ages of ages," and traces certain problems to the Church-Slavonic edition (Rome, 1940). He concludes by proposing a scholarly English translation of the Septuagint Psalter.



The first English translation of the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom done under Catholic auspices is probably that produced by Father Adrian Fortescue¹ and published by the Catholic

¹ *The Divine Liturgy of our Father among the Saints John Chrysostom*, Done into English with an Introduction and Notes by Adrian Fortescue (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1908). My thanks to Michael Davies, who kindly provided

Truth Society for the benefit of those who attended the Divine Liturgy at Westminster Cathedral, London, on 12 September 1908 during the Nineteenth Eucharistic Congress.² This translation was made directly from the Greek, as the service for which it was prepared was held in Greek “to conform in every detail to the rubrics of the Greek euchologion, and to avoid entirely that mixture of Latin elements that often intrudes itself.”³

The people who are now called Ukrainian Catholics began to come to the United States and Canada⁴ towards the end of the nineteenth century. In 1884 they established their first parish church in the Western Hemisphere: Saint Michael’s Greek-Catholic Church, Shenandoah, Pennsylvania. To the best of my knowledge, the first English translation of the Divine Liturgy prepared specifically with reference to the “Ruthenian” usage was

me with a photocopy of this unobtainable edition. This translation is not mentioned in the bibliography of Father Adrian Fortescue’s own *The Uniate Eastern Churches*, Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., New York 1923, nor in Donald Attwater, *The Christian Churches of the East, volume I: Churches in Communion with Rome* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1946), nor in the other bibliographies I consulted in preparing this paper. Father Fortescue’s 1908 translation would be worth reprinting.

² This is stated to have been the first Catholic celebration of the Byzantine Liturgy in England. Archimandrite Arsenios (Atiyeh), Pastor of the Church of Saint Julien le Pauvre, Paris, was the principal celebrant; the Augustinians of the Assumption, from Constantinople, provided the concelebrants and the deacon. Prince Max of Saxony was the lector. The choir of Westminster Cathedral, directed by R.R. Terry, sang the entire Divine Liturgy in Greek, in Byzantine chant. A temporary iconostasis was installed in the cathedral for the occasion (the account notes that the royal doors were opened and shut during the Divine Liturgy as prescribed). Cardinal Vanutelli, Papal Legate to the Congress (and the first Papal Legate to enter England since the death of Cardinal Pole in 1558) presided, enthroned outside the iconostasis. Cf. the announcement of this service in the “official guide” to the Eucharistic Congress, published in advance by Burns and Oates, pp. 35–38; the account of the service in *The Story of the Congress: A Record of great things seen and heard in Catholic London, Sept. 1908*, Burns and Oates, pp. 43–44, and the account of the service in *Report of the Nineteenth Eucharistic Congress, held at Westminster from 9th to 13th September 1908*, (London and Edinburgh: Sands and Company, 1909), pp. 449–451.

³ The “official guide” to the Eucharistic congress, published in advance by Burns and Oates, p. 37.

⁴ Ukrainian Catholics did not settle permanently in England and Australia in significant numbers until after World War II.