



CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE
OF ENGLAND AND WALES
DEPARTMENT FOR CHRISTIAN LIFE
AND WORSHIP

Statement on the Name of God

The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacrament has issued guidance to Bishops' Conferences on the translation of the 'Name of God' in texts for use in the liturgy. The directives expand on the instruction *Liturgiam Authenticam* and note that the Hebrew Tetragrammaton YHWH, *Yahweh* or *Jehovah*, has in the tradition of the Church always been translated as 'Lord'. The Bishops' Conference welcomes the attention that the Congregation has given to the due reverence we owe to the name of God. It is also worth noting that the use of *Yahweh* is highly offensive to the Jewish people.

These directives do not affect our current liturgical texts in use at Mass and other liturgies. Nor do they affect the forthcoming translation of Roman Missal, 3rd edition, which is being studied and voted on by the bishops, and is being translated following the guidance of the Holy See found in *Liturgiam Authenticam*.

The directive that the name *Yahweh* is not to be read, sung or prayed in the Liturgy or at other times of prayer affects more than the official texts of the liturgy. The name is found in some liturgical songs and parishes are required to refrain from using these texts. Publishers of Catholic liturgical material in England and Wales are asked to either omit or amend any texts that use the term. Care should be taken when a reading is taken directly from a Bible (such as the *Jerusalem Bible*) to replace the word *Yahweh* with Lord where it occurs. The term should also be avoided in composed texts such as the Prayer of the Faithful.

It is part of our Catholic tradition that we offer reverence not just with the words on our lips but through actions such as a bow of the head. This bow is made whenever the Holy Trinity are named together, for example, in a doxology, and at the names of Jesus, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of the Saint in whose honour Mass is being celebrated. Though the document from the Holy See is concerned with language and translation it provides an opportunity to remind ourselves of the reverence owed to the name of God both in worship and in daily life.

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