

IN THE NEWS

CARDINAL RITTER WEDNESDAY – August 26, 2026

FROM LATIN TO ENGLISH

Sixty-two years ago this week, on August 24, 1964, Cardinal Joseph Ritter made history. He orchestrated the first four celebrations of Holy Mass in America's vernacular language, English. The first draft of the English version of the liturgy of the Mass was celebrated on four consecutive days, by four different clerics at the Annual Liturgical Week Conference at the Kiel Auditorium in St. Louis. Ritter celebrated his first "in English" Mass on the second day of the conference. *Time* Magazine reported "the verdict of most liturgists was – 'Needs work.'"

The New York Times reported "More than 11,000 bishops, priest, nuns and laymen, supplemented by a hundred invited Protestant observers, heard the historic celebration in the horseshoe-shaped arena. The event opened the 25th annual Liturgical Week here [St. Louis]."

Latin had been the language of the Roman Catholic Mass since the fourth century. That officially changed throughout America on November 29, 1964, the first Sunday of Advent. Cardinal Ritter's role in the Second Vatican Council established his leadership of the transition from Latin to English.

Click FROM LATIN TO ENGLISH for the full story and an explanation of the accompanying *Associated Press* photo.



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THANK YOU! Ray Day, CRBFI Archivist

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