

Kneel, Genuflect, Bow

DURING FEBRUARY 2008, the **Bishops' Commission for the Liturgy 2008** issued a leaflet, *Some Changes in the Celebration of Mass*.

It states that, on Pentecost Sunday, 11th May, 2008, Catholics in Australia will be asked:-

1. **to stand after the priest's invitation *Pray Brethren*** before giving their response *May the Lord accept the sacrifice...* (Reference GIRM §46. GIRM here stands for *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal, Interim Text for Australia*, referring to the GIRM issued in 2002 and slightly amended in the new Latin Missal of 2004, and with a few Australian amendments added with permission from Rome.)

2. **to bow when approaching to receive Holy Communion.** (Reference GIRM §160.)

The context which precedes it in GIRM says:

In Australia standing is the most common posture for receiving Holy Communion. The customary manner of reception is recommended to be followed by all, so that Communion may truly be a sign of unity among those who share in the table of the Lord. GIRM § 160.

N.B. recommended not prescribed.

NOT MENTIONED

1. The leaflet does NOT reveal that this bow replaces a genuflection;
2. nor does it mention genuflecting or kneeling, let alone forbid them;
3. it gives no hint that another rule allows anyone to kneel for Communion who wishes to;
4. nor does it address the crisis of faith and piety in regard to transubstantiation.

RECENT HISTORY 1968-2008

The leaflet gives no inkling that, in 1968, the Australian bishops authorized the reception of Holy Communion standing, but with a **genuflection to replace the pre-Reformation practice of kneeling**. It is worth reflecting that no cogent reason was ever given for standing in place of kneeling. Talk of "a pilgrim people on the march" and the first Passover in Egypt "eaten in haste standing and with one's staff in one's hand" were certainly not cogent. Indeed, they contradicted the popular paintings of the Last Supper.

Over the last 40 years, there has been a distinct lack of enthusiasm to urge the laity to genuflect before receiving Holy Communion standing. Indeed, it has been condemned as thwarting the pious gallop.

In view of recent history, is predictable that:

1. the bow will not be insisted on; and that
2. some priests will rail against anyone who genuflects, and will even refuse them Holy Communion, as some have done to those who want to receive on the tongue.

BACKGROUND

Apology for irreverences to the Blessed Sacrament:

I would like to ask forgiveness — in my own name and in the name of all of you, venerable and dear Brothers in the Episcopate — for everything which, for whatever human

weakness, impatience or negligence, and also through the at times partial, one-sided and erroneous application of the directives of the Second Vatican Council, may have caused scandal and disturbance concerning the doctrine and the veneration due to this great Sacrament.

Pope John Paul II to the Bishops, for Holy Thursday, issued 24th February, 1980.

Hence in the directive ordered by him soon after:

The venerable practice of **genuflecting** before the Blessed Sacrament, whether enclosed in the tabernacle or publicly exposed [in the Monstrance], as a **sign of adoration**, is to be maintained. This act requires that it be performed in a recollected way. In order that the heart may bow before God in profound reverence, the genuflection must be neither hurried nor careless.

Inestimabile Donum §26, 17th March, 1980.

THE KNEELING OPTION

ANY COMMUNICANT is entitled to receive Holy Communion kneeling, even in countries like ours when standing is normative.

This kneeling option is allowed in **Sacrament of Redemption**, *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, published by order of Pope John Paul II on 19th March, 2004:

90: "The faithful should receive Communion kneeling or standing, as the Conference of Bishops will have determined", with its acts having

received the *recognitio* [approval] of the Apostolic See. "However, if they receive Communion standing, it is recommended that they give due reverence before the reception of the Sacrament, as set forth in the same norms". [There is a cross-reference to GIRM § 160]

And 91: In distributing Holy Communion it is to be remembered that "sacred ministers may not deny the sacraments to those who seek them in a reasonable manner, are rightly disposed, and are not prohibited by law from receiving them", [i.e. not excommunicated. The official text has a reference to Canon 843 §1, cf. canon 915.] Hence any baptized Catholic who is not prevented by law must be admitted to Holy Communion. **THEREFORE, IT IS NOT LICIT TO DENY HOLY COMMUNION TO ANY OF CHRIST'S FAITHFUL SOLELY ON THE GROUNDS, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT THE PERSON WISHES TO RECEIVE THE EUCHARIST KNEELING OR STANDING.**

EARLIER DECLARATIONS

Cardinal Arinze, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship, Prot. n. 47/03/L of 26th February, 2003, said of the permission for standing in the USA:

...while this Congregation gave the *recognitio* [authorization] to the norm desired by the Bishops' Conference of your country that people stand for Holy Communion, this was done *on the condition that communicants who choose to kneel are not to be denied Holy Communion on these grounds*. Indeed, the faithful should not be imposed upon **nor accused of disobedience and of acting illicitly** when they kneel to receive Holy Communion.

There was an earlier reply in July 2002 from the former

EVEN WHEN STANDING FOR COMMUNION IS THE NORM, THOSE WHO WISH TO KNEEL MAY NOT BE REFUSED

Prefect of the Congregation, Cardinal Medina:

The Congregation... considers any refusal of Holy Communion to a member of the faithful on the basis of his or her kneeling posture to be a grave violation of one of the most basic rights of the Christian faithful, namely that of being assisted by their Pastors by means of the Sacraments (canon 213).

With such rulings about the right to kneel for Holy Communion, some might even conclude that a communicant is entitled to go on genuflecting while others are bowing or doing nothing. However, it might be better to choose one's right to kneel, and suggest a couple of prayer desks at the top of aisle.

OTHER KNEELING

With the first GIRM (1969/1970), the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference extended the general rule requiring kneeling at the consecration to kneeling from the end of the *Sanctus* ("Holy, Holy, Holy...") to the great *Amen*, and from the end of the *Agnus Dei* ("Lamb of God") until the end of the Communion.

Over the years since, some priests have discouraged kneeling. Churches have even been built without kneelers, and with seats packed so close that kneeling is impossible for non-contortionists.

Thanks be to God, the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference have decided to continue their original rule on kneeling from the *Sanctus*. See their GIRM §43. Indeed, one bishop said it will necessitate providing kneelers in churches that do not have them.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE REAL ABSENCE* ANGLICANS to this day continue to kneel to receive their consecrated bread and wine.

Yet The Book of Common Prayer of 1662 says:

Wherefore it is ordained in this office for the Administration of the Lord's Supper, that the Communicants should receive the same kneeling; (which order is well meant, for a signification of our humble and grateful acknowledgement of the benefits of Christ therein given to all worthy Receivers, and for the avoiding of such profanation and disorder in the holy Communion, as might otherwise ensue:) yet, lest the same kneeling should by any persons, either out of ignorance and infirmity, or out of malice and obstinacy, be misconstrued and depraved: It is here declared that thereby no Adoration is intended, or ought to be done, either unto the Sacramental Bread or Wine there bodily received, or unto any Corporal Presence of Christ's natural Flesh and Blood. For the Sacramental Bread and Wine remain still in their very nature natural substances, and therefore may not be adored; (for that were Idolatry, to be abhorred of all faithful Christians;) and the natural Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ are in Heaven, and not here; it being against the truth of Christ's natural Body to be at one time in more places than one.

This Zwinglian doctrine was dubbed 'the black rubric' by many. The High Churchmen repudiated it and not only knelt, but genuflected before and after, to show their adoration. Indeed, some declare their belief in the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation!

An Australian Prayer Book in 1978 omitted the 'black rubric'. Nevertheless, its sub-title is For use together with *The Book of Common Prayer, 1662*.

* A High Church humorist seeing an altar frontal with the text, "He is not here for He is risen," dubbed it, "The doctrine of the Real Absence".

P.C. "PRETEND CATHOLICS"

On the other hand, there are C.P. or Closet Protestants in the Catholic Church today who hold the Anglican doctrine expressed in the black rubric. They have done their own private act of Modernism. For them, the consecrated elements are **merely a reminder** of Christ's Body and Blood. They do not believe in transubstantiation or a Real Presence that can be adored. And they do not believe in genuflecting.

ANOMALY

How is it that Anglicans can kneel for their Holy Communion without intending any adoration, while Catholics are content to stand for Holy Communion (so often distributed in haste and in a far too casual fashion) while claiming to adore Jesus Christ, really present, Body and Blood, soul and divinity, beneath the appearances of bread and wine?

It does not ring true.

Why not act in accord with one's faith?

CHANGES IN THE MASS

It is interesting to speculate whom the *Catechism* had in mind when it said:

...Even the supreme authority in the Church may not change the liturgy arbitrarily, but only in the obedience of faith and with religious respect for the mystery of the liturgy.

Catechism of the Catholic Church n. 1125.

BEWARE OF THE DEVIL

There has been a certain loss of credibility recently.

The Petition of the ex-priests presented to the Australian bishops in November 2007 asked for married priests, re-instatement of ex-priests, and 'reconsideration' of women priests; (see Handouts n. 46).

Most of the bishops have not yet re-assured the faithful (see Exodus 11:7, Isaiah 56:10, Ezekiel 3:17,20) on the importance of consecrated celibacy and of keeping promises ("even with intolerable consequences", cf. Tolkien's *Tree and Leaf*), and the impossibility of ordaining women because of priestly masculinity and fatherhood and the rejection of unisex by Vatican II (cf. *Declaration on Christian Education* §8).

However, two wrongs don't make a right.

The Devil is tempting those loyal to the true faith towards anger, despondency, despair and doubt.

The Lord Jesus depends on His faithful to suffer with Him, to forgive sinners while detesting their sins, hence to repair errors with truth and not with blame. Blaming others so easily bypasses the repair work and lapses into gloom. It's a Satanic trick.

FAITH, HOPE & CHARITY

"Contend for the faith once delivered to the saints," Jude 1:3. "Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer," (Romans 12:12). "Charity is patient and kind," (1 Corinthians 13:4). Saints are God's heroes. The holiness to which all are called includes heroic patience and heroic kindness.