



February 2, 2023

Dear Father, Deacon, Parish Life Coordinators, and parishioners,

The Covid pandemic affected many aspects of our daily life and our life in parishes, especially forcing us to make changes in the celebration of our liturgy. Now that we have moved beyond some of the concerns of the pandemic, it is time to review our liturgy and ensure that appropriate norms are being followed as we celebrate the Eucharist. I shall be using The General Instruction of the Roman Missal to inform the changes needed for our liturgies.

1. For the Procession at the beginning of the Mass, the deacon or reader may carry a Book of the Gospels (though not a Lectionary) slightly elevated (GIRM, n. 121d).
2. It is most appropriate to use two readers at the Eucharist.
3. “It is preferable for the Responsorial Psalm to be sung, at least as far as the people’s response is concerned. Hence the psalmist, or cantor of the Psalm, sings the Psalm verses at the ambo or another suitable place, while the whole congregation sits and listens, normally taking part by means of the response” (GIRM, n. 61). For the Gospel Acclamation, it is preferable that the cantor lead from another place other than the ambo.
4. During the creed, at the words (and by the Holy Spirit... and became man), the whole assembly makes a profound bow (GIRM, n. 137).
5. At the beginning of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the gifts which will become Christ’s Body and Blood are brought to the altar (GIRM, n. 73). Please note that the gifts are brought to the altar and not to the foot of the sanctuary.
6. At the Preparation of the Offerings, the assembly should stand from the invitation, *Orate, fratres (Pray, brethren)*, before the Prayer over the Offerings (GIRM, n. 43). In other words, when the priest invites the people to respond, the people should stand and not wait until the response is made (GIRM, n. 146).
7. At the beginning of the Preface, the faithful shall stand for the rest of the Mass until the end of communion. During the Eucharistic Prayer, the faithful shall kneel at the epiclesis (calling of God’s Spirit on the gifts to the consecrated) and for the Consecration and then stand at Mystery of Faith and continue standing until communion is completed (GIRM, n. 43). The faithful should continue standing after the Lamb of God. They should not kneel at this point in the Mass.
8. For those churches where there are no kneelers and the faithful stand for the consecration, the entire assembly is invited to make a profound bow when the priest genuflects after the consecration of the bread and after the consecration of the wine (GIRM, n. 43).
9. It is most desirable that the faithful, just as the Priest himself is bound to do, receive the Lord’s Body from hosts consecrated at the same Mass (GIRM, n. 85). Nowhere is it explicitly mentioned that consecrated hosts already in the tabernacle may be used during the communion rite at Mass; the GIRM finds this idea so opposed to the spirit of the Mass that it never gives directions concerning such a practice. Kevin Irwin warns that “if the faithful customarily received hosts from the sacrament reserved in the tabernacle, they might separate the enactment of the Mass as a *sacrifice* from the reserved *sacrament* located in the tabernacle” (*Liturgical Ministry*, 12 (Summer 2003), p. 128). The fact that

- parishes regularly count their parishioners should be a helpful way of having the approximate number of hosts needed for masses.
10. The entire assembly shall stand during communion until everyone has received communion. People may sit or kneel once everyone has finished communion. While some continue to stand until the Blessed Sacrament is placed in the tabernacle or until the vessels are cleansed, this practice should not continue, for the focus must be on the communion received and not on the Sacrament in the Tabernacle.
 11. Holy Communion is to be received standing, though individual members of the faithful may choose to receive Communion while kneeling. When standing before the minister to receive Holy Communion, the faithful should make a simple bow of the head. When receiving Holy Communion on the tongue, they reverently join their hands; when receiving Holy Communion in the hand, they reverently open their hands placing one beneath the other, and they consume the host immediately upon receiving it (GIRM, n. 160). All should respond “Amen” before they receive communion.
 12. Communion under both kinds is still suspended, but we may consider reintroducing this practice when it is appropriate and healthy.
 13. For the dismissal at the end of mass, the priest uses the phrase “go forth ...” rather than an invitation to “Let us go”

While some of these norms may seem rather minimal or trivial, they are important to ensure consistency throughout the Archdiocese. Many of these norms involve posture in the Eucharist. The GIRM states: “A common bodily posture, to be observed by all those taking part, is a sign of the unity of the members of the Christian community gathered together for the Sacred Liturgy, for it expresses the intentions and spiritual attitude of the participants and also fosters them” (n. 42).

Moreover, the GIRM places a new emphasis on the role of the bishop in the liturgical ministry of his diocese. It explicitly states that he is the “moderator, promoter, and guardian” of the liturgical life of the diocese and challenges the bishop to assist the faithful of his diocese to “grasp more deeply a genuine sense of the rites and liturgical texts, and therefore be led to an active and fruitful celebration of the Eucharist” (GIRM, n. 22). Out of this understanding, I offer these norms as a way for all of us to grow in our appreciation for the Eucharist. Please discuss these with your liturgy committee or with your Parish Leadership Teams.

May the celebration of the Eucharist within our parishes continue to form us into the People of God, “gathered together by the Lord, nourished by his word, the people called to present to God the prayers of the entire human family, a people that gives thanks in Christ for the mystery of salvation by offering his Sacrifice, a people, finally, that is brought together in unity by Communion in the Body and Blood of Christ (GIRM, n. 5).

Sincerely in Christ,



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