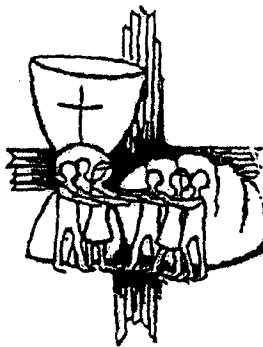


## Some Changes in the Celebration of Mass



On Sunday 11 May this year, Catholics all over Australia will be asked to make two changes in the celebration of the Mass.

These changes are the result of the Holy See approving a revised English translation of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)* which guides the way we celebrate the Eucharist and accompanies the third Latin edition of the Missal as yet to be published.

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## † The First Change relating to Posture

At present when the priest invites the people to pray at the Preparation of the Gifts we remain seated until we have said: "May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name..." etc.

After that we stand for the Prayer over the Gifts.

From Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2008 we will be asked  
to **STAND** immediately after the priest  
invites the assembly to join him in offering the  
Eucharistic Prayer with the words:

**P:** *Pray brethren that our sacrifice may be  
acceptable to God the Almighty Father.*

We **STAND** at this point and respond as usual with  
the words:

**All:** *May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your  
hands...etc*

(GIRM 146)

### **Why stand for this response?**

The posture for prayer, whether it be standing or kneeling, reflects something of our relationship with God and helps define that relationship.

To stand in response to the priest's invitation to pray with him is a sign of our readiness to enter into the great prayer which follows, i.e. the Eucharistic Prayer, in which the priest leads the gathered assembly.

To stand is to give recognition to the importance of our response to that invitation.

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## † **The Second Change relating to Gesture**

The Communion Procession is a very important ritual act in the celebration of the Eucharist. It is the time when those disposed to receive Holy Communion remember again that they come as the Body of Christ to receive the Body of Christ.

The Australian edition of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal says:

*When approaching to receive Holy Communion, the faithful bow in reverence of the Mystery that they are to receive.*

(GIRM 160)

**From 11<sup>th</sup> May , each communicant is therefore asked to bow just before stepping up to receive the Body and then the Blood of Christ.**

**Such a bow is done without disrupting the flow of the Communion procession.**

**The communicant bows as soon as the person in front of him or her is receiving communion.**

**The minister must wait until each communicant has bowed before distributing the host. The same applies when giving the cup.**

**This form of reverence is to replace other forms such as genuflecting or kneeling prior to receiving Communion, thus signifying our unity as the Body of Christ.**

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The General Instruction also asks for a Communion hymn or song to be sung during the procession to Communion. It is to begin with the priest's own Communion.

(GIRM 159)

This is a more important moment for singing than after Communion since its purpose is to unify the assembly in song as it receives Holy Communion, and to assist worshippers as they prepare to receive the Body and Blood of Christ. A hymn with a well-known refrain, or a psalm with a response in which all can participate, is helpful at this time.



As with any change, it will take some time to become accustomed to these two changes of posture and gesture. As happened after Vatican II, there is once again a role for the commentator in reminding the assembly when these changes are to occur. This may need to continue for a month or more.

Be ready for these changes from Pentecost Sunday, 11<sup>th</sup> May 2008. Their introduction is an opportunity for us to reflect again on *all* the various gestures and postures we make in common in the Eucharist, symbolising that we are all one in Christ.

BISHOPS COMMISSION FOR THE LITURGY 2008  
and OFFICE FOR WORSHIP, ADELAIDE

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