

Notes on the Liturgy

This bulletin insert is provided to address questions or issues which have arisen in the celebration of the liturgy. Some of these practises have a number of options and so implementation of them by individual priests or different churches may sometimes vary.

1. Holy Communion Under One Kind

Due to the corona virus we have been instructed to distribute Holy Communion under one species:

“Since Christ is sacramentally present under each of the species, communion under the species of bread alone makes it possible to receive all the fruit of Eucharistic grace. For pastoral reasons this manner of receiving communion has been legitimately established as the most common form in the Latin rite. But ‘the sign of communion is more complete when given under both kinds, since in this form the sign of the Eucharist may be seen more clearly’.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1380)

We will return, as soon as possible, to receiving under both kinds at all Masses.

2. Altar Cross

Sometimes parishioners will see that there is a cross placed on the altar facing the priest:

“Likewise, either on the altar or near to it, there is to be a cross, with the figure of Christ crucified upon it, a cross clearly visible to the people. It is desirable that such a cross should remain near the altar even outside of liturgical celebrations, so as to call to mind for the faithful the saving Passion of the Lord.” *General Instruction to the Roman Missal* (GIRM) #308

The altar cross means that all present, priest and people, are facing towards the Lord during the Eucharistic Prayer and are joined with him in his prayer/sacrifice of the cross. This practise is not obligatory so not all priests will use it. Those who wish to read more can access the following on the internet for a deeper explanation:
http://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/details/ns_lit_doc_20110126_crocifisso_en.html

3. Sign of Peace

We have been told to stop, for the time being, the shaking of hands at the Sign of Peace:

“There follows the Rite of Peace, by which the Church entreats peace and unity for herself and for the whole human family, and the faithful express to each other their ecclesial communion and mutual charity before communicating in the Sacrament. In the dioceses of New Zealand the most common form of the gesture of peace is the handshake, although different practices according to region and culture are not excluded. However, it is appropriate that each person offer the sign of peace only to those who are nearest and in the sober manner.” (GIRM 82)

This, too, will change when the corona virus emergency ends.

4. Candles on the Altar

There are various options when it comes to candles on the altar during the Mass:

“The altar is to be covered with at least one white cloth. In addition, on or next to the altar are to be placed candlesticks with lighted candles at least two in any celebration, or even four or six, especially for a Sunday Mass of a Holyday of Obligation” (GIRM 117) and “The candlesticks required for the different liturgical services for reasons of reverence or the festive character of the celebration should

be appropriately placed either side of the altar or around it, according to the design of the altar and the sanctuary, so that whole may harmonious and the faithful may not be impeded from a clear view of what takes place at the altar of what is placed upon it.” (GIRM 307)

It depends on the celebrant as to how many candles are warranted for any particular occasion.

5. Scrutinies During Lent

The ceremonies of the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA), celebrated on the Sundays of Lent, were renewed after the Second Vatican Council. They originated in the Early Church as stages on the journey towards Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist:

“In order to inspire in the elect a desire for purification and redemption by Christ, three scrutinies are celebrated. By this means, first of all, the elect are instructed gradually about the mystery of sin, from which the whole world and every person longs to be delivered and thus saved from its present and future consequences. Second, their spirit is filled with Christ the Redeemer, who is the living water (gospel of the Samaritan woman as in the first scrutiny), the light of the world (gospel of the man born blind in the second scrutiny), the resurrection and the life (gospel of Lazarus in the third scrutiny). From the first to the final scrutiny the elect should progress in their perception of sin and their desire for salvation.” *RCIA Study Edition #143*

Some people struggle with the way the catechumens are dismissed from the assembly. They are not being excluded. They go to deepen their knowledge of the Word they have just heard. Let us all support our catechumens and candidates they gradually enter the mysteries of salvation and journey with them as fellow disciples on the Way.

6. Posture during the Eucharistic Prayer

Parishioners will notice that worshippers kneel at St Peter Chanel for the Eucharistic Prayer but stand at Sacred Heart, Pakipaki and Our Lady of Lourdes:

“A common posture, is to be observed by all those taking part, is a sign of 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” (GIRM 42) and “In the dioceses of New Zealand, they (the people) should kneel from the completion of the *Sanctus* (Holy, Holy, Holy) until after the *Amen* of the Eucharistic Prayer, except when prevented on occasion of ill health, or for reasons of lack of space, of the large number of people present, or for another reasonable cause. (I consider architectural design of pews designed for standing to be a reasonable cause) ... However, for those who do not kneel ought to make a profound bow when the priest genuflects after the Consecration. They are to kneel again after the *Agnus Dei* (Lamb of God) until the distribution of Holy Communion. During the period of sacred silence after Communion, they may either sit or kneel.” (GIRM 43)

Since I have been in the Catholic Parish of Hastings I have been gratified to see a love of the liturgy, a reverence for the Blessed Sacrament and excellent participation of the laity in the celebrations of the Mass. My hope is that by using the *General Instruction to the Roman Missal* we will be able to unite the parish even more through our celebration of the Eucharistic liturgy. This will allow for a unity which is the signature of the Universal Catholic Church as well as the wonderful diversity evident in our different congregations and churches. The beauty of our buildings and the prayer we share will serve both to make us better missionary disciples as well as to draw others in to share the faith with us: “... so that our joy may be complete.” (1 Jn 1: 5)