

November 30, 2011

Reverend Fathers and Reverend Deacons:

With the implementation of the new translation of the Roman Missal and the General Instructions for the Roman Missal, or the GIRM, I am issuing this letter of direction concerning some aspects of our celebration of Sunday Masses for our diocese. Included are some corrections to my original instructions, based on some feedback and in discussion with the Office of Worship. Also included is a special section for Masses with an assisting Deacon.

1. Moments of Silence: #127 before praying the opening prayer, #128 silence after the readings, #136 silence after the homily, #164 a sacred silence after Holy Communion. Please make these moments of silence evident and prayerful.
2. Standing: besides what we are accustomed to as indicated in # 43, #146 the people stand and respond to the "Pray my brothers and sisters...". #151 we stand for the "Mystery of Faith" acclamation, and we stand as usual for the presidential prayers and when receiving Holy Communion. After the washing of your hands, invite the people to stand.
3. Bowing: #160 the recipient of Holy Communion makes a 'slight bow' before responding "Amen" and receiving the Sacred Host. #43 where people do not kneel for the consecration, they should make a 'profound bow' when the priest genuflects after the elevation of the Sacred Host and Chalice.
4. Kneeling: #43 of the General Instruction notes that in Canada the faithful should kneel at the Consecration. The general practice adopted by most diocese in Canada has been to begin kneeling after the singing of the "Holy, Holy, Holy..." and to rise at the "Mystery of Faith". A bell may be rung after the Holy, Holy, Holy is sung, to indicate this change in posture.
5. Sitting: #43 indicates the times of sitting as per our normal practice. It also indicates a sacred silence after Holy Communion where the congregation sits. When people return to their pews after Holy Communion they may sit or stand until the end of the distribution. With many elderly in our congregations, I am recommending that people return to their pews and sit in prayerful attention during the communion period and joining in the Communion hymn until the period of sacred silence after communion.
6. Communion: #85 indicates that it is most desirable that the faithful receive the Lord's Body and also partake of the Chalice. As has been the custom for many years in our diocese, the option of also partaking from the chalice is retained in particular for our Sunday celebrations. Extraordinary ministers for the chalice should be properly instructed for this ministry.

7. Singing: #40 stresses the importance of singing in the Mass and in particular the parts of the Mass appropriate to the priest and people. It states "every care should be taken that singing by the ministers and the people not be absent in celebrations that occur on Sundays and on Holydays of Obligation". I am requesting, for some sense of unity in our diocese, that all parishes learn the responses to the first setting or setting A of the Mass as found in the Celebrate in Song booklets. Please note the Acclamation of Faith: "*Christ has died... Christ is risen....etc*" is no longer used.
8. Rite of Peace: #82 states that "in dioceses of Canada, the sign of peace is given by a handshake or a bow. However, it is appropriate that each person offer the sign of peace only to those who are nearest and in a sober manner". The celebrant generally should not leave the sanctuary during the Rite of Peace.
9. Concluding Rite: deacons and priests should be attentive to the new responses that are given for the dismissal of the congregation. We are not at liberty to use our own words but are to use one of the dismissals given in the texts as written. The Holy Father himself prepared some of these new dismissal texts.
10. Genuflections: The General Instruction notes in #274 that 'during Mass, three genuflections are made by the Priest Celebrant...etc' it also notes 'if however, the tabernacle with the Most Blessed Sacrament is situated in the sanctuary, the Priest, the Deacon and the other ministers genuflect when they approach the altar and when they depart from it, but not during the celebration of the Mass itself.' A bow is the proper gesture and is made when passing the altar of sacrifice during the liturgy itself.

Masses with a Deacon: GIRM #171-185

1. After the Priest, the Deacon, in virtue of the sacred ordination he has received, holds first place among those who minister in the celebration of the Eucharist. #94 He shall wear the sacred vestments, he ministers both the chalice and the book, proclaims the Gospel after having received the blessing from the Celebrant during the singing of the Alleluia #175, guides the faithful in instructions and announces the intentions of the Universal Prayer. He also purifies and arranges the sacred vessels and carries out the duties of other ministers, if necessary. #171
2. Deacon carries the Book of Gospels slightly elevated or else walks with the priest in the entrance procession. #172.
3. Deacon assists the priest with incense if used at the beginning of the Mass #173 and the deacon incenses the Gospel book #175. In reading the Gospel, the deacon with hands joined says, *the Lord be with you...*#175.
4. If there is no other suitable reader present the Deacon should proclaim the other readings as well. #176.

5. Intentions of the Universal Prayer are announced usually at the ambo by the Deacon or another minister when no deacon is present. #177
6. Deacon prepares the altar as usual. He quietly says, *By the mystery of this water etc.* and the Deacon normally hands the paten with the bread and the chalice with the wine to the priest at the preparation of the gifts. #178
7. Deacon is to bow when the priest genuflects at the consecration of the bread and wine. #43 The Priest proclaims, *The Mystery of Faith....* not the Deacon.
8. As usual the Deacon holds the chalice at the doxology, *Through Him and with Him etc.* #180 which is sung/said by the priest alone.
9. The Deacon invites the congregation to exchange a sign of peace at the appropriate time. #181
10. Normally at Communion the deacon would assist with the Chalice and would help to arrange and organize the distribution of Communion with the other ministers. #182 If there are more than two chalices to be used at Mass, a dignified flagon (carafe) may be used for holding the Precious Blood until Communion time. The Deacon or the Priest would carefully and reverently pour the Precious Blood into the needed chalices before distribution.
11. When the distribution of Communion is over the Deacon (sometimes assisted by other ministers #100) collects the remaining Sacrament to the tabernacle and carries the chalice(s) and other vessels to the credence table for purification. #183 This purification is normally done after Mass. The chalice and vessels are normally not to be purified at the altar and never in the centre of the altar, except by the priest.
12. For the Concluding Rites and dismissal, the Deacon should memorize the formulas used for dismissal of the assembly and use them as they are written in the Roman Missal. #185 There should be no mixing of the formulas, or making one's own dismissal wording.

These instructions can be seen in full in the GIRM and it is recommended that they be read by all the priests and deacons along with the instructions for other ministries, so in celebrating together at the Sunday Eucharist, everyone is familiar with all the instructions for the Mass and with the norms and instructions issued by my office. Questions should be addressed to me or to our Office of Worship (worship@dotb.ca) for any clarifications. Thank you.

Sincerely in Christ,

+*Fred J. Colli*

Bishop of Thunder Bay

