

What is GIRM?

GIRM is an acronym for General Instruction of the Roman Missal. This document is found at the beginning of the Roman Missal (at present at the front of the Sacramentary).

It includes a Preamble that proclaims the unchanged faith and unbroken tradition of the Catholic Church regarding the celebration of the Eucharist. It also describes briefly the ways in which the Mass has been adapted to changed conditions throughout history.

There then follow eight detailed chapters:

- The Importance of Dignity of the Eucharistic Celebration
- Structure, Elements, and Parts of the Mass
- Office and Ministries in the Mass
- The Different Forms of Celebration
- The Arrangement and Furnishing of Churches for the Eucharistic Celebration
- Requisites for Celebrating Mass
- Choice of the Mass and its Parts
- Masses and Prayers for Various Needs And Occasions, and Masses for the Dead.

As with any change it will take some time to become accustomed to the change in posture and the new gesture. Some people and some parishes will be quicker than others in making the change, but with a little patience and quiet concentration there should be no confusion or disruption to the flow of the mass.

Be ready now for these changes at Mass from Sunday May 11, 2008.

Two changes:

- the assembly will stand when they begin to say, *'May the Lord accept this sacrifice At your hands....'*
- each communicant will bow when approaching Holy Communion.

Two reminders:

- the assembly kneels during the Eucharistic Prayer, from the Holy, holy, holy to the conclusion of the Doxology and Great Amen.
- the purification of the sacred vessels after Holy Communion is the function of the ordained clergy and/or instituted acolytes only.



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Ever Ancient, Ever New



*Some implications for our
Eucharistic liturgies
as Australia implements
The 2007 edition of
The General Instruction of the
Roman Missal.*

The years since the Second Vatican Council (1962-1966) have seen a number of liturgical developments. All of these have served to help everyone - assembly, clergy and lay ministers - to participate in a 'full, active and conscious way' in the celebration of the sacred Liturgy.

The Church's faith in the Eucharist as the 'true, real and substantial Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ' has been firm and consistent through the centuries. However, the way in which the Church celebrates this Mystery of Faith has varied and developed over time.

Just as people have different ways of expressing love as relationships grow, so the Catholic Church has various ritual actions and words that develop with the passage of time.

On Sunday, May 11 of this year, Catholics in Australia will be asked to make two changes in the way we celebrate Mass. The Holy See has approved an 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 *Missale Romanum*.

The First Change relates to Posture



At present, when the priest invites the people to pray at the Preparation of the Gifts, we remain seated until we have responded '*May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands to the praise and glory of His name for our good, and the good of all His Church.*' And then we stand for the Prayer over the gifts.

From Sunday May 11, 2008 you will be asked to **STAND** when the priest invites you to pray:
'Pray, brethren, that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God the Almighty Father.'

We STAND and respond:
'May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands to the praise and glory of His name, for our good, and the good of all His Church.' (GIRM 46)

Why stand? 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 is a sign of our readiness to enter into the great prayer which will follow, i.e., the Eucharistic Prayer which the priest prays on behalf of the gathered assembly.

To stand is to make a formal recognition of the importance of that invitation.

The new General Instruction also reaffirms that the congregation kneel from the completion of the Sanctus until after the Great Amen, and then stand from the beginning of the invitation to the Lord's Prayer until the completion of the Agnus Dei, when they are to kneel again until the distribution of Holy Communion. During the sacred silence after the distribution of Holy Communion, they may either sit or kneel.

There has been some variation in practice about posture during the Eucharistic Prayer in Australia. The Bishops in making this determination for Australia seek to foster a unified practice across the country.

To kneel during the Eucharistic Prayer is a sign of our reverence and wonder at the sacrifice of Cavalry and the sacramental presence of our Risen Lord in the Eucharistic mystery.

The Second Change relates to a gesture



The Communion Procession is a most important ritual act in the celebration of Mass. It is the time when those disposed to receiving Holy Communion come *as* the Body of Christ to *receive* the Body of Christ. We are individuals, yet we constitute something more in this procession.

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)

The communicant might bow just before receiving Holy Communion or perhaps while the person in front of them is receiving Holy Communion. Such a bow can be done simply, without disrupting the flow of the Communion Procession. Above all the Communion Procession should be reverent, ordered and never rushed.

The General Instruction also provides for a Communion hymn or song to be sung by the assembly during the Procession. Its purpose is to unify the assembly and to assist worshippers as they prepare to receive the Body and Blood of Christ.

1. Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, art. 14.
2. Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1374.