

OFFICE FOR WORSHIP

July 2016

A Walk through the Mass Continues...

In May, we took a closer look at the eight essential parts of the Eucharistic Prayer. We continue our study of the parts of the Mass with The Communion Rite.

The Lord's Prayer

From the General Instruction of the Roman Missal:

In the Lord's Prayer a petition is made for daily bread, which for Christians means principally the Eucharistic Bread, and entreating also purification from sin, so that what is holy may in truth be given to the holy... – GIRM, 81

The Communion Rite

Immediately following the Doxology and Great Amen, the assembly rises to their feet and The Communion Rite of the Mass begins with the Lord's Prayer. As we prepare to share Holy Communion, the Lord's Prayer is the best prayer we know. It is the prayer that Jesus taught to his disciples. The Lord's Prayer probably ended up as a prayer before Holy Communion because of the petition for "daily bread" and its promotion of mutual forgiveness. As such, it begins the community's preparation for sharing in the Eucharist.

The priest introduces The Lord's Prayer with the words, "**At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say...**" This introduction tells us three things: we are praying this in obedience to Christ; we are using the words Christ taught us; and we are being bold in doing so.

Why do we "dare to say" the Our Father? Quite simply, it is because we are presuming to call God our Father, making us part of God's family, adopted sons and daughters through Christ our Lord, with whom we are "fellow heirs" (Romans 8:17), and in Whom "we have boldness and confidence of access" to God (Ephesians 3:12). Through our Baptism we receive the grace to call upon God as Father, despite our sinfulness. The Catechism of the Catholic church calls this, "filial boldness."



DIOCESE OF DES MOINES

In This Issue

- A Walk through the Mass: Communion Rite
- Posture during Our Father
- Important dates
- Planning form for Masses with Bishop

The Embolism (Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil...”

From the General Instruction of the Roman Missal:

...The embolism, developing the last petition of the Lord’s Prayer itself, asks for deliverance from the power of evil for the whole community of the faithful. The invitation, the Prayer itself, the embolism, and the doxology by which the people conclude these things are sung or are said aloud. – GIRM, 81

Following the Lord’s Prayer, the priest prays that the community may be delivered from every evil as it awaits the coming of Jesus. This prayer expands upon the last petition of the Our Father — deliverance from evil. The desire to be free from sin at our Lord’s coming is directed not only to Christ’s coming at the end of time, but also to Christ’s coming in the Eucharist. This text didn’t appear in the liturgy until the sixth or even seventh century, and away originally said by the priest in an inaudible voice while he signed himself with the paten and then kissed it. It wasn’t until 1964 when Pope Paul VI asked the priest to say the prayer aloud.

The Rite of Peace

From the General Instruction of the Roman Missal

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. – GIRM, 82

The prayer the priest prays immediately following the Doxology of the Lord’s Prayer contrasts the sins of those gathered with the faith of the entire Church (“...look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church...”). The prayer addresses Jesus, the giver of peace, and asks for peace on the community.

Following the prayer for peace, we then move into the exchange of peace — first between the priest and the people and then with one another. A greeting of peace has preceded Holy Communion since the 11th Century though the earliest record of it comes from Justin the Martyr in the second century. It brings the prayer of peace into the room in a spoken exchange between the priest and the people.



As the exchange of peace comes to an end, the priest breaks the host over the paten, places a small piece in the chalice, and offers a prayer that this mingling will bring eternal life to those who receive it. This practice of mingling bread and wine dates back to the third century when Irenaeus (+202) spoke of sending the Eucharist to other churches. Pope Innocent would send some consecrated bread from his celebrations to the churches around the city. These particles of Eucharist were dropped into the cup by the priest thus establishing Eucharistic communion among all the churches of the city with the Bishop of Rome. As the Church grew, this practice became impossible to maintain. Today, the comingling of the Body and Blood signifies the unity of the Body and Blood of the Lord in the work of salvation, namely, of the Body of Jesus Christ, living and glorious (GIRM, 83).

Lamb of God

As the priest breaks the bread, everyone sings or says the Lamb of God. The invocations may be repeated several times if the breaking of the bread (the fraction) is prolonged. The final invocation returns to the overarching theme of peace of the communion rite and it creates a natural ending to the action leading up to Holy Communion.

When the first Christians gathered for the Eucharist, they called this action “the breaking of the bread” (Acts 2:42). They reasoned that the tearing of the bread recalled the suffering of Jesus and sharing it recalled the Last Supper. This action served the practical purpose of letting many eat one loaf, but eventually it became filled with this deeper meaning.

The fraction is accompanied by the Lamb of God, a title of Jesus attributed to John the Baptist. Christ is called a lamb in 1 Corinthians 5:7 and again in Revelation 5:12 and 13:8. The priest is to break the bread into parts so that it can be shared by the faithful. He is not to consume all the bread from the piece that he breaks (GIRM, 321) because it brings out more clearly the importance of the sign of unity of all in the one bread that is broken and shared.

Following the Lamb of God, the priest says a quiet prayer to prepare himself to receive communion. Then then genuflects, takes the host and, holding it slightly raised above the chalice, invites the people to make a statement of unworthiness to receive and a prayer for healing.

The people’s response (“Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.”) relies heavily on the biblical story of the healing of the centurion’s child. The biblical words “my child” become the liturgical words “my soul” because the people seek a general spiritual healing more than a specific physical one. Although we are all unworthy of Jesus’ healing power, he gives himself anyway to those who have faith.



Holy Communion

We are now ready to receive Holy Communion. The priest receives first and he is obliged to receive from the bread and wine consecrated at this Mass, not from the bread consecrated at a previous sacrifice. It is important to point out that the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, paragraph 85 states, “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...” For the focus of any Mass is on sharing communion from the bread and wine consecrated then. There was no tabernacle at the Last Supper.

The faithful are encouraged to receive Holy Communion in the form of both kinds — bread and wine. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal calls it “a fuller form” when both kinds are received. At the Last Supper Jesus asked all of those present to drink from the cup. The Church never eliminated the possibility of receiving from the cup; however, during the Middle Ages, the cup was reserved for the clergy, largely out of fear of spillage stemming from a heightened sense of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The Second Vatican Council permitted the broader reception of Holy Communion from the cup, and the practice has spread with enthusiasm and appreciation from the faithful around the world.

Communion Song

While the priest is receiving the Sacrament, the communion song is begun. It's purpose is more than simply to "fill a spot" and it should not be viewed as a distraction from one's personal prayer after receiving Holy Communion. Instead, the purpose of the communion song is to express the spiritual union of the communicants by means of the unity of their voices, to show joy and gladness of heart, and to bring out more clearly the "communitarian" character of the procession to receive.

The communion song begins while the priest is receiving, not after the priest and the extraordinary ministers of communion. This is to unite the priest's communion and the communion of the extraordinary ministers with the communion of the rest of the assembly. This is the greatest moment of unity in the Mass—everything we do at this point should express unity.



After Communion

When the distribution of Communion is over, the priest or deacon collects the remainder of the Eucharistic fragments, and should a large number remain they are placed in the tabernacle to be used for communion of the sick or for Viaticum. If only a small amount of consecrated bread is left, it is consumed by priest, deacon, and instituted acolyte if there is one present. Consecrated wine is always consumed after distribution of communion and never kept on reserve. The sacred vessels are then carried to the credence table where they are purified by an ordained minister or instituted acolyte. It is permitted to purify the vessels after Mass, but they must be kept on a corporal, covered, and moved to the credence table until the end of Mass.

After Holy Communion, the priest may return to his chair—or go to the altar. A moment of silence is observed. The entire assembly may stand and sing together a song of praise to God.



The prayer after communion then concludes the Communion Rite, summing up its purpose in a single prayer to God.

Gesture / Posture / Holding Hands at the Our Father?

One of the most-asked questions I receive in the Office for Worship concerns the “proper posture” for the assembly during the Lord’s Prayer. More specifically, I’m asked if people are “allowed” to hold hands with their families and neighbors at this point in the liturgy. The opinions on this topic are as numerous as there are people in the pews. **The following paragraphs do not serve to provide a prescribed posture for the Diocese of Des Moines, but rather to provide some “food for thought” on this topic.**

The proper posture of the assembly during the *Our Father*

Apart from the priest, there is no official or prescribed posture for the assembly’s hands during the Our Father. What is perhaps most surprising about this is that neither the Holy See nor the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has officially addressed this question.

Many people think that if the hierarchy of the Church has not prescribed a particular posture or gesture, then people are free to do as they please. I find a bit of weakness with this line of argument because, while there is no particular difficulty in a couple, a family, or a small group spontaneously holding hands during the Our Father, problems do arise when the entire assembly is *expected* or *obliged* to do so.

The process for introducing any new rite or gesture into the liturgy in a stable or even “binding” manner is subject to a process which entails a two-thirds majority vote in the bishops’ conference and the go-ahead from the Holy See before any change may take effect.

That being said, if neither the bishops’ conference nor the Holy See has prescribed any posture for the recitation of the Our Father, it is hardly appropriate for any lesser authority—priest, deacon, lay minister, scholar or theologian—to impose a gesture not required by liturgical law and expect the faithful to follow their decrees.

The only directions given in the Roman Missal regarding anyone’s posture during the Our Father are directions for the priest and any concelebrants to pray with their hands extended. This position is known as the “orans” position.

One could say that holding hands expresses the faithful’s unity as one “family of faith” or “one Body in Christ.” While this opinion is indeed convincing, it cannot go unsaid that singing or reciting all the prayers of the liturgy with united hearts and voices also (and already) expresses this unity. And of course, the greatest symbol of unity we have in our liturgy is unity in the Communion of the Faithful.



The act of holding hands usually emphasizes group or personal unity from the human or physical point of view and is thus more typical of the spontaneity of small groups. Therefore, it does not always transfer well into the context of larger gatherings where people may feel uncomfortable and a bit imposed upon when expected to hold the hands of the person next to them.

A different case is the practice in which some people adopt the “orans” posture during the Our Father, praying like the priest, with hands extended. In some countries, like Italy, for example, the Holy See has granted the bishops’ request to allow anyone who wishes to adopt this posture during the Our Father. What’s important here is that it is for those who wish to do so and it is not expected or imposed upon anyone.

Despite opinions and appearances, the orans gesture is not a case of the laity trying to usurp priestly functions. The Our Father is the prayer of the entire assembly and not strictly a priestly or presidential prayer. Thus, it is the only case when the rubrics direct the priest to pray with arms extended in a prayer that he does not say alone or only with other priests. In the case of the Our Father, the orans posture expresses the prayer directed to God by his children.

The most important thing to consider is that there is no gesture prescribed or recommended for the assembly at this point in the Mass. What must not be overlooked is when considering the symbol of unity in the parish, nothing should overshadow the Communion of the faithful.



“The Last Supper” by Ugolino di Nerio, 1324-05

Contact the Worship Office

Have a liturgical question? Contact

Kim Mandelkow

Director, Office for Worship

601 Grand Avenue

Des Moines, IA 50309

(515) 237-5043

kmandelkow@dmdiocese.org

Visit us on the web at

www.dmdiocese.org

Important Dates

**USCCB Fortnight for
Freedom:** June 21-July 4

**Rite of Candidacy for Semi-
narian, Max Carson:** July 2,
2016, 4:30 p.m. St. Anthony
Parish, Des Moines

Feast of St. Mary Magdalene
July 22, 2016 (previously a
memorial, elevated to a feast
by Pope Francis in June
2016)

Full, Conscious, and Active Participation

Over the last several months, our discussion of the elements of the Mass has aimed at increasing our own understanding of the liturgy in hopes that we can all enter more fully, actively, and consciously into our Sunday celebrations. But, as the old adage says, "You're preaching to the choir," I have to admit, I am. I have produced these newsletters knowing full well that the audience are those people who already have a sense of liturgy and what it means to enter into liturgical prayer, fully, consciously, and actively.

Have you ever asked the question, "How can we increase full, conscious, and active participation in our parish?" German liturgist Josef Jungmann called this "the refrain of the Second Vatican Council." It is true that the Council Fathers worked tirelessly to bring about the documents of Vatican II which were intended to renew and revitalize the liturgy in order that the faithful might enter into a fuller expression of their faith at worship, but over 50 years later, it seems that some of us have "missed the boat," or perhaps, "never jumped onboard." Some parishes have vibrant liturgies and people know, understand, and enter prayerfully into the Sacred Mysteries, while other parishes have people that gather without ever truly knowing, understanding, or praying during the liturgy.

Did you know that the Office for Worship can help with this? I can't say I have all the answers or that suddenly full, conscious, and active participation will increase in your parish. I will say that I want to hear your stories, your frustrations, even your victories regarding this topic. I have worked with numerous parishes over the years to address this topic and (hopefully!) help improve participation.

I am willing to come to your parish to observe the weekend liturgies and then to offer some feedback and ideas about ways to increase participation. Don't hesitate to reach out. I look forward to visiting your parishes and working to build up the Kingdom of God in Southwest Iowa.

—Kim
Director, Office for Worship

Planning form for Mass with Bishop Pates

A word from the Director of Worship...

Dear Priests, Deacons, Friends in Liturgy and Music,

Over the past several months, the Office for Worship has assisted many of you with preparation for Mass and other special liturgical celebrations at which Bishop Pates is the presider. It has been a true honor and privilege to work so closely with all of you and I truly look forward to working with you in the months and years ahead.

For me, putting together a liturgy is something I do every day; however, I know that is not always the case for everyone. Simply knowing where to start once you've confirmed the date with Bishop, can raise questions about which readings you can use or how many servers you need. Sandy Riesberg, the administrative assistant for the Office for Worship, and I have put together a helpful planning guide to be used when you are preparing for Mass with Bishop Pates. Our hope is that this will improve communication and facilitate cooperation between Bishop Pates, the Office for Worship, and each parish or organization within the diocese. We also hope that it will help to answer and address any questions you may have as you prepare for the Sacred Liturgy.

A copy of the form is attached to this month's email *In the Diocesan Loop*. It can also be found on Worship page of the Diocese's website.

Sincerely in Christ,

Kim Mandelkow

Director, Office for Worship