



Communion from the Tabernacle

Following the Instructions

by Rev. Thomas B. Iwanowski

There are various laws that govern how we drive our cars. Of all those laws, there is one that seems to be ignored more than any other. That is the one that limits the speed at which we are to drive our cars. Most of the time drivers exceed the posted speed. That is especially true on major highways. The majority of drivers go well over the limit.

When it comes to the Mass, there are rules and regulations that govern how the liturgy is to be celebrated. Those rules and regulations are found in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)* and in other liturgical documents such as *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*.

If we were to examine all instructions dealing with the Mass, we might conclude there was one significant regulation most often ignored by those responsible for the liturgy. That rule 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 and that, in the cases where this is foreseen, they partake of the chalice, so that even by means of signs, Communion will stand out more clearly as a participation in the sacrifice actually being celebrated.” (*GIRM*, #85)

A similar instruction appears in the *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the USA*. It affirms:

“When Holy Communion is to be distributed under both species, careful planning should be undertaken so that enough bread and wine are made ready for the communication of the faithful at each Mass. As a general rule, Holy Communion is given from hosts consecrated at the same Mass and not from those reserved in the tabernacle. Precious Blood may not be reserved at one Mass for use at another.” (#30)

These rules tell us that during the Communion Rite, people should receive hosts consecrated at the Mass in which they are participating and not hosts consecrated at a previous liturgy.

These directives are based on the central document dealing with the liturgy, namely, *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* of the Second Vatican Council. There we are told:

“That more perfect form of participation in the Mass whereby the faithful, after the priest's communion, receive the Lord's body from the same sacrifice, is strongly commended.” (#55)

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Questions and Answers

The Penitential Act: When and Which

by Rev. Michael C. Santoro

The Roman Missal offers three options for the Penitential Act that are part of the Introductory Rites of the Mass. The choice of which formula and when to use it can help focus the assembly on the particular aspect of the Paschal Mystery that is the focus of the occasion or season of the liturgical year.

Is there always a Penitential Act at Mass? No.

The General Introduction to the Roman Missal (GIRM) states, "In certain celebrations that are combined with Mass according to the norms of the liturgical books, the Introductory Rites are omitted or take place in a particular way." (46)

The Rite of Marriage omits the Penitential Act at a Nuptial Mass. In the case of a funeral, the sprinkling of the casket and placing of the pall replace the Penitential Act; when the presider reaches the chair at the conclusion of the entrance chant (hymn), the collect is prayed. The introductory dialogue with parents and godparents when baptism is celebrated at a Sunday Mass and the signing of the child with the sign of cross replaces it. Ash Wednesday Masses omit the Penitential Act replacing it with the signing with ashes as the penitential action after the homily. After the Procession or Solemn Entrance on Palm Sunday, the priest begins the Mass with the Collect. The Sprinkling Rite takes the place of the Penitential Act as well.

Which Penitential Act should be used? The Roman Missal does not designate which Penitential Act is to be used but the season of the liturgical year should be considered.

Lent is our most penitential season so reserving the first formula (I confess to Almighty God...) with its strong emphasis on personal sinfulness and fault seems most appropriate. To use it frequently throughout the other seasons of the year could have a diminishing effect during Lent. Even though the pervasiveness of sin in our lives is always present this option would certainly not be the best choice during the Christmas and Easter seasons.

The second formula, one we can even call the "forgotten" formula would be very appropriate for the weekdays of the Easter season. Because it is used so infrequently, the assembly would need to be prepared beforehand to respond appropriately.

When is the *Kyrie, eleison* used? It follows the first and second formulas. The Kyrie is an integral part of the third option.

How is the third formula used? The third formula can be fashioned to fit a particular season of the liturgical year or the readings of the day. Besides the one example given in the Penitential Act section of the Roman Missal, other sample invocations are found in Appendix VI. They may be taken from other sources or composed for the occasion. These examples make clear that the invocations are in praise of Jesus Christ and not acknowledgements of our sinfulness.

The *Misal Romano*, the Spanish language Missal, has quite a number of invocations organized for each season of the liturgical year; these could readily be translated into English. Below are several for use during Ordinary Time. Translations for use during other seasons of the year can be found on the Worship Office Web page.

Lord Jesus, you lead the way to the Father...

Lord Jesus, you are the truth that enlightens people...

Lord Jesus, you are the life that renews the world...

Lord Jesus, you are the fullness of truth and grace...

Lord Jesus, you became poor to enrich us...

Lord Jesus, you came to make us your holy people...

Lord Jesus, you came not to condemn but to forgive...

Lord Jesus, you said there is great rejoicing in heaven over one repentant sinner...

Lord Jesus, you said those who forgive much, love much...

Lord Jesus, you came to find what was lost...

Lord Jesus, you desired to give your life as a ransom for all...

Lord Jesus, you gather your scattered children...

Lord Jesus, you offered forgiveness to the repented Peter...

Lord Jesus, you promised paradise to the good thief...

Lord Jesus, you forgive all who trust in your mercy...

Lord Jesus, defender of the poor...

Lord Jesus, refuge of the weak...

Lord Jesus, hope of sinners...

Priming the Pump

Funeral Homilies 2015 by Fr. Tom Iwanowski

This column provides suggestions and ideas that may assist preachers in preparing homilies. This particular column offers suggestions for funeral homilies.

Water Is Thicker Than Blood – A Funeral Homily

The homilist could begin by speaking about the phrase, “blood is thicker than water.” That phrase says that relationships based on family ties are the strongest of all relationships. This is certainly evident at funerals as family members come together for the funeral liturgy of a beloved relative to whom they are related by blood. Blood ties bring people together especially at times of suffering and death.

The homilist could then observe that from the perspective of faith the phrase “blood is thicker than water” should be reversed. It should actually go, “water is thicker than blood,” for in the waters of baptism we are brought into an enduring relationship that makes us children of God, brothers and sisters in Christ, dwelling places of God’s Holy Spirit, and part of the family of faith that we call the Church.

Certainly the signs and symbols of the funeral liturgy (the sprinkling of the casket with water, the covering of the casket with a white pall, and the Easter Candle) remind us of the relationship that began in the waters of baptism.

The homilist can then develop the idea that at a funeral Mass, the Church prays that God will recognize the relationship that the deceased has with him and welcome that person into the peace of his Kingdom.

Water *is* thicker than blood for it is the waters of baptism that open the doors to an everlasting relationship with God – a relationship that not even death can break.

A Journey to the Heavenly Table – A Funeral Homily

The homilist can begin by saying that life can be described in many ways. One familiar way to describe life is to see it as a journey – a journey that goes from birth to childhood, to teenage years, young adulthood, adulthood, middle age, senior years, and finally to old age. During that journey we have different experiences and relationships. At this point the homilist could mention some aspects of the life journey of the deceased.

As Christians, we also see life as a journey – a spiritual journey. This spiritual journey begins at baptism and is brought to mind during the funeral liturgy as the casket is sprinkled with water from the baptismal font. The movement of the casket up the aisle of the church toward the Paschal/Easter Candle can serve as a reminder that Christ, our Light, draws us forward on our spiritual journey.

We move forward as we receive the Sacraments (Penance, Confirmation, Communion), as we gather with our fellow Christians to be nourished at the Table of God’s Word and the Table of the Eucharist at Sunday Mass and as we grow in our relationship with Christ and His Church.

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RCIA

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St. Bartholomew the Apostle Church

Laboring in the Field

People & Parishes Working to Improve Liturgy in the Archdiocese of Newark

“ . . . when a member of Christ’s Body dies, the faithful are called to a ministry of consolation to those who have suffered the loss of one whom they love.”
(Order of Christian Funerals, 8)

Funerals: The Opportunity to Embrace and Evangelize *by Pat Krema*

A good example of a parish’s work with funeral liturgies can be found at St. Bartholomew the Apostle Church in Scotch Plains. This large parish, which holds an average of more than eighty funerals a year, employs a method of preparation for funeral liturgies that offers the grieving family and the community Christian hope in the face of death. Under the direction of the pastor, Very Rev. John J. Paladino, funerals are a priority at St. Bartholomew, engaging both staff and parish volunteers in a ministry of service distinct from the parish’s Bereavement Outreach. Fr. Paladino believes that, “we must extend an invitation to families to come to church to see us. We must make a pastoral response to people and their grief. In doing so, the by-product is evangelization.” Elements of St. Bartholomew’s method of funeral preparation can enrich other parishes, regardless of size or frequency of funerals.

Upon receiving a call from a funeral home, Fr. Paladino and both of the parish’s directors of worship are contacted and all of the staff is made aware of the death and the anticipated funeral Mass through a posted notification. This intake form includes not only basic information about the deceased, but also the name of the funeral home, the date and time of the wake and funeral, the presiders for each of the services, and other information such as the assignments for the ministry team (greeters, altar servers) as well as any special directions. The pastor determines the clergy assignments for the wake, funeral and cemetery, while the directors consult with the funeral home and prepare to meet with the family.

The St. Bartholomew directors of worship are experienced in working with grieving families and one is always on-call should the need arise. When contacting the family, the director offers not only condolences, but also extends an invitation to family members to come to St. Bartholomew so that, in their grief, the staff can be present to them and assist in preparations for the funeral during what is often an overwhelming and confusing time. The family meeting allows them to speak about their loss and affords an opportunity for the Church to honor the life of the departed and offer consolation to the family and friends of the deceased. Discussion with the family focuses on their active involvement in the funeral liturgy, such as placing the pall and a cross on the casket, participating as readers, and bringing forward the gifts during the Mass. Families are encouraged to participate, but are never asked to do more than they can handle as the funeral ministry assists where needed.

Readings and music options for the Mass are shared with the family that they may thoughtfully choose those which resonate with them according to the life of the deceased and circumstances of death, thus also ensuring appropriate selections for a funeral Mass. In addition, one of the most important parts of the meeting is offering the family a chance to share what they want the presider to know about the deceased -- virtues, joys and sorrows. This insight allows the priest to pastorally minister to the family in their grief. When possible, the priest assigned to the Mass greets the family during the meeting to offer his support and assurance of his prayers in their time of sorrow.

Continued on next page

Need more Information on Liturgical Matters?

Check out the Worship Office Web Page: www.rcan.org/worship.

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Use of the National Flag at Funerals

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To Embrace & Evangelize

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Members of the funeral ministry contribute before, during and after the funeral Mass as greeters and altar servers. Given the unique opportunity a funeral offers for hospitality, these greeters – as well as the music ministry (organist and cantor) - are in church and prepared to receive mourners at least thirty minutes prior to the start of a funeral, thus allowing the focus to be on those coming to the church and not on busily completing tasks while people arrive. Special care is taken to warmly welcome all. Customized worship aids, developed by the worship directors, are provided to ensure full participation in the liturgy.

Such a funeral liturgy reflects the circumstances of the life and death of the deceased. The simple beauty of the worship space, attention to the liturgical elements (Word, homily, music, Paschal Candle, holy water, incense, funeral pall) and the dignity of the celebration allows families to express their grief in the presence of those who offer their comfort, strength and hope of our Catholic faith. The attention to liturgical detail, genuine care for those who mourn, and time spent with families amid distress echoes Pope Francis' call for "spiritual accompaniment" that St. Bartholomew extends to its families at the time of death and long after the funeral Mass is concluded.

Priming the Pump *Continued from page 3*

If the deceased were married, the homilist could speak of the Sacrament of Marriage mentioning how forming children in the faith helped the deceased in his or her own spiritual life. The homilist could also speak of any particular roles of service that may have helped the deceased grow in his or her faith.

The homilist could conclude by saying that we pray that Christ will now bring the deceased to the final step in his or her spiritual journey, the step into God's Kingdom. The very position of the casket before the altar table proclaims that for us as Christians the spiritual journey that begins at baptism ends at the Lord's heavenly table.

Letting Go of a Parent – A Funeral Homily

The homilist could begin by saying that the death of a loved one is always difficult to face, but the death of a parent is especially hard since it means losing someone who has always been part of our conscious life. The first face we saw and recognized was the face of our mother, our father.

The homilist could speak of the fact that the letting go of a parent often happens before the moment of death. The letting can take place as the parent ages, physical ailments take their toll, or mental decline sets in. We know the end is coming, but we as children do not want to face it. We do not want to let go of Mom or Dad. Yet letting go is part of life. We cannot hold onto anyone or anything forever. Death forces us to let go. We have no choice.

When we think of letting go of something, we think of something dropping from our hands and falling to the floor. We can see death as letting go of a parent and having that person we love just fall away. But for us as a people of faith we believe that when we let go of a parent, or any loved one, that person falls not to floor, so to speak, but into the hands of a loving God. God catches our loved one and lifts that person up to new life with him. As Jesus himself cried out on Good Friday, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." (Luke 23:46) So into your loving hands Father, we commend our brother/sister.



Worth a Look by Rev. Thomas A. Dente

Guide for Sacristans

Training a new sacristan? The newly revised edition of *Guide for Sacristans* will ensure that the person is easily acclimated to the task and has a resource guide for easy reference. The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* defines the sacristan as a layperson who “diligently arranges the liturgical books, vestments, and other items necessary for the celebration of Mass” (GIRM, 105). The person should be well trained in liturgical actions as well as familiar with ritual texts. This 96 page book does just that.

The Guide attends to the person of the sacristan in their prayer life and presents catechesis about liturgy, ritual and symbol; it includes the practical as well as the academic. Along with theological reflections and quotes from church documents as well as from scripture, the book speaks to rubrics from the third edition of *The Roman Missal*. Among the entries are detailed instructions for set up and clean up for Mass, a walk through the sacristy, an annotated resource section, a glossary and instructive photos and charts.

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FOLLOWING THE INSTRUCTION *Continuation from page one*

Yet we know at many, if not most parishes, that is not what takes place. At communion time a priest, deacon, or extraordinary minister goes to the tabernacle and retrieves one or more vessels filled with hosts consecrated at other Masses. These hosts are brought to the altar, and along with those consecrated during the liturgy, are distributed to the people. Sometimes the only host consecrated at a particular Mass is the one shown to the people and received by the priest.

Those who distribute previously consecrated hosts may be unaware of the instructions previously cited, or they may consider them impractical and impossible to fulfill, especially in parishes with large Sunday congregations.

Some priests may also fail to appreciate why the documents of the Church strongly discourage the distribution of previously consecrated hosts. They believe it makes little difference. After all, everyone is receiving the Body of Christ; the only difference is the hour of consecration. Some priests dismiss such rules as niceties promulgated by liturgists disconnected from parish life.

It should be noted that the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* does not mention the practice of bringing consecrated hosts from the tabernacle for use during the Communion Rite of Mass. This absence of instructions indicates that the Church does not envision this practice as a normative part of the celebration of Mass.

If we are to faithfully observe the directives cited above, we need to understand the values these rules are meant to uphold and how the practical challenges involved in following them can be met.

- The bread and wine that are brought forward during the preparation of the gifts represent the assembly’s offering to God. Those gifts are received, consecrated, and then become God’s gifts to his people. There is a dynamic of giving and receiving. The people’s gifts to God become God’s gifts to his people.
- When the people receive hosts consecrated at a previous Mass, they are receiving gifts that are not a result of the sacrifice actually being celebrated. That is why the priest is required to receive the Body and Blood of Christ consecrated at the Mass he celebrates. If this is required of the priest, should it not be the right of the people to share in the sacrifice they actually are celebrating as well? As was previously stated, “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.” (GIRM, #85)
- The bread and wine are transformed as the result of the prayers of the priest and people. “Therefore, O Lord, we humbly implore you by the same Spirit graciously make holy these gifts we have brought to you for consecration that they may become for us the Body and Blood of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Eucharistic Prayer III) God does what the people ask, their gifts are transformed. If the people receive gifts made holy at previous liturgies their prayer seems superfluous.

FOLLOWING THE INSTRUCTION Continuation from previous page

- The reception of the consecrated bread and wine not only unites us with Christ, it also makes us into a holy communion with him and with those sharing his sacred Body and Blood. “Grant in your loving kindness to all who partake of this one Bread and one Chalice that, gathered into one body by the Holy Spirit, they may truly become a living sacrifice in Christ to the praise of your glory.” (Eucharistic Prayer IV) This sense of communion is reinforced as those present share the holy bread and wine taken from the altar, and not from the tabernacle.
- In taking hosts from the tabernacle, we convey the idea that a tabernacle is essential for Mass. While we know that is not true, many of those in the pews may have another notion if at every Mass the distribution of Holy Communion does not begin until hosts are brought from the tabernacle. What we do at liturgy teaches what we believe. We may be teaching something that is not true, namely, that Mass requires the presence of a tabernacle filled with hosts.
- By avoiding the distribution of hosts from the tabernacle, we indicate that the purpose of reserving hosts is to ensure the Eucharist is available for the sick and the dying and for adoration outside of Mass, and not for communion during Mass.



In distributing bread and wine consecrated at the Mass in which the people are actually participating, we are following the instructions given to us by the Church. We are respecting the dynamic of giving and receiving found in the liturgy. We are harmonizing the words we pray during the Mass with what we actually do. And we are faithfully following the example of the Lord who in feeding the crowds took, blessed, broke and gave the bread that was presented to him by the people. Like him, may we feed the people of God with the bread and wine they offer for consecration.

PRACTICAL STEPS

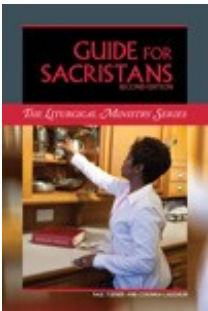
FOLLOWING THE INSTRUCTION REGARDING THE DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

- While some may object that following the instruction that people “receive the Lord’s Body from hosts consecrated at the same Mass” is impractical, we do manage to follow that regulation concerning the Lord’s Blood. We do not bring chalices of consecrated wine from the tabernacle.; we consecrate what is needed and consume what remains. If we can follow that procedure for the consecrated wine, with some effort and adjustments we should be able to do so with the consecrated bread.
- Since the number of people attending particular Masses remains relatively steady, except for Christmas, Palm Sunday, and Easter, a count can be made of the number of people at each Sunday Mass. This count can be made over a period of a month or two, and then an average attendance can be determined for each Mass. A chart can then be created indicating the amount of hosts required for each liturgy.
- If a few additional hosts are needed, the ministers can break the remaining hosts to accommodate those wishing to receive Holy Communion. If more than a few hosts are needed, a minister could then approach the tabernacle to obtain previously consecrated hosts.
- If too many hosts are consecrated, they may be consumed or placed in the tabernacle. “When the distribution of Communion is over, the priest himself immediately and completely consumes at the altar any consecrated wine that happens to remain, as for any consecrated hosts that are left, he either consumes them at the altar or carries them to the place designated for the reservation of the Eucharist.” (GIRM, #85)
- If a parish feels following these directives will be too difficult, a simple way to begin is by implementing them at weekday Masses. The experience gained at these Masses and the harmony that will be apparent between our words and our actions in the liturgy will encourage us to do on Sunday what we are doing during the week.


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