



Reverence for the Blessed Sacrament. One of the many spiritual topics we discussed during our Bishop's recent wonderful visit to our church was how to increase our reverence for the Holy Eucharist. This concern was not just for our parish, but for all the parishes of our diocese. Let us use this opportunity, then, to reflect on how we can best express our own reverence in regard to kneeling, genuflecting, receiving Holy Communion, and creating prayerful quietness in our worship space.

Kneeling. The Roman Missal (the book on the altar) instructs the congregation to kneel at two times during the Mass. For the Eucharistic Prayer, we should kneel from after the Sanctus until we finish the Great Amen. For Holy Communion, we should kneel from after the Agnus Dei until we come up to receive Holy Communion. It is interesting to note that, while kneelers are not mentioned in the Roman Missal, kneeling is still clearly indicated.

So, please kneel down during these times, if you are able to do so. If you cannot kneel, or choose not to kneel, then please sit down instead of standing for such a long time. This way, the people who are kneeling can see the altar. And, if you lean slightly forward as you are seated, you are in a prayerful posture that is similar to kneeling. During the most sacred moments of our liturgy, we should pray with the utmost reverence and attention.

Genuflecting. Before being seated, please genuflect on one knee, making the sign of the cross, as you look to either the altar or the tabernacle. Then repeat the same prayerful gesture when you leave your place at the end of Mass. If you are physically unable to genuflect, please make the sign of the cross as you reverently bow towards the altar or the tabernacle. Also, remember that blessing yourself with holy water as you enter is a sign of cleansing in preparation for worship. As such, it is not necessary to bless yourself with holy water when you leave church.

Holy Communion. As you come up for Holy Communion, please bow your head and clearly respond "Amen" as the host (or the chalice) is presented to you. Then please consume the host immediately, before you walk away. Remember to prepare for Holy Communion by fasting for at least an hour beforehand, and by going to Confession for any serious sins. It is also recommended that you confess your less serious sins regularly for spiritual growth.

If you are not spiritually prepared to receive Holy Communion, you can receive a blessing from the priest instead. Please place your hand over your heart to indicate that you have come up for a blessing. We look forward to the day when we will all be one again in faith, and will thus be able to share the Holy Eucharist with all our fellow Christians. Until then, we can join together in the solemn prayers and beautiful music of our sacred liturgy.

Prayerful Quietness. If you notice people praying quietly in church, please kindly take your conversation out into the narthex or into the parish center, so that they may continue their prayer in silence. We encourage everyone to spend some time in quiet prayer both before and after Mass. So, please come early, and feel free to stay late!

Thank you for making our parish community your spiritual home. Special thanks to those who come to church dressed up in their Sunday best. The beauty of our church is reflected in the holy lives of those people who come to worship here each week. May your daily lives reflect the inspiration that you receive in the sacred liturgy!

