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# *A word from the Secretary*

LOUIS J. TOFARI

## WHAT MAKES THE GUILD SO GREAT?

The end, or purpose of the Archconfraternity of Saint Stephen is to sanctify the server. This is seen quite plainly not only in the OBJECT of the Guild, but throughout the entire Handbook. It is this aspect, that of sanctification, that is essentially missing in the other server guilds that have existed in the past. It is very clear, in the prayers that the servers are required to say, in the Ceremony of Enrollment, and in admonitions that are to be found in the Handbook, that this is an essential part of the Guild.

A server can be sanctified in the first place, just by serving the Mass *devoutly* (he loses merits by allowing himself to be purposefully distracted!). But the Guild provides other ways in which the server may gain graces *outside* of serving the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Firstly, the Guild has some indulgences to offer (cf. INDULGENCES, page 4 in the Handbook). There are three times that a member of the Archconfraternity of Saint Stephen may gain a *Plenary Indulgence*.

1. On the day of admission into the Guild.
2. On the patronal feast of the Guild: Saint Stephen, on the 26<sup>th</sup> of December.
3. At the hour of a Guild member's death.

Plenary comes from the Latin adjective *plena*, which means full. A Plenary Indulgence wipes out all of the temporal punishment due to sin and therefore no time is spent in Purgatory for reparation.

There are also four feast days on which a server may gain a Partial Indulgence of 40 days:

1. Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist, 27<sup>th</sup> December.
2. Saint Joseph, 19<sup>th</sup> March.
3. Saints Peter and Paul, 29<sup>th</sup> June.
4. Saint Michael, 29<sup>th</sup> September.

And then there is also an indulgence of 300 days every time a member says the prayer, “*Direct, we beseech Thee, O Lord, our actions . . .*” This beautiful prayer can be said before praying, working or playing. What a wonderful way in which we can be sanctified through *all* of our actions.

Finally, if the server lived in England or Wales, a member could receive an indulgence of 200 days every time he said the Daily Guild Prayer.

So, just by *being a member* of the Guild, one can be sanctified. One does not even have to serve to receive these various graces that the Catholic Church offers to us through the Guild of Saint Stephen. Therefore, we must realize just what a privilege it is for us to belong to this *archconfraternity* that the Church has erected for our sanctification. CUI SERVIRE REGNARE EST

# A Glorious History

BY MR. PEDRO SIDOTI (story adapted from a Guild Handbook)



Fr. Hamilton MacDonald

The Guild of Saint Stephen was founded in May 1905. Its founder was Father Hamilton MacDonald, who was the chaplain at the Sacred Heart Convent at Hammersmith in London, England. Like so many of these things, the Guild was started because it was needed. Father MacDonald wanted to raise the standard of Altar serving, so he started regular classes for Altar servers at the Convent. The idea caught on, and soon he was holding meetings every month at the local parish church, Holy Trinity, in Brook Green, an area of the London metropolis. It was a great success. The Archbishop of Westminster, Francis Bourne (later Cardinal), was so impressed, that he decided to start a Guild at Westminster Cathedral and gave his blessing and support, in November of the same year.

News of the Guild had already reached the Pope, the great and saintly Pope Pius X, who sent the Guild his special blessing (*Dilectis filiis fausta quaeque et salutaria a Domino adprecantes Apostolicam Benedictionem peramanter impertimus; die 5 No. 1905; found on page ii in the Handbook*). So greatly impressed was the Pope by the nature and work of the Guild, that just over a year afterwards he erected the Guild into an archconfraternity on December 4<sup>th</sup>, 1906, and gave it the power to join to it other guilds of a similar nature in the British Isles.

Many years later on February 19<sup>th</sup>, 1934, His Holiness Pope Pius XI, extended this privilege throughout the British Empire which at that time comprised of the countries of Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Canada, various countries in Africa, India, Australia, New Zealand and many other places in the Pacific. Thus in a short time, the work and life of Saint Stephen was being introduced to boys and young men, not only in Britain, but also throughout the British Empire.

In 1914, the Great War exploded in Europe and raged until 1918. Millions of men joined the Army and Navy. Some of these were senior servers from the parishes. The result was that the Guild declined. In fact, it remained active in only one or two parishes. But after the war, a few of Father MacDonald's boys came to the rescue. They worked hard at building up the Guild again.

In 1925, Cardinal Bourne gave his approval to a revised constitution for the Guild. A Central Council and a Executive was established. Slowly the Guild grew in numbers and in strength.

Father MacDonald died in 1933. He had lived to see it firmly established.

Again, during the Second Great War (1939-1945), the Guild was not able to carry on its work as in time of peace. But this time the Central Council kept things going, and when the war was over, the Guild once again began to expand and grow.

Many bishops appointed a priest as Diocesan Director, a result of this was the formation in September 1945 of a National Council of Priest Directors to advise the National Director.

Travelling abroad was then not as common as it is today. So when in 1950, the Guild organized a pilgrimage of Altar servers to Rome, it was a big adventure and it was a great success. Since that time more Rome pilgrimages have taken place. These have varied in size from 100 to 350 servers.

Building on the wonderful work of Father Hamilton MacDonald, a number of National Directors have

served the Guild with great distinction. Among these, Monsignor Edward Sutton, Monsignor Joseph Collings and Canon John Marriot will always be remembered.

In the forty years since the ending of the war of 1939-1945, the influence of the Guild has spread far and wide. There are now branches all over the British Isles, Africa, Australia, Malaysia and the West Indies. Now, through the Society of Saint Pius X, it has spread to other countries, where before it was unknown; the United States of America, Mexico and the Philippine Islands.

The Guild still exists in the *Novus Ordo* and unfortunately those chapters have been absorbed and denatured by the *Novus Ordo Missae*. The *Saint Stephen's Handbook* issued by the *Novus Ordo* is an embarrassing mockery of Father MacDonald's intentions.

However, just like the Guild was almost extinguished in the First Great War, a small group still goes on. This time it is we who are the small but devoted band of survivors, mostly newcomers, who keep in our chapters the true spirit and purpose of the Guild shining brightly and continue to add to the glorious history of the Guild and Saint Stephen. May Saint Stephen assist us always in serving the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Do an act of charity: pray for the repose of the souls of those who were directors and members of the Guild. *Requiescant in pace. Amen.*

## The Survivors Continue...

MR. SIDOTI IS THE PRESIDENT OF THE  
CHAPTER IN ROCKDALE, AUSTRALIA; THE  
CHAPTER  
THAT STARTED IT ALL IN  
THE SOCIETY OF SAINT PIUS X.  
THE REST IS HISTORY...

You asked me for a little history of our foundation in Sydney. It was started in Rockdale (a suburb of Sydney) in 1981 by Fr. Damian Carlise, before he entered the Seminary in Econe. He was still going to school at the time. I took over from him when he left. He was ordained in 1991, and was sent to Gabon (a country in Africa) where he has been ever since.

In 1985, His Grace Archbishop Lefebvre came to Australia to confer Confirmations in Rockdale. He was very impressed with the work of the Guild in Sydney. When he returned to Econe, he made a special mention about the Guild at the General Chapter. This was related to me by Fr. Gerard Hogan. Also His Grace sent me a personal postcard in regard to the Guild.



*Mr. Sidoti has had not only the privilege to serve Holy Mass for Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, but also for Padre Pio! Here he serves (on the Gospel side) with his brother in 1962.*



Mr. Pedro Sidoti



1989, Feast of Saint Stephen: Bishop Fellay promotes nine members as Senior Acolytes in Rockdale. On the left are pictured the original men of the Guild who were enrolled in the early 1960's; the tradition continues!

Some of the original members had joined the Guild in England in 1962. One other member had joined in his own parish in Sydney in 1963. Some of the members have been in the Guild over fifteen years. In 1989, on the feast of Saint Stephen, Bishop Fellay gave the medal and tassel to nine members. It was a most impressive ceremony.

When Fr. Todd Angele arrived in Australia after his ordination, he was appointed to Sydney. That is when he came in contact with our Guild in Rockdale. He was very impressed with the Guild. It was not long after, that he was appointed Prior of Melbourne in Victoria (a state of Australia; -*Ed's note*). From there he has set up the Guild in all of the Mass centers of the Society in Australia and New Zealand. From these centers some of its members have already entered Holy Cross Seminary to study for the Priesthood. More jewels are added to the crown of Saint Stephen!

CUI SERVIRE REGNARE EST

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# CHAPTER UPDATES

## WHAT'S GOING ON WITH THE GUILD

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**Our Lady of Victories Church, New Manila, Philippines:** More exciting news from this Chapter! In the words of its President, Mr. John Arellano, *“December 19, Saturday, was the induction of the first members of The Archconfraternity of Saint Stephen in Manila. The induction ceremony was one of a kind. It was done by the Chaplain, Rev. Fr. Joven Soliman, the first Filipino SSPX Priest. We started it with a day of recollection at A.M. We had 3 conferences (2 in the morning and 1 in the afternoon), visits to the Blessed Sacrament, Spiritual reading, Way of the Cross, and then, in the afternoon, rehearsal for the induction and singing of the Antiphon, Psalms, and Hymn in honor of St. Stephen. There were 11 servers inducted to different ranks; 1 to Presidency, 3 to M.C., 3 to Senior Acolytes and 4 to Junior Acolytes. The District Superior of Asia, Rev. Fr. Daniel Couture, was delighted to see the candidates advanced to the sanctuary and consecrated themselves to Almighty God, to Our Lady, and to St. Stephen. Before the induction, we had invited our parents, relatives and friends to witness our engagement to the Archconfraternity. They congratulated us after the ceremony and they were proud of us. (We made it a big deal for the greater glory of God). After the event, we treated ourselves to a chicken restaurant, with permission from the District Superior. And then, we went home afterwards with exceeding joy in our hearts to be admitted to The Archconfraternity of Saint Stephen.”* Mr. Arellano’s letter speaks for itself! Their Chapter also had a *“picnic in the country”* followed by an evening Mass.

# Why Saint Stephen for our Patron?

BY MR. PEDRO SIDOTI

All who are Altar servers should be proud to have Saint Stephen for their Patron. The great Saint Augustine of Hippo once preached a wonderful sermon on Saint Stephen, and at the conclusion of it, he exhorted his people in the following words, *“Let us so desire to obtain temporal blessings by his intercession, that we may merit in imitating him, those which are eternal.”* We cannot do better than follow this grand advice. Like Saint Stephen we should be proud to do all we can to serve our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. How better can we do this than by following the example of our Saint, who was never happier than when he was serving the first Priests of Christ’s Church, who were the Apostles.

There is also the other little point which we would do well to remember: In everything that Saint Stephen did, he prayed continuously. So we, who serve Holy Mass, ought also to make sure that we too pray with devotion and care all the time we are serving. We might adopt the slogan: *“Serve by praying.”* If we do this we shall most certainly serve better than ever before and great graces will come to us from Our Lord at Holy Mass.

The name of Stephen has a special meaning too. It means the *“One who is crowned,”* and when he died, we all know what a glorious crown his Divine King placed upon his head. *“Thou hast placed upon his head a crown of most precious jewels.”* To serve God is a sure guarantee that one day we too shall receive a crown; and so the motto of those who are privileged to serve God on the Altar is, *“Cui Servire Regnare Est,”* which can mean for us: *“He who serves shall reign.”*

If we all strive to serve devoutly and lovingly, we one day will share the glory of Stephen who, as the first of all the Martyrs, now reigns gloriously in the Heavenly court of the King of Kings. CUI SERVIRE REGNARE EST



# Who is Saint Stephen?

While Saint Stephen is the Patron of the Guild, how many of us as members of that same guild know anything substantial about our Patron? As the *Protomartyr* (*Proto* is Greek for “first”), Saint Stephen is most certainly very powerful in his intercession with Christ. As one of the first deacons of the Church, he provides the example of *cui servire regnare est*, when he served the Apostles (the first bishops) both liturgically and in other offices too, such as alms giving and preaching. As a man of renowned virtues, he is a great model to imitate (unlike the majority of today’s sport stars).

I decided to use in its entirety, the story of Saint Stephen as found in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (The Encyclopedia Press, Inc. 1911), not due to any lack of originality, but rather towards providing a comprehensive history that celebrates the laurels of our holy Patron.

“Stephen, SAINT, one of the first deacons and the first Christian martyr; feast on 26 December. In the Acts of the Apostles the name St. Stephen occurs for the first time on the occasion of the appointment of the first deacons (Acts, vi, 5). Dissatisfaction concerning the distribution of alms from the community’s fund having arisen in the Church, seven men were selected and specially ordained by the Apostles to take care of the temporal relief of the poorer members. Of these seven, Stephen, is the first mentioned and the best known.

Stephen’s life previous to this appointment remains for us almost entirely in the dark. His name is Greek and suggests he was a Hellenist, i.e., one of those Jews who had been born in some foreign land and whose native tongue was Greek; however, according to a fifth-century tradition, the name *Stephanos* was only a Greek equivalent for the Aramaic *Kilil* (Syriac *kelila*, crown), which may be the protomartyr’s original name and was inscribed on a slab found in his tomb. It seems that Stephen was not a proselyte<sup>1</sup>, for the fact that Nicolas is the only one of the seven designated as such makes it almost certain that the others were Jews by birth. That Stephen was a pupil of Gamaliel<sup>2</sup> is sometimes inferred from his able defence before the Sanhedrin; but this has not been proved. Neither do we know when and in what circumstances he became a Christian; it is doubtful whether the statement of St. Epiphanius (*Haer.*, xx, 4) numbering Stephen among the seventy disciples is deserving of any credence. His ministry as deacon appears to have been mostly among the Hellenist converts with whom the Apostles were at first less familiar; and the fact that the opposition he met with sprang up in the synagogues of the ‘Libertines’ (probably the children of Jews taken captive to Rome by Pompey in 53 B.C. and freed -hence the name *Libertini*), and ‘of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of them that were in Cilicia and Asia’ shows that he usually preached among the Hellenist Jews. That he was preeminently fitted for that work, his abilities and character, which the author of the Acts dwells upon so fervently, are the best indication. The Church had, by selecting him for a deacon, publicly acknowledged him as a man ‘of good reputation, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom’ (Acts, vi, 3). He was ‘a man full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost’ (vi, 5), ‘full of grace and fortitude’ (vi, 8); his uncommon oratorical powers and unimpeachable logic no one was able to resist, so much so that to his arguments replete with the Divine energy of the Scriptural authorities God added the weight of ‘great wonders and signs’ (vi, 8). Great as was the efficacy of ‘the wisdom and the spirit that spoke’ (vi, 10), still it could not bend the minds of the unwilling; to these the forceful preacher was fatally soon to become an enemy.”

*To be continued...*

NEXT ISSUE:

SAINT STEPHEN’S CONFLICT WITH THE LIBERTINES,  
WHICH LEADS TO HIS HOLY MARTYRDOM

<sup>1</sup> A Gentile learning to become a Jew.

<sup>2</sup> He was the teacher of Saint Paul.

# Presidential Tips

## Advice for Chapter Presidents

BY MR. CARL LOANDO  
Mr. Carl Loando is the President of Our Lady of Lourdes Chapter in Honolulu, Hawaii

When we attend Mass, we directly connect ourselves with Our Lord, the Apostles, the Saints and Martyrs, the Popes and Priests that have graced us with the divine mystery of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. We should consider it the greatest of all gifts that any layman can give of himself to devoutly assist at the Altar of that Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, whether you are starting out as a Postulant in the Guild or you hold the office of the President of your Chapter.

We are here to serve Holy Mass by our free will, and are granted this divine privilege above all earthly things. In earlier days of the Church, this angelic privilege was conferred upon candidates to the Priesthood (ordained Acolytes, Clerics of the fourth order *etc.*). Today with a great loss of vocations throughout the world, it is even more important that laymen are being called to the Altars of Our Lord to assure that this angelic office remains fulfilled till the end of time. We are being called to assist at the Altar to return praise and dignity which that is rightfully His, but which is being denied to Him in this pagan world.

### *The future of the Church and the Guild*

Much care and nurturing must go into a new Postulant of the Guild. Remember that they are looking to you as their teacher for the knowledge to become one of those Altar servers. The next time you happen to be at Mass, and you get a chance to look around at those young men who are not Altar servers: take a look at them; they are watching what the altar servers are doing.

**Prayer for a Trainer**  
*Lord, teach me to treat these souls with the delicacy and infinite patience through Thy Holy Spirit. Amen.*

So when the new candidate to the Guild arrives at class for the first time, you will have vested an interest to his knowledge of his faith. This added knowledge will give him spiritual longevity, and sanctification to his soul. Think of our young men and women of who attend the Traditional Latin

Mass as our most precious resource we have today. They are the future of the true Roman Catholic Faith. We should guide them all to the knowledge, the Faith and the Truth to ensure that they will continue this Tradition for the generation after them.

As a Chapter President, the proper manner in which you carry yourself in public, in the parish, and at the Foot of the Altar will be reflected in them. Your carelessness, your inattention to detail and disgracefulness will reflect in them as well. As the President of your Chapter you are responsible for the organizing, training, scheduling, advance preparation of liturgical functions, ceremonies, etc., and in most missions, as here in Hawaii, we also take care of the Sacristy, assuring that advanced preparation of the Sacristy and Sanctuary are taken care of for the Pastor or visiting Priest.

### *The Postulant*

When starting out with the Postulant, a candidate to the Guild of the Archconfraternity of Saint Stephen, takes the time to invest in his knowledge and of things that he will need: a missal, a rosary, the ability to read and comprehend, etc.. We must remember not all young men read at the same level. Are



they here because they want to be here. Or has Dad and Mom said, “*You have to be here*”? This can and has led to problems later. If you are going to take the time to train him, you want to sure he is not going to say, “*I don’t like this anymore,*” and move on. There can be nothing more disappointing than to see your hard work leave because he does not want to be there.

Take the time to explain what will be required of him, his duties, his studying and making it to practices, his conduct and understanding the Rules of the Guild. All of these things combined will help to lay good foundation for his growth as he moves up in rank.

Now that we have a good start with what is to be expected, help them learn Latin, getting them past the tongue twisters early. When I open my class, we always start with a prayer. If we have a new candidate, we start simple, but I try to include some of the Latin responses. By doing so we gain two things: the new candidate gets to listen to how the pronunciations are made, and we learn to say it at the same speed. Sometimes when the servers are paired at Mass, listen to them to see if they are saying the prayers in unison. It must be difficult for the Priest to listen to the *Confiteor* at two different speeds, so trying to incorporate some of the prayers into the opening prayers at class has its benefits.



Mr. Loando (back row on the right side of Fr. Libietis) with his Chapter in Honolulu, Hawaii

*Movements and general rubrics  
of ceremonies*

Although there are many techniques in teaching which can be employed with optimal results, often the very basic way of following the leader is sometimes the fastest. We were all dependent upon someone to teach us and to be there for us. We learned how to crawl before we could stand. We took our first steps and began to walk. Once we are comfortable with

walking we learned how to run. Often in the beginning of class, we go through the movements one step at a time. We cover a little of all the items which will be needed for the Low Mass, what they are, what they are used for, how to set them up and where we keep things in our parish, etc., etc., etc..

It is very important for the candidate to have a good understanding of what all those items on the Altar, and in the Sacristy are for. Remember the success of your Chapter depends on how well you have organized and planned things. Instilling knowledge into your Altar servers correctly from the start, will be of long benefit to your Chapter. Building a teaching syllabus to help you in your training of your servers is not hard to do. If you have absolutely *NO* teaching skills at all, get together with your Pastor and sit down and discuss it with him. They have a wealth of teaching skills and can help you to build a training guide line for your Chapter (Also available from the Chapters’ Headquarters, is a *Manual of Training*, which outlines a simply, yet comprehensive method of training servers. -*Ed’s note*).

Once you have a basic training syllabus that you can follow, teach from it, build on to it and refine it. If you have senior servers, get them into the habit of building their teaching syllabus. As I have said there are many different methods that can be devised to teach your serves. Find a method that will work best for your Chapter and stick to it. Good luck and may our Patrons Saint Stephen and Saint Pius X guide you. CUI SERVIRE REGNARE EST

# *Introibo ad Altare Dei*

THE CONTRIBUTED ARTICLES SECTION

BY MR. JIM DE PIANTE

Mr. De Piante is the President of the Saint Anthony's, Charlotte, NC Chapter. We asked him to reproduce his famous "*Bee Conference*" (cf. **CHAPTER UPDATES** of **ISSUE I**) for your edification and enjoy-

## *The "Tiniest Members" of the Altar Rosary Society*

If your Chapel is like ours, then there are probably several wonderful and devout ladies there who give their service in preparing the vestments and altar for Holy Mass. They, like we altar servers, have an important job to do in serving Almighty God.

There are some other *ladies*, hard-working and dedicated, who also give their service and who are essential for Holy Mass, but we never see them in church (perhaps because they are not Catholic). In fact, if they ever DID come to church, many people who misunderstand them might want to leave! Can you guess who they are? Will it help if I tell you that they are very tiny, no more than 5/8 of an inch long? One more hint: They helped supply food for St. John the Baptist when he was in the desert.

Did you guess? You're right. These wonderful little ladies are honeybees. They made the honey that St. John the Baptist ate, and they make the wax that is required to be used in the altar candles that must burn at every Mass.

Have you ever smelled a pure beeswax candle? It has a unique and very beautiful scent, which becomes most apparent as the candle burns. Did you know that this represents the *bonus odor Christi*, (the good odor of Christ)? This means His infinite goodness and holiness.

The beeswax candle burns very cleanly. The lighted beeswax candle represents the pure hearts of the good faithful, illuminated by the light of Christ. Tallow candles (made from animal fat) are prohibited for use at Mass. They burn with a lot of smoke and are messy, a picture of the sinner.

There are three kinds of honeybees. The queen is, of course, female, and the mother of all the other bees. Her daughters are the workers, who do not mate and have no offspring. They are very clean. They pick up after themselves and others. They take care of the young and serve the queen. They go out and gather the nectar and the pollen that will feed the colony. They make the honey comb. They guard the hive.

The queen's sons are the drones. They never do any work at all. They take food whenever they want it and never pick up after themselves. They live pretty good all summer long. Sometimes they go out carousing, flying around making a lot of noise (a droning sound, which is why they are called drones). Yes, they live pretty good all summer long. Mind you, when the fall comes and the busy little ladies are making preparations for the winter, they throw the bums out on the porch. And that's where the drones will die, excommunicated from the colony and cut off from the life-giving sustenance it provides. (Do you see the symbolism here?)

Some people think that candles are used on the altar because early Christians used candles in the dark catacombs. That is not the reason. Candles are used because of what they symbolize. The bright flame on top represents the Divinity of Christ. The candle itself symbolizes His pure body,

*Introibo ad Altare Dei* SECTION CONTINUED . . .

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made from the wax produced by the bee using the nectar she has gathered from beautiful and sweet-smelling blossoms. The virginal workers are thus symbols of the Virgin Mary, from whom Christ took his human body. The wick symbolizes Christ’s soul, hidden within his body. As the candle burns, it gives us light, but sacrifices its body so that we can see. (Do you see the symbolism here?)

Long before the catacombs, candles were used by the Israelites to celebrate Passover. So Christ used candles at the Last Supper, which was, of course, the first Mass. Candles were also used in the Temple at Jerusalem.

The bee colony itself is also symbolic – of the Church and her Pope. The colony is orderly, and has its head, the queen. When the head is not functioning properly, the bees become agitated and do not tend to their work well. There is a constant succession of queens, and only one who rules all the bees. The workers have their jobs to do and tend to them diligently. Outside the colony, there is no life, but only death. Like man, the individual bee can not survive alone, but must be a part of a society.

As altar servers, there is much we can learn from the bee. She is our tiny partner in the sanctuary. Like Mary, she is humble and unseen, a servant of God and man. Think of her next time you light her sweet-smelling candles on the altar of Sacrifice, and be reminded of her diligence in serving Christ.

CUI SERVIRE REGNARE EST



The lucky boys of Charlotte and Raleigh, North Carolina, who received the famous “Bee Conference” firsthand from Mr. DePiante (who’s taking the picture) at the Archconfraternity camp held last summer. Father Beck, their former Director (now assigned to the Pittsburgh-Girard circuit) is in the back.

*per breviorē* ..... **OR** ..... *per longiorē* .....

“ . . . BY INSTRUCTING HIM THE MANNER OF OBSERVING THE RITES AND CEREMONIES OF THE CHURCH ACCORDING TO THE RUBRICS AND TO THE DECREES OF THE SACRED CONGREGATION OF RITES AND THE INTERPRETATIONS OF THE MOST GENERALLY ACCEPTED AUTHORITIES . . . ” The second part of the OBJECT of the Guild

With the aforementioned quote taken from the Handbook, it is easy to see that the Archconfraternity of Saint Stephen places great importance in following what liturgists call, “*the strict mind of the Church.*” It is well that it does so, for abiding by the various, yet simple rules (rubrics) that apply to the ceremonies are considered as an act of spiritual discipline (cf. J.B. O’Connell, pg. 182). The word rubric is derived from the Latin word *ruber*, which means “red”. This in turn is derived from the texts found in the ceremonial books that are printed in red, which give directions for the Celebrant and other ministers; hence *in the red.*

Besides rubrics, there are *principles* of ceremonies. A principle is actually a rubric but much more. A rubric simply makes a rule about a particular item, but a principle is the foundation for the rubrics. Principles are nothing more than liturgical common sense, and are actually quite simple, though often misunderstood. This is due to two reasons:

The first reason is, unless one reads Latin, the only rubric book available in English that outlines the general principles of ceremonies in a systematic fashion is Very Rev. Laurence J. O’Connell’s book, *The Book of Ceremonies*; unfortunately, this book is out of print. The authors of the two other excellent books in English, *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described*, by Fr. Adrian Fortescue, and *The Celebration of Mass*, by Canon J. B. O’Connell, assume that you know the principles of ceremonies, and so they do not mention them in detail. However, one can determine the bulk of these principles by just examining the actions that the Celebrant and other ministers make over and over again.

The second reason why principles are misunderstood is due to a lack of distinction. Principles are to rubrics, as philosophy is to theology: if you have bad philosophy, your theology will be rotten (and you will most likely end up as a heretic!): if you have a poor understanding of principles, your knowledge of rubrics will be like a piece of Swiss cheese: full of holes.

In this issue, the general principles of genuflecting will be explained. But first, what is a genuflection, or what does it symbolize? The act of genuflecting is unique to the Latin Rite and to the other Western Rites of Mass (e.g. the Dominican Rite, the Sarum Rite {once found in England}, the Ambrosian Rite, etc.), it is not however ever performed in the Eastern Rites, as it is a custom to make a low bow in the eastern countries (e.g. Greece, the Middle East). The genuflection came from the Roman court of the Emperors, and was used as a sign of homage to Caesar. Being a common custom among the Romans, the early Catholics in Rome adopted it for use in the liturgy as an act of adoration to our Lord. It is also used to show reverence to the Pope especially, and to a Prelate (Cardinal, Bishop or Abbot) inside and outside of the ceremonies.

There are two forms of a genuflection: the double knee genuflection, and the single knee (or simple) genuflection. Let us treat of the simple genuflection first, as it is the most used of the two. Quoting L. O’Connell directly:



Simple Genuflection

## “Simple Genuflection.

### A. How to make a simple genuflection:

Bend your right knee so that it touches the floor near the heel of your left foot. Keep your body erect, without bowing and without resting your hands on your left knee. Never genuflect at an angle, v.g., in passing from one side of the altar to the other, but always directly toward the altar.”

B. When is a simple genuflection made (this is a summary of what L. O’Connell lays out):

#### Preliminary remarks:

-an inferior minister *during a service* always genuflects when in the Sanctuary, even if just the cross is on the Altar. However, *outside of a service*, if just the cross is present on the Altar, the server makes only a moderate bow.

-quoting L. O’Connell: “The Blessed Sacrament is considered exposed:

- a) When It is in the monstrance, in the ciborium (or pyx) during private exposition, or in the chalice in the repository on Holy Thursday and Good Friday;
- b) When It is elevated at Mass or when Holy Communion is distributed;
- c) When It is carried in procession inside or outside the church;
- d) When It is on the altar after the Consecration, but only to the celebrant, deacon, and subdeacon- not to the inferior ministers, i.e., the master of ceremonies, the thurifer, etc., except when they are going up to, or coming down from, the altar after the Consecration. Therefore, the inferior ministers do not make a double genuflection when coming from the sacristy or returning to it (SRC 4135, 3), but make a simple genuflection on going up to, and coming down from the altar. Cf. Callewaert, p. 28.”

A simple genuflection is made:

1. When entering or leaving the Sanctuary. This can be done either:
  - at the center of the Foot (or Sanctuary)
  - or near the Sacristy doorway upon entering from the Sacristy, if one is not going to the center, but just remaining on the same side (e.g. an Acolyte returning from the Sacristy to his normal position near the Credence).
2. When one passes the center of the Altar.
  - If two servers *as a pair* are proceeding to a point in which one of the servers would have to genuflect before crossing sides, then both go to the center, genuflect and then proceed to that point (e.g. Ac1 and Ac2 genuflect at the center before proceeding to the Credence for the Offertory).
  - However, if there are two servers, and only one needs to proceed to a point which necessitates a genuflection, only that server goes to the center and genuflects; the other remains at his position (e.g. when Ac2 goes to switch the Missal from the Epistle side to the Gospel side for the Gospel).
3. When one leaves the center of the Altar to go to an outside point.
  - However, it is not necessary for a server to go to the center and genuflect, when he is going to another point on the same side of the Sanctuary (e.g. a single server at Low Mass does not go to the center and genuflect before proceeding to the Credence at the Offertory).

4. When the Blessed Sacrament is exposed in some way on the Altar (cf. *d*) above), a genuflection is made both times *in plano* (on the floor) by an inferior minister:
  - a) before ascending to the Altar (either the Predella or Altar steps).
  - b) after descending from the Altar. (for both a and b: cf. also J.B. O’Connell, pg. 364 and SRC 975<sup>1</sup>)

This follows a basic principle for inferior ministers (this principle differs for Sacred Ministers): they do not genuflect on the Predella, except in cases of the principle *ratione accommodationis* (to rationally accommodate; e.g. when the MC is assisting the Celebrant at the Missal during the Canon after the Consecration). This same principle should be observed by all outside of a ceremony too (e.g. when lighting or extinguishing the candles on the Altar, the genuflection should be made *in plano* at the Foot when crossing the center of the Altar, rather than on the Predella.).

It is unfortunate that the widely used book by Rev. William O’Brien, *How to Serve Low Mass and Benediction*, is incorrect in regards to #2 of principles of genuflecting. He gives as principles, or “rules of thumb” in the section, *Serving a Low Mass With Two Altar Boys*, “Genuflections: All genuflections are made by both boys; Movements: Whenever a duty is to be performed by one or both boys, both boys proceed to the center of the altar and genuflect on the floor before and after the action.”

Neither do these “rules of thumb” make sense (just think about it: what are all of the extra actions for?), nor do they conform with the principles as given by the recognized authorities. This method, particularly seen at the Gospel movement (e.g. switching the Missal), cannot be claimed either as a custom (cf. J.B. O’Connell: *VI. Custom*, pgs. 24-32; he makes it quite clear what is considered a valid custom.), nor retained for the sake of symmetry (which is ridiculous, as the correct method is even more symmetrical; neither does mere symmetry dictate rubrics, though it often does play an important part in them.).

This is unfortunate, since O’Brien’s book is not only well done with diagrams and pictures, making it very easy for servers to learn the movements, but he also has an excellent method of teaching the Latin responses in their proper places of Mass. And finally, the majority of the method that he lays out for serving Mass is correct. However, in regards to point 2 concerning the principles of genuflecting, the method that he outlines for two servers should not be used by the chapters of the Guild, as it does not conform to the 2nd part of the Object of the Guild (cf. title page of this article).

Does that mean we should just throw O’Brien’s books off of our shelves and into the can? By no means. Perhaps the Guild in the near future can print a small reference card that will simply alert one to the errors (with the authoritative quotes to prove them). The Guild does hope to eventually publish a small, but comprehensive rubric book for parish use by the Chapters. Much research is required to accomplish such an important, yet necessary task. We can only hope and pray that by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost and for love of the Altar, that this will one day be finally accomplished.

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