

# THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF CEREMONIES

## in the Roman Rite

### THEIR ORIGIN AND IMPORTANCE

The general principles of the Roman Rite are what define the character of this rite as *roman*. The dominating themes in the Roman world were **logic** and **simplicity**. These same Roman themes can be found to have been impressed upon its namesake Rite and which differentiates it from the Eastern Rites and even other Western Rites<sup>1</sup>. These themes find expression at these levels:

1. **Logic:** The principles and rubrics *make sense* and are not superfluous actions. The juridical character of the ancient Romans pervades the Roman Rite.
2. **Simplicity:** The various actions are done in a simple, yet profound manner, as simplicity is beauty in itself. As a result of this spirit, the Romans were quite practical in their methods. This simplicity is exercised in various ways within the Roman Rite.<sup>2</sup>

The general principles are to rubrics, what philosophy is to theology: they are the foundation for individual rubrics. The general principles are also simply *liturgical common sense* and comprise the liturgical "rules of the road"; once understood, their application on a particular basis becomes a fairly simple matter.

The general principles can be found innately, though not necessarily listed systematically, spread throughout the various liturgical books of the Roman Rite, namely, the *Missale Romanum* and the *Ceremoniale Episcoporum*. In fact, by examining the various actions repeatedly dictated by these books for the Sacred Ministers, one can ascertain a pattern and thereby the majority of the general principles. Furthermore, where the liturgical books lack in citing such principles in detail, the Sacred Congregation of Rites (SRC) and rubricians make up, either in the case of the former by elucidation and decrees, or in the latter case, within their referential works. In the case of rubricians though, some list these principles systematically, while some refer to them in passing (e.g., in the case of Fortescue, he assumes one already knows these principles), however, all rubricians agree though on these principles.

One final word to demonstrate the connection of the Roman Rite with Rome herself, in the past when a dispute of universal proportion has occurred regarding a particular action (e.g., how the altar is to be incensed), the SRC would usually decide in favor of the practice as found in the churches of Rome (i.e., the major basilicas who have an especial link to the Holy See, or particularly, the Bishop of Rome).

### RUBRICIANS

There are unfortunately misconceptions about rubricians which in turn beget misconceptions about rubrics themselves. The most common ones are:

- a. there are so many rubricians,
- b. each says something different or disagrees with each other on how the ceremonies should be carried out,
- c. a rubrician's word is simply his own, and therefore their works can be dispensed with.

In answer to these misconceptions:

- a. since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there have been roughly about a dozen authors (rubricians) who have written comprehensive rubrical works, and these works differ slightly because of:

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, the Dominican Rite, though a variation of the Roman Rite, has its own set of ceremonial principles, the majority of which are in conjunction with the Roman Rite, while a few are not. E.g., the Sedilla is considered in the Dominican Rite to be out of the view of the Altar, whereas in the Roman Rite it is not.

<sup>2</sup> One practical application of this type of Roman thought is: If items are not being used, they should be put away (e.g. bells and prayer cards should not be stored on the 1<sup>st</sup> Altar step during Mass or outside of Mass; their proper place is on the Credence when they are not being used by the Acolyte). Of course, one could also conclude that this simply makes sense (i.e., it is logical).

- (due to the years in which they were published, or republished) revisions made necessary either by reforms made to the Liturgy, or clarifications made by the SRC (or other offices of the Curia),
  - the language in which they were written (many rubrical works are written in Latin, but others are written in the vernacular; e.g., Fortescue was the first to compose a rubrical book in English),
  - and hence the local customs for the geographical area they entreated (e.g., Fortescue's work integrates the local customs of England, while L. O'Connell's those of the United States),
  - and finally, their style of presentation (some are more orderly and easier to read than others), especially in regards to the depth of detail in outlining how the ceremonies are to be conducted (e.g., in English, Fortescue *assumes* one already knows the general principles and hence, does not list them, J. B. O'Connell gives a few, while L. O'Connell lists almost all of them systematically).
- b. all rubricians agree upon the general principles (as they must); where they disagree or hold opinions are in matters where such options are allowed, as the rubrics are either not clear, and/or have not been definitively decided upon.
- c. the quote below, will not only define *what* a rubrician is, but also, *how much authority* a rubrician's word has:

“While the name of certain rubricians carry great weight,<sup>113</sup> [f. <sup>113</sup> Because it is recognized that they have really studied the rubrics thoroughly —they are not mere copyists or summarists —and their teaching is found to be strictly accurate] **the opinion of any writer is worth as much as the reasons on which it is based, and no more.** Hence the more authoritative writers usually give the reasons (rubrics, decisions of S.R.C., customary law, general principles of ceremonial —embodied in the rubrics themselves<sup>114</sup> [f. <sup>114</sup> Many general laws of ceremonial are given in the first chapter of the *Ritus celebrandi* of the Missal and are found scattered throughout the *Caeremoniale Episcoporum*.] or deduced from particular laws —liturgical propriety, or accepted practice) for their views, especially on points about which there is a difference of opinion.”<sup>3</sup>

And a quote from the Archconfraternity of Saint Stephen's 2<sup>nd</sup> part of its Three-Fold Object, further demonstrates this point:

“...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...” (pg. 1 of the SSPX's reprint of the Guild's *Handbook*, and pg. 1 of the Guild's 1962 edition).

## SOME FURTHER MISCONCEPTIONS

However, rubrical misconceptions do not simply end with the question of rubricians. Indeed there are others, here are just a few:

- a. There are no rules for servers, as they simply follow local custom. *Contra*: The general principles for the Sacred Ministers also apply (with a few differences due to the dignity of the office) to the Inferior Ministers. Furthermore, it ought to be well-remembered that the actions of the servers are actually *more frequent and therefore visible* (and therefore more liable to cause either edification or distraction for the faithful), and hence *a fortiori*, there actions must be regulated by some type of rules. Otherwise, matters would be helter-skelter.
- b. Customs (abuses; “tradition” vs. Tradition) vs. principles
- c. Rubrics have no meaning (argument of Modernists)

## AMERICAN CUSTOMS

<sup>3</sup> J.B. O'Connell, *The Celebration of Mass*, 1962; V. Rubricians, pg. 24

Derived from Roman and English practices

- Ac2 switching book
- No chalice veil before Offertory (English custom not to touch at all)
- Presentation of cruets / Lavabo (Ac1 holds towel)
- Use of bells (Hanc Igitur, Consecration action [universal method])
- Incensing from where Gospel was read during Solemn High Mass
- Use of crossbearer (boatbearer by application)
- Use of thurible w/ blessed incense for Processional / Recessional

## HIERACHY OF APPLICATION

- General Principles (universal to Roman Rite)
- National (*i.e.*, local) customs (*i.e.*, legitimate customs and not *abuses* which are against liturgical law)
- “SSPX customs” (*e.g.*, use of 2<sup>nd</sup> *Confiteor*, retention of minor items from pre-1955 Holy Week ceremonial)

## FOREWORD

It is assumed that the positions of *inferior ministers* (*i.e.*, servers) are held by clerics, who perform the reverences and various actions as prescribed for the Sacred Ministers with some minor variations. Therefore, within the ceremonies, nothing but the authentic liturgical gestures as described in the liturgical books, and as expounded upon by the recognized authorities, should be performed by laymen when serving the sacred ceremonies. All private acts of devotion should be omitted while serving, as these do not consist of the Church officially at prayer.

## I. GENERAL

### PRIVILEGES OF SACRED MINISTERS VERSUS INFERIOR MINISTERS

There are certain privileges that the Sacred Ministers (*i.e.*, the Celebrant, Deacon, Subdeacon<sup>4</sup>) enjoy due to the dignity of their office, but which the inferior ministers do not generally share. These privileges are:

- the ability to genuflect on the predella *in actu functionis*<sup>5</sup>,
- the ability to genuflect on the 1<sup>st</sup> Altar step *in actu functionis* (with the exceptions noted below),
- the ability to genuflect on the appropriate Altar step when changing from one side of the Predella to the other (outside of the condition *in coram Sanctissimo*)

### UNIFORMITY OF ACTION

Regarding uniformity of action, L. O’Connell declares that “*Nothing is more conducive to the smoothness of a ceremony.*”<sup>6</sup> It follows then, that the servers should make every effort to genuflect, to make the various liturgical gestures, to walk, to make the responses in unison either with other servers, or with the Sacred Ministers where this applies.

### WALKING

#### By Oneself

Always walk erect and at moderate pace. One’s eyes should be slightly cast downwards when walking out of reverence for the Sanctuary. Never walk sideways (*i.e.*, sidestepping); rather, turn in the proper direction then walk the short distance, then turn back to face the former direction. Nor should one walk

<sup>4</sup> And during a Pontifical Mass, the Assistant Priest and Deacons.

<sup>5</sup> However, outside of a function, a major cleric is still required to genuflect *in plano* as he is no longer exercising one of the offices of Sacred Ministers. This is confirmed by the fact that the *Ceremoniale Episcoporum* assumes that the head MC will be at least a priest, and because this office is that of an *inferior minister*, he is thereby required to follow the various genuflecting rules for inferior ministers. If this occurs *in functionis*, then *a fortiori*, outside of a function, a major cleric would be required to also do so outside of a ceremony when no office is being enacted.

<sup>6</sup> *The Book of Ceremonies*, pg. 29.

backwards; one is allowed to take one step back, but that is all. When encountering obstacles, if possible, step off to the right of it. When ascending steps, do so with your left foot first.

### **When Walking Around The Foot**

When walking around the Foot, e.g., to go to the Credence, one should not “*curb*” it. Rather one should go around the Foot in a graceful elliptical, keeping about a foot away [“*A foot for the Foot*”]. This will prevent one from hitting the steps accidentally with his shoe, and will also prevent the “*leaning towards the step*” look that normally accompanies “*curbing*” the steps.

### **With Another Server**

When two servers are walking together, they always walk shoulder to shoulder, not in single file.

### **When Two Servers Are Walking Around The Foot**

Again the same rule as for one server applies: The inside server should keep a foot away from the Foot. Likewise, the inside server must go at a slow enough pace to allow the outside server to keep up with the ellipsis movement around the Foot.

### **“Swing Like A Door” Movement**

There are times when two servers will need to “*swing like a door*” rather than turn inwards so as to continue walking shoulder to shoulder. In this case, the inside server will swivel slightly towards the direction in which the pair will proceed, while allowing the outside server to keep up.

## **SITTING**

One must sit straight and erect without leaning against objects behind him.<sup>7</sup> When sitting, the surplice should be positioned in one’s lap without stretching it, so that the hem is slightly above the bend of the knee. The hem should be arranged neatly, and the hands should be placed inside the hem, palm down, with fingers extended and held together, upon each knee.

## **POSITIONS OF DEPORTMENT<sup>8</sup>**

### **During Low Mass:**

Servers kneel out of deportment<sup>9</sup>, rather than out of reverence, which is why they bow when kneeling, but Sacred Ministers do not (when a Sacred Minister kneels, he does so to show a reverence). However, there are a few exceptions:

#### **Standing**

- During both *Gospels*.
- When servicing the Celebrant or performing a duty.

#### **Sitting**

- During the *Sermon*<sup>10</sup>.

### **During A *Missa Cantata*<sup>11</sup> Or A Solemn High Mass:**

These are the general rules for the ministers: When the Celebrant sits, the ministers sit (unless occupied with a duty), when the Celebrant stands the ministers stand, when the Celebrant kneels (for an objective reason), then the ministers kneel.

Servers generally stand<sup>12</sup> during these types of Mass with exception to these cases:

#### **Sitting**

- Whenever the Celebrant sits.

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<sup>7</sup> Only a bishop has the right to have a back to his seat, that is, the throne. Even the Sedilla should not have a back.

<sup>8</sup> For an excellent in-depth explanation of these principles, one should consult Fr. Michael Simoulin’s article in the March 1997 issue of *The Angelus*, pages 13-19.

<sup>9</sup> The principle behind this is that the Propers or Ordinary are not being chanted. When one sings, one generally stands.

<sup>10</sup> However the servers should not sit at the Sedilla, as this is reserved for the Sacred Ministers. Rather they should sit at separate stools.

<sup>11</sup> Generally called “High” Mass.

<sup>12</sup> The reason for this, is that standing is the “*liturgical position par excellence*.” Fr. Simoulin, March 1997, *The Angelus*, pg. 17.

- During the *Epistle*.
- During the *Sermon*.

### **Kneeling**<sup>13</sup>

- During the *Preparatory Prayers at the Foot of the Altar*.
- (If the Celebrant does so) During the *Credo* when the choir sings “...*descendit de caelis*” until “*Et homo factus est*” inclusively.
- During the *Consecration* (but the servers stand immediately after the *Consecration* actions are completed; *i.e.*, the last genuflection of the Celebrant after consecrating the Precious Blood).
- During the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Confiteor*.
- During the *Distribution of Holy Communion*.
- For the *Last Blessing*.

### **During A Requiem *Missa Cantata* Or Solemn High Mass**

As usual for High Mass, with these exceptions:

#### **Kneeling**

- During the *Oratio (Collect)*.
- During the *Postcommunion*.

### **During A *Missa Cantata* Or A Solemn High Mass On An Ember Day**

As usual for High Mass, with these exceptions:

#### **Kneeling**

- During the *Oratio (Collect)*.
- During the *Postcommunion*.

## **HANDS (liturgical gestures)**

### **General Rules**

- Fingers are always held closely together and extended for all actions listed below.
- When performing an action with your hands, imagine taking your folded hands apart and then performing the action with a slight modification (*e.g.*, like slightly bending the right hand).
- When holding an object, do not perform any actions with your hands (*i.e.*, the sign of the Cross, etc.).
- When one hand is in use (usually the right hand), hold your free hand with fingers touching, flat against your sternum.

### **Folded Hands**

When one’s hands are not in use, hold them with fingers touching, palm to palm with the right thumb over left thumb (“...*in modum crucis*...”<sup>14</sup>), at about a 20° angle just in front of one’s sternum (not actually touching your chest)<sup>15</sup>.

### **Making The Large Sign Of The Cross**

While keeping your right hand fingers together, touch your forehead, then your sternum (just above your left hand), the top of your left shoulder, then slightly twist your wrist and touch the top of your right shoulder<sup>16</sup>. This sign should always be made deliberately and reverently.

<sup>13</sup> This rule differs slightly for the Torchbearers, who kneel upon being led into the Sanctuary at the *Sanctus*, until they are led out after the *Distribution of Holy Communion*. However, the two head Torchbearers, go to each side of the Communion Rail and *stand* during *Communion* (after having themselves received).

<sup>14</sup> *Rit. Cel. III, 1*.

<sup>15</sup> Folded hands represent a state of inactivity, so one should not receive the *Lavabo* towel on one’s folded hands, but rather in the thumbs and index fingers of one’s outstretched hands.

<sup>16</sup> This over the right hand shoulder action symbolizes the throwing off of sin.

### **Making The Small Sign Of The Cross (The Gospel Cross)**

With your right thumb pointing upwards, and your extended right hand pointing left, take the fleshy side of your thumb and make a small cross on your forehead, then your lips, and finally your chest (just above your left hand). Each small cross should be a Greek cross (equilateral) and made with reverence and care. Do not form your hand into a fist when making this action.

### **Striking The Breast**

Keep your right hand extended, but slightly cupped, and strike your breast on your sternum (just above your left hand held flat) noiselessly with the tips of fingers. Do not form your right hand into a fist. The only time one strikes their breast are for these occasions:

1. Each *Confiteor* of the servers: At each *mea culpa*.
2. The *Agnus Dei*: At *miserere nobis* and *dona nobis pacem*.<sup>17</sup>
3. The *Domine non sum dignus* of the faithful: For the duration of each clause.
4. During the *Leonine Prayers* for the response “*Miserere nobis*” or “*Have mercy on us*” (out of custom, and then *only* if the Celebrant does so).

### **Do Not Strike Your Breast For:**

- The Celebrant’s *Confiteor*.
- The *Nobis quoque peccatoribus*.<sup>18</sup>
- The Celebrant’s *Domine non sum dignus*.<sup>19</sup>
- “*O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary*”, during the *Leonine Prayers*.

### **CARRYING OBJECTS**

When servers are carrying objects, they do not make any of the usual liturgical gestures with their hands (e.g., during a blessing, the Acolytes and Crossbearer neither kneel nor make the sign of the Cross). However, they do perform the usual bows (unless they are accompanying an image of Christ; cf. below).<sup>20</sup>

### **Torches**

Torches are always held in the **outside** hand.

**Exception:** There is an exception to this general rule: When the Torchbearers walk next to Blessed Sacrament (e.g., on either side of Canopy), torches are held in the *inside* hand.

### **Books**

Books are always placed with the opening facing *left*.<sup>21</sup> When presenting a book to a superior minister, hold the book so that the opening faces right. In this way, the minister does not have to turn the book around when he receives it, so that it will face left.

### **Books Can Be Carried In Two Ways:**

1. With both hands under the bottom edge, with the top edge of the book resting against one’s chest.
2. With the right hand on upper right corner, and the left hand under the bottom edge.

### **When A Minister Is Reading From A Book:**

Books are either held open:

1. Against one’s chest.
2. Against one’s forehead.

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<sup>17</sup> But not at a Requiem Mass, as the words change, and so the meaning changes to “*may he rest in peace*”, to which a striking of the breast is not appropriate, as this action symbolizes contrition.

<sup>18</sup> This is a part of the *Canon*, and the Celebrant is suppose to use the tone of “*aliquantulum voce*” to simply let those near him know where he is at in the *Canon*. L. O’Connell, pg. 161.

<sup>19</sup> The Celebrant is saying, “*Lord, I am not worthy to receive...*”, therefore it does not make sense that anyone other than the Celebrant should be striking his breasts. L. O’Connell, pg. 161.

<sup>20</sup> There is however a practical exception for the Torchbearers: When they are holding their torches and a moderate bow is prescribed, they make only a simple bow, as it is impractical for them to make a moderate bow.

<sup>21</sup> Exception: When a book is on the Gospel side of the Altar, the opening faces *right*, i.e., towards the Tabernacle.

This will depend on the situation. However, an opened book is always held with both hands under the bottom edge of the book (*i.e.*, the cover boards), but so that the pages can still be turned.

## II. RULES OF PRECEDENCE AND OF PROXIMITY

*"In all ceremonies strict precedence is observed."*<sup>22</sup> Proximity is a sub-principle, or a necessary conclusion, of the principle of Precedence. And though it is not explicitly named in the rubric books, it cannot be denied that its various rules exist.

### WHEN WITH A SUPERIOR

What is meant by a superior is usually the Celebrant, though this can also imply any of the Sacred Ministers.

### WHEN THE SUPERIOR IS WEARING VESTMENTS

#### Walking

Inferior ministers walk in front of and depending on the circumstances, to the left of superiors. The place of dignity in a liturgical procession is at the end.

#### Kneeling Or Standing

Inferior ministers stand or kneel slightly *behind* a superior.<sup>23</sup> Inferior ministers also kneel one level below that of the Celebrant or the Sacred Ministers.<sup>24</sup> However, there are times when both Sacred and inferior ministers kneel on the same level (*e.g.*, during Benediction).

### WHEN THE SACRED MINISTER IS WEARING ONLY A SURPLICE AND STOLE

#### Walking

Inferior ministers walk *behind* the superior in surplice and stole. The order of dignity is reversed for a non-liturgical procession.

### WHERE CONFLICT OF SPACE OCCURS

If two or more servers (*e.g.*, the Acolytes with the Crossbearer) come to a point where only one or two may proceed through, the highest ranking server(s) always goes first (*i.e.*, Ac1 at Low Mass or the Crossbearer at High Mass, then Ac1).

### MAKING WAY FOR A SUPERIOR

At certain times, an inferior minister will be required to step back one step to allow someone of higher rank (either a Sacred or inferior minister) to pass.

### TURNING

Turning falls under the rules of proximity.

#### When Turning By Yourself

Always turn in the direction of the nearest object (*e.g.*, the Altar) or personage that holds the greater dignity (*e.g.*, the Celebrant versus the Deacon). In cases of conflict or of choice, turn to the right.

#### When With Another Person

When with another server or Sacred Minister, always turn towards him. This is called an *inward turn*.

#### Practical Point On Inward Turning

If proceeding to another part of the Sanctuary with another server, upon turning, the inside server must always allow enough time for the outside server to keep up with the movement. Each turn should be performed gracefully and simultaneously to show unity of action.

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<sup>22</sup> L. O'Connell, pg. 29

<sup>23</sup> *E.g.*, during *Psalm 42*, the server should be about one foot away from the Foot; this not only satisfies the rule of precedence, but it also gives the Celebrant more room when he turns around upon descending from the Predella.

<sup>24</sup> If one is serving at an Altar that has just one step, *i.e.*, the Predella, the server should kneel *in plano* and not on the Predella, except during the *Consecration* action, and when receiving Communion (*i.e.*, when he normally would be on the Predella).

### **Turning Under The Conditions Of *in coram Sanctissimo***

When the Blessed Sacrament is exposed do not *completely* turn your back when descending from the Predella. These times occur:

- After the presentation of the cruets at the *Offertory*.
- After ministering the *Lavabo*.
- Immediately after the *Consecration* action when the servers go *in plano* to the center of the Foot to genuflect.
- After ministering the *Ablutions*.
- When changing the Missal and the Chalice Veil.

In these cases, the servers turn slightly toward each other and descend from the Predella almost facing each other (almost side-stepping). If the servers are to return to the Credence, upon reaching *in plano*, the servers then turn inwards completely and perform their duties as usual.

### **DURING THE READING OF THE GOSPEL**

During the reading of the *Gospel*, all should be facing towards the book out of respect for the Word of God.<sup>25</sup> Extraneous actions should not be performed during either the *Gospel* or the *Last Gospel*.<sup>26</sup> To do so shows a lack of reverence for God's Holy Word.

## **III. VARIOUS CONDITIONS THAT AFFECT REVERENCES**

### ***IN ACTU FUNCTIONIS* (in the act of the function)**

This describes when a liturgical function is occurring, namely:

- A. *During* Mass.
- B. *During* the Divine Office (said in choir).
- C. *During* any other type of official ceremony.
- D. All of Good Friday after the unveiling of the Cross inclusive to the ceremonies of the Easter Vigil.

### **Where The Blessed Sacrament Is Reserved**

Genuflections are observed as required.

### **At An Altar Where The Blessed Sacrament Is Not Reserved**

Inferior ministers genuflect as usual, even though the Celebrant only bows.

### **Where The Blessed Sacrament Is Exposed (*in coram Sanctissimo*)**

All ministers observe the special rules of genuflecting for *in coram Sanctissimo*.

### **OUTSIDE A SERVICE**

This occurs when performing Sacristy work, preparations in the Sanctuary, or when lighting candles.

### **Where The Blessed Sacrament Is Reserved**

Genuflections are observed as required under the usual circumstances.

### **At An Altar Where The Blessed Sacrament Is Not Reserved**

Inferior ministers make a moderate bow where they would normally genuflect.

### **Where The Blessed Sacrament Is Exposed (*in coram Sanctissimo*)**

A double knee genuflection is made where one would normally make a single knee genuflection.

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<sup>25</sup> Following this rule of proximity, the *Missale Romanum* gives the direction for the Celebrant during a Solemn High Mass to turn and bow toward the Tabernacle (or Altar Cross) instead of toward the Gospel book.

<sup>26</sup> There is one exception to this rule: During a High, Solemn or Pontifical Mass, the servers line up for the *Recessional* after signing themselves. The reason for this is historical; at one time the text of the *Last Gospel* was said by the bishop or priest to himself while returning to the Sacristy as private devotion. Later this was made an official part of the Mass due to the influence of the Franciscans. During Low Mass however, one should wait until the end of the *Last Gospel* before retrieving the Biretta or Prayer Card from the Credence and/or the Sedilla.



## **GOING TO AN OUTSIDE POINT (LEAVING THE VIEW OF THE ALTAR)**

When going to an outside point, or out of the view of the Altar, a genuflection is required at the Foot (or near it) , before leaving from and upon returning to the Foot.

### **These Items Are *Not* Considered To Be An Outside Point:**

- A. The Credence
- B. The Sedilla
- C. Either side of the Altar (Sanctuary) *in plano*.

### **These Items Are Considered To Be An Outside Point:**

- A. The Communion Rail
  - B. The Chancel
  - C. The Sacristy
- Therefore, when the Communion Rail Cloth needs to be turned, a genuflection must be at the Foot before departing and upon returning.
  - Therefore, during the reading of the *Epistle* at a Solemn High Mass, a genuflection is made by the Subdeacon and MC before departing and upon returning, even though they are not crossing the Sanctuary<sup>27</sup>.
  - Therefore, during Benediction, whenever a server or minister leaves the center of the Foot to go to the Credence, to the Sedilla, or to one of the sides of the Altar a moderate bow is not made before departing or upon returning.

## **IN CORAM SANCTISSIMO (in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament [exposed])**

This condition of the Blessed Sacrament exists on these occasions<sup>28</sup>:

- A. When It is in a Monstrance.
- A. When It is in a Pyx.
- B. When It is in a Ciborium.
- C. On Holy Thursday and Good Friday at the Repository
- D. When Holy Communion is distributed (when the Tabernacle is open, etc.)
- E. At the *Elevation*.
- F. When It is on the *mensa* from the *Consecration* until the Tabernacle is closed after *Communion*, but not to the inferior ministers *in plano* except when they ascend to or descend from the *Predella*.<sup>29</sup> It is exposed however to those who are on the *Predella*.

## **WHEN CARRYING OR ACCOMPANYING AN IMAGE OF CHRIST**

When one is carrying or accompanying an image of Christ or Christ Himself, one does not make any sort of reverence (*i.e.*, a bow, genuflection, or to kneel).<sup>30</sup> This rule encompasses these objects, persons and at these times:

- A. Blessed Sacrament (*i.e.*, during the *Distribution of Communion*): The Celebrant and the accompanying server(s)<sup>31</sup>.
- B. Processional Cross: The Crossbearer and the Acolytes.<sup>32</sup>
- C. *Evangelarium*<sup>33</sup>: The Subdeacon (when the office of the *Gospel* is being performed or that is, when the book is open) and the Acolytes (when they are flanking it).
- D. *Last Gospel* Card: The Subdeacon (at a Solemn High Mass) or the MC (at a High Mass).
- E. Infant Child for the *creche* (on Christmas Eve): The Celebrant.

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<sup>27</sup> This is done even when the Subdeacon and MC do not even go to an outside point. The reason for this is historical; at one time the *Epistle* was read at an *ambo* often located quite far from the Altar, and so a genuflection was necessary. The rubrics have retained this reverence even where it is not necessary.

<sup>28</sup> These occasions are outlined by L. O'Connell, on page 38, footnote 18.

<sup>29</sup> L. O'Connell, pg. 38, ff. 18 & SRC 4135, <sup>3</sup>, and Callewaert, pg. 28.

<sup>30</sup> While this is not explicitly mentioned as a *principle* in any of the books, that it is, can nevertheless be easily deduced by a careful comparison of the various rubrics that describe all of the conditions listed immediately below.

<sup>31</sup> This includes the Torchbearers who are *directly* accompanying the Blessed Sacrament. *I.e.*, Tbs 1 & 2 when at the edges of the Communion Rail during the distribution of communion.

<sup>32</sup> L. O'Connell, pg. 43; Callewaert, p. 26; J.B. O'Connell, pg. 464. Even so, there is one exception to this general rule: When a Metropolitan or an Archbishop in his diocese gives a blessing, the Crossbearer kneels with the figure of Our Lord facing the Prelate. Most likely, this hearkens back to the practice, when a corpus was not used on the special cross carried in front of the Archbishop.

<sup>33</sup> Or when a *Missale Romanum* is used to serve as a replacement.

- F. Veneration of the Cross on Good Friday: The Celebrant and the Acolytes accompanying with candles.

## IN REGARDS TO MAKING REVERENCES FOR A WORD OR PHRASE; WHOM TO FOLLOW, THE SACRED MINISTERS OR THE CHOIR?

The rule for this is as such:

### If The Celebrant Is Reciting A Prayer:

- Follow what the Celebrant is saying and perform those reverences in unison with the Celebrant as required.

### If The Celebrant Is Not Reciting A Prayer (e.g., is at the Foot or at the Sedilla)

- Follow what the Choir is singing and perform those reverences in unison with the Celebrant as required.

### **CUM RATIONE ACCOMODATIONIS (with rational accomodation)**

This is a principle of exception in regards to the normal rules of when to make reverences and it is sometimes employed for the sake of unity of action. For the inferior minister, this will affect him at certain times when he is next to a Sacred Minister. One example of this is when the MC and Thurifer are assisting the Celebrant incensing the Altar at a High Mass; they genuflect on the Predella with the Celebrant (who has the privilege of genuflecting on the Predella), though by themselves, they would normally not be allowed to do so.

## IV. REVERENCES

### BOWS

The rules for bowing differ for Sacred Ministers versus that of *inferior ministers*. Sacred Ministers are instructed *not* to bow while kneeling,<sup>34</sup> whereas *inferior ministers* are instructed to bow while kneeling (which is not necessarily a position of deportment for them at all times). However, when *inferior ministers* are next to a kneeling Sacred Minister they do not bow (following the rule of *cum ratione accomodationis*), unless the Sacred Ministers are explicitly required to bow; these times are:

- During the *Credo* at “*Et homo factus est*”.<sup>35</sup>
- During Benediction, before standing to impose incense.
- During Benediction, before and after incensing the Blessed Sacrament.
- During Benediction, for the hymn, *Tantum ergo*, at the words, “*veneremur cernui*”.<sup>36</sup>

### General

“*Bows should not be made unless they are required by the rubrics.*”<sup>37</sup> It follows then, that bows *should not* be made to the Tabernacle or Altar Cross upon ascending to or before descending from the Predella (e.g., when switching the Missal, etc.)<sup>38</sup>.

### When Kneeling

Bow straight ahead. The only time one turns while bowing when kneeling are those who, by proximity, are next to or immediately behind the Celebrant and at these times:

- A. During a Solemn High Mass: During the *Celebrant's Confiteor* when he turns toward the Deacon and Subdeacon and says, “*...et vobis, fratres...*” and “*...et vos, fratres...*”.
- B. When the Sacred Ministers and/or the servers say the *Misereatur*.
- C. When the servers say the *Confiteor*, at the words, “*...et tibi, pater...*” and “*...et te, pater...*” (however, this is not done at the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Confiteor*).

<sup>34</sup> At these times kneeling is a position of *reverence* and not of deportment for them.

<sup>35</sup> SRC rescript 2915, <sup>6</sup> prescribes this for Christmas and the Feast of the Annunciation, and by application this should be done by the Sacred Ministers if they kneel at the Foot while the choir sings these words (after having said it themselves at the Altar).

<sup>36</sup> SRC 4179, <sup>2</sup>.

<sup>37</sup> L. O'Connell, pg. 43.

<sup>38</sup> This is neither prescribed nor mentioned in the rubrics for *inferior ministers*, even by those who are quite specific; i.e. J.B. O'Connell and L. O'Connell. There was one exception, which has fallen out of use anyhow because the action is no longer performed: The Acolyte use to process into the Sanctuary and recess out carrying the Missal. After the *Leonine Prayers*, he would pick up the Missal and bow to the Tabernacle in unison with C (who was about to descend with the Chalice), thereby following the principle of *cum ratione accomodationis*. It should be mentioned also, that those bows that the Sacred Ministers customarily perform towards the Tabernacle, are hotly debated by rubricists.

### When Standing

One should pivot on his feet so as to face the Tabernacle, and then make the appropriate bow, and then pivot back to face the former direction. This should be done smoothly and in unison with any other ministers. In anticipation of making the bow, one should turn towards the Altar, at least a second or two before the word or action arrives, so that the bow can be made on cue.

### During The Sung *Gloria* And *Credo*: Whom To Follow —The Celebrant Or The Choir?

During the sung *Gloria* and the sung *Credo*, the servers follow the bows (and the genuflection) of the Celebrant as long as he is at the Altar. Once he leaves the Altar to go to the Sedilla, they then act according to the words sung by the Choir, as does the Celebrant himself.

### There Are Three Types Of Bows<sup>39</sup>:

1. **Simple:** With the head only.
2. **Moderate:** With the head and shoulders at a 60° angle.
3. **Profound:** With the head and shoulders at an almost 90° angle.

### Bows Are Made For 5 Reasons:

1. Whenever something is said **aloud** that requires a reverence<sup>40</sup>.
2. When kneeling, for a word or phrase said **aloud** that requires a genuflection for those standing<sup>41</sup>.
3. When ministering (servicing) to a Sacred Minister.
4. When an act of reverence is required towards a personage.
5. For an action of the Celebrant that requires an objective reverence (e.g., for the genuflections of the *Consecration*, and at *C's Communion* of both Sacred Species).

### Bows Are Not Made:

- By an inferior minister when he is kneeling next to a *kneeling* Sacred Minister,<sup>42</sup> not even for the *Gloria Patri* or the Holy Name.
- By an inferior minister towards anyone or anything before sitting down.
- To someone who is kneeling.<sup>43</sup>
- From the *Veneration of the Cross* on Good Friday until the Vigil Service on Holy Saturday, all bows *to persons* are omitted.<sup>44</sup>

### The Simple Bow

Almost all of the bows made during a ceremony are simple bows.

### A Bow Is Required For These Words Said Aloud By A Sacred Minister:

- A. At the Holy Name of Jesus (but not when the title, "*Christ*" is mentioned by itself).
- B. During the *Gloria Patri* . . . (but not for the second part: *...sicut erat...etc.*).
- C. During the *Gloria* at these words: *in Deo* (just at *Deo*), *adoramus te, gratias agimus tibi, Jesu Christe, suscipe deprecationem nostram, Jesu Christe*.
- D. "*Oremus.*"
- E. At the name of Mary, and the name(s) of the Saint(s) of the day. However, if the name of another Mary occurs<sup>45</sup>, or another saint of the same name, do not bow for it. Do not bow for

<sup>39</sup> Cf. *The Acolyte*, Issue 3, pg. 16; the Guild's *Handbook*, pg. 9; L. O'Connell, pg. 35, f. 14; J. B. O'Connell, pg. 264 f (in the three volume set); and J. B. O'Connell, pg. 200 (in the 1962 edition) for clarifications on how many types of bows exist.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. above, *VARIOUS CONDITIONS THAT AFFECT REVERENCES*, section *E* for further clarification.

<sup>41</sup> Same as footnote 24.

<sup>42</sup> With exception to those times that Sacred Ministers are required to, as mentioned above in the section *BOWS*.

<sup>43</sup> L. O'Connell, pg. 43, Fortescue, p. 26.

<sup>44</sup> L. O'Connell, pg. 43.

- the name of the Apostles on their feast day when the Gospel is announced (e.g., “*Sequentia Evangelii secundum ...*”).<sup>46</sup>
- F. During the *Credo* at these words: *in unum Deum, Jesum Christum*, (a moderate bow is made for the genuflection at: *Et incarnatus est*), *simul adoratur*.
  - G. During the *Preface* at: “...*gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro*.”
  - H. During the entire recitation of the *Agnus Dei*.
  - I. During the *Last Blessing* at: “*Benedicat vos omnipotens Deus . . .*”
  - J. At the name of the reigning Sovereign Pontiff and of the local Ordinary.<sup>47</sup>
  - K. During the season of Lent for the *Oratio super populum*: When the Celebrant says, “*Oremus* (make a simple bow): *Humiliate capita vestra Deo* (make another simple bow until the prayer is concluded; do not make a bow for “...*per Dominum Jesum Christum...*” as your head is already lowered).<sup>48</sup>

### When Ministering To (servicing) A Sacred Minister

A bow is always the *first* thing and the *last* thing done when ministering to a Sacred Minister. One is considered to be servicing a Sacred Minister at these times:

- When presenting either the *Epistolarium* or the *Evangeliarium*.<sup>49</sup>
- When presenting the cruets at the *Offertory* (either to the Celebrant or to the Subdeacon).
- For any kind of *Lavabo*.
- When receiving the Pax (or in giving it to one in choir *via* a Pax Brede)<sup>50</sup>.
- During the *Ablutions*.<sup>51</sup>

When servicing the Celebrant or a Sacred Minister, the bows are made directly in front of him, **not in plano** before the servers ascend to the Altar to perform their duties.

A bow is *not prescribed* in any of the books, for the ministers (i.e., the MC and Thurifer) before they ascend to the Predella for the imposition of incense and should therefore be omitted.

### When An Act Of Reverence Is Required Towards Other Personages

- A. Bows are returned if the personage bowing is of equal or higher rank.
- B. Whenever the Thurifer incenses someone (or a group) the first thing and last thing that he does is bow toward them.<sup>52</sup>

### The Moderate Bow

The moderate bow is used only:

- A. During the *Misereatur* and *Confiteors* said by the servers.
- B. When *kneeling*, for words said **aloud** by the Celebrant that require a genuflection for those standing (e.g., during the *Credo* at *Et incarnatus est*<sup>53</sup>, for *Flectamus genua* on some Ember days)
- C. For the four genuflections of the *Consecration* action.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>45</sup> E.g., during *Gospel* for the Votive Mass of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the name of Mary of Cleophas is mentioned, but just *mater* for the Blessed Virgin Mary.

<sup>46</sup> SRC 3767, <sup>25</sup>; cf. L. O’Connell, pg. 35, ff. 15

<sup>47</sup> E.g., during Benediction if *Tu es Petrus* is sung, a bow is made for the name of the Pope, but only when the Celebrant is standing for the *Oratio Pro Papam*.

<sup>48</sup> Fortescue, pg. 41.

<sup>49</sup> Usually, an extra *Missale Romanum* is used for both of these books, due their rarity.

<sup>50</sup> This is actually a reverence made out of courtesy or respect, rather than that of performing a duty towards the person.

<sup>51</sup> This includes both parts of the *Ablutions*: When Ac1 is alone on the Predella, he performs the necessary bows by himself, and when the Celebrant goes to the Acolytes, they again make both bows before and after.

<sup>52</sup> This may be done from a distance however, unlike the bows made when servicing the Celebrant.

<sup>53</sup> Sacred Ministers are required also to bow for this phrase if they are kneeling during the *Credo*, after reciting it at the Altar. SRC 2915, 6.

<sup>54</sup> This is the rule given by the Guild’s *Handbook*, by L. O’Connell, pg. 160-161 and in a slightly different version by J. B. O’Connell, pg. 359-360.

- D. When kneeling under the conditions of *in coram Sanctissimo*:<sup>55</sup>
- Before rising to impose incense into the thurible.
  - Before and after incensing the Blessed Sacrament.
  - During *Tantum ergo* at the words, *veneremur cernui*.

### The Profound Bow

A Profound bow is used before and after incensing the Celebrant. Otherwise, it is hardly used by inferior ministers, except in regards to Prelates during Pontifical ceremonies.

#### Do Not:

- Make a profound bow while kneeling. The moderate bow takes its place and “*is equivalent to a profound ... bow while standing*”.<sup>56</sup>

### GENUFLECTIONS

As for bowing, the rules for genuflecting differ somewhat for the inferior ministers from that of the Sacred Ministers. Likewise, a genuflection should not be made unless it is prescribed.

#### Predella Protocol

Whereas the Sacred Ministers have the privilege of genuflecting on the Altar steps<sup>57</sup>, inferior ministers do not have the privilege of genuflecting on the Predella within or outside of the ceremonies, except in cases of the principle *cum ratione accomodationis*.<sup>58</sup> When this occurs, one may not rest his hands on the Altar, as only the Celebrant has this privilege.<sup>59</sup>

#### There Are Two Types Of Genuflections:

1. The **Single knee** genuflection.
2. The **Double knee** genuflection.

#### Genuflections Are Made For 7 Reasons:

1. When entering or leaving the Sanctuary.
2. When crossing the center of the Altar.
3. When coming to or leaving from the center of the Altar.
4. When going to an outside point (leaving the view) of the Altar.
5. When standing, for a word or phrase said **aloud** that requires a genuflection (during the *Last Gospel* at *Et homo factus est*, during some *Graduals* or *Alleluias*, for “*Flectamus genua*”, etc.).<sup>60</sup>
6. When the special rules for *in coram Sanctissimum* apply.
7. On Good Friday from the *Veneration of the Cross*, inclusive to the Vigil of Holy Saturday (this entire period of time is treated as *in actu functionis*).<sup>61</sup>

### General

Like bowing, a genuflection should not be made unless the principles or a specific rubric calls for it. It follows then, that the often seen method for the two servers at Low Mass, “*whenever one server has to genuflect, the other server should genuflect with him in the center*” is incorrect. This is not only wasted

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<sup>55</sup> As mentioned previously, these bows also apply to the Sacred Ministers. These occasions occur during Benediction, the Forty Hours Exposition, on Holy Thursday during the *Translation of the Blessed Sacrament*, and during any Procession of the Blessed Sacrament, namely on the feasts of Corpus Christi and Christ the King.

<sup>56</sup> SRC 4179, 1 and L. O’Connell, pg. 37. Whenever profound bows are prescribed for Sacred Ministers, it is when they are *standing*.

<sup>57</sup> The first and last genuflection though, is always performed *in plano* by the Sacred Ministers.

<sup>58</sup> Technically, this rule should even include major clerics outside of a ceremony, since they are no longer fulfilling the function of a Sacred Minister *in actu functionis* and consequently now longer have the privilege.

<sup>59</sup> L. O’Connell, pg. 43, Callewaert, pg. 26.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. *above* VARIOUS CONDITIONS THAT AFFECT REVERENCES, section F.

<sup>61</sup> L. O’Connell, pg. 39 and SRC 3049, <sup>5</sup>.

motion, but this “rule of thumb” does not even make sense and certainly does not comply with the Roman character of the ceremonies; an action should not be made unless there is a need or reason for it.

### **Direction Of Genuflecting**

When genuflecting, normally one genuflects directly ahead, however, on occasion, it may be necessary for one to turn and face an object (be it the Blessed Sacrament, the Altar, the Book of Gospels, etc.) and then make the genuflection.

### **The Single Knee Genuflection**

The majority of genuflections made are single knee. A single knee genuflection is made by bending the right knee, so that it touches the floor near one’s left foot.

### **When A Single Knee Genuflection Is Made, *Do Not*:**

- Bow your head.
- Make the sign of the Cross (each action means something different).
- Touch your knees with your folded hands (or put your hands on your knees).
- Slouch your body.
- Genuflect at an angle towards the object you are genuflecting to, especially when crossing the center of the Foot (e.g., the Altar).

### **Special Rules of *In Coram Sanctissimum***

Under those conditions in which the Blessed Sacrament is considered exposed, a single knee genuflection is made by an inferior minister *in plano* before ascending to the Predella, and *in plano* after descending from the Predella (without turning one’s back). This is done also outside of a service when lighting and extinguishing candles, or performing Sacristy work on the Altar where *in coram Sanctissimum* conditions exist.

### **The Double Knee Genuflection**

A double knee genuflection is made by going to your left knee, then to your right, making a moderate bow, then standing again (you must stand before you kneel again, *unless* the place where you are genuflecting is the *same place* where you are going to kneel<sup>62</sup>).

A double knee genuflection is used only during times of *in coram Sanctissimum*. Though when they are used differs depending on the conditions:

### ***In Actu Functionis***

When this condition exists, a double knee genuflection is only made for these two reasons:

1. When entering or leaving the Sanctuary.
2. When going to an outside point (leaving the view of the Altar).

All other genuflections (e.g., like crossing the center of the Altar, ascending to and descending from the Predella) are single knee genuflections as usual.

### **Outside Of A Service**

1. For those reasons listed for *in actu functionis*.
2. Every time one crosses the center of the Altar.

### **Special Consideration On Genuflecting**

If where one would genuflect is the same place where one would kneel (e.g., both times *in plano*), then one is not required to genuflect and then kneel, but one simply remains kneeling after performing the moderate bow.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> A server always genuflects *in plano*. So if the server were kneeling *in plano*, instead of kneeling on an Altar Step, etc., he would simply kneel, perform a moderate bow, and then remain where he was already kneeling.

<sup>63</sup> L. O’Connell, pg. 40. This principle is more often performed by Sacred Ministers than by inferior ministers.

## **SOLITA OSCULA**

*Solita oscula* are given to the Celebrant only (*i.e.*, during a Solemn High Mass, *not* to a Deacon or Subdeacon who may be a priest)

### ***Solita Oscula* Are Given In This Order:**

- A. **When giving:** Object first, then the Celebrant's hand.
- B. **When receiving:** Celebrant's hand first, then the object.

### **There Are 2 Exceptions To The Receiving Rule Regarding Sacramentals:**

- A. **Blessed Candle:** Candle first, then the Celebrant's hand.
- B. **Blessed Palm:** Palm first, then the Celebrant's hand.

The reason for this is that these sacramentals take precedence over the Celebrant.

### **The Items That Receive *Solita Oscula* Are:**

- A. Biretta: On one of the sides.
- B. Cruets: On the side of the cruet (not the lip or handle)<sup>64</sup>.
- C. Aspergillum: On the end of the handle.
- D. Incense spoon: On the end of the handle.
- E. Thurible: On the disk (where the chains are attached).

### ***Solita Oscula* Are Omitted:**

- A. For Requiem Masses.
- B. For ceremonies *in coram Sanctissimo*.
- C. On Good Friday and pre-Mass ceremonies of Easter Vigil inclusive.

## **V. GLOSSARY OF LITURGICAL EXPRESIONS IN LATIN**

Those words in *italics* are the literal translation of Latin to English

*a fortiori*

*Even more so* (when proving a point)

*in actu functionis*

*In the act of the function*

*in coram Sanctissimo*

*In the presence of the Blessed Sacrament*

*in plano / in planum*

*On the floor* (of the Sanctuary) (ablative form: no motion) / *on the floor* (accusative form; motion)

*cum ratione accomodationis*

*With rational accommodation*

*solita oscula*

*With the customary kisses*

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<sup>64</sup> This is done at the *Offertory* only when *presenting* them to the Celebrant. This is also a particular custom in the United States that ought to be observed in this country.