

PREPARING FOR THE UPCOMING CHANGES ON THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT, 2011

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Sunday Mass is the greatest miracle in the world: the celebration of the Eucharist. God speaks through the Scriptures. The Church offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving. The Holy Spirit transforms the gifts of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus. The faithful receive Communion. And so nourished, the people of God go forth into the world to preach the Gospel and to live by its demands.

What happens inside the Church is important, but so is what happens inside the heart. When the priest sings, "Let us pray," his timing, pace, enunciation, gestures, and eye contact are all of great consequence. But so is something underneath it all: the prayer that happens as a result of this exhortation.

The purpose of the Introductory Rites is to ensure that the faithful who come together as one dispose themselves to listen properly to God's Word and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily.

At Mass Christ is present when the Church prays and sings. Christ is present in the priest, the Word, and substantially and continuously under the Eucharistic species, but Christ is also really present in the people.

The peal of the bells calls us to the celebration of the Liturgy. May the voice of the bells prompt us to come gladly to the House of God. Upon entering the church, many people sign themselves with holy water. This is an old and honored practice for all who enter a church to dip their hand in a font of holy water and sign themselves with the sign of the cross as a reminder of their baptism.

Extraordinary ministers of Communion will take their places with the people in the church. There is no reason for special seating in the sanctuary nor for joining in the entrance procession.

Before taking their place in church, the people make a sign of reverence. Most Catholics genuflect. Some people place, one hand on the pew for support. Many people make the sign of the cross while genuflecting. Some lower the knee only part way to the ground. Some are unable to genuflect at all because of physical ailments. In such cases, a profound bow would be most acceptable.

Many Catholics may be surprised that the Altar, not the Tabernacle, is the center of attention for the celebration of Mass. Hence, this is why we here at St. Paul close the curtain during the celebration of the Eucharist. Before the Closing Hymn, the curtain is once again opened.

The choir and other musicians take places that facilitate their full participation. The cantor or choir director will lead the people's singing from an area apart from the ambo (where the Word of God is proclaimed). The Responsorial Psalm is properly sung from the ambo. Many parishes have established a music area as we have at St. Paul.

A choir loft behind the congregation usually does not serve as well as an area visible and connected to the people. The ministers of music are most appropriately located in a place where they can be part of the assembly and have the ability to be heard.

The ushers reserve the back pew. Seating ushers near the doors of the church advantageously places them where they can tend to the needs of all those arriving, even those coming in late. However, ushers at the back of church should be all the more careful to participate at the Mass, not simply to observe it, or even worse to ignore the liturgy by spending too much time visiting in the church foyer where the baptismal font is so beautifully located.

Lectors sometimes have proclaimed the Word of God from materials of lesser quality, such as missalettes or photocopies. This should never be done because it weakens the effect of the Liturgy of the Word. Because of the dignity of the Word of God, the books of readings should be handled with dignity. After the Gospel has been proclaimed, the people remain standing until the Gospel Book has been enthroned in its proper place. The Book remains opened as the Homilist seeks to explain and apply the Word of God for that particular Sunday.

(All of the above comes from the book "Let Us Pray" authored by Father Paul Turner. Father Turner led our Priests' Study Days this past year in aiding us to understand the upcoming changes. More materials will be following during the upcoming weeks.)

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The entrance song opens the celebration, fosters the unity of the people, introduces the mystery of the season or the day, and accompanies the procession. The songs which are sung during the Eucharistic celebration should be chosen wisely-befitting the Word of God which is being proclaimed.

Singing is of great importance to the celebration of Mass. This is especially true of the dialogues between the priest and people on Sundays and holy days of obligation. Singing is one of the most important ways to achieve what the Second Vatican Council called for (1962-1965), namely, for the conscious, active, and fruitful participation of the faithful in the liturgy. Singing is to be especially encouraged in every way for Masses celebrated with children.

It is important today for us to realize we will no longer be singing "at Mass," but rather, we will be singing "**the Mass.**" This deserves some reflection on our part.

The cantor or song leader is encouraged to announce the hymn with such words as: "Please join in singing...." This is more appropriate than "Join me in singing," which sounds as though the song belongs to the cantor, or "Let us greet our celebrant," which sounds as though the song is about the priest. Some parishes avoid the announcement altogether by preparing and printing a weekly worship aid. **I wonder if there is anyone in our parish who would like to volunteer to do this?**

If incense is used, it is an expression of **reverence** and of **prayer**. That which is incensed is **holy**. Incensation is encouraged on Sundays and festive days.

Have you noticed the only objects kissed by the deacon and priest during the course of the Mass are the **Altar** and the **Book of Gospels**?

After the Sign of the Cross the priest speaks (or sings) the **ritual greeting** which has a deeper significance than a polite hello. The greeting signifies the presence of the Lord to the community gathered there.

In the Penitential Rite the priest invites everyone, including himself, to acknowledge their sins. All observe a brief silence. All strike their breast as they acknowledge their own faults. The priest then gives an absolution. Even though the word "absolution" is used, it lacks the efficacy of the Sacrament of Penance. Still, it is a prayer asking forgiveness.

The blessing and sprinkling of water may replace the Penitential Rite on Sundays as a reminder of baptism. This is especially recommended for the Easter Season. Another beautiful feast for the blessing and sprinkling of water would be the Solemnity of the Baptism of the Lord.

The **Collect** is the **Opening Payer** of the Mass. The priest invites the people to pray. All observe a period of silence so that everyone may be conscious of the fact that they are in God's presence and may formulate their petitions mentally. Singing is encouraged for the Opening Prayer.

What follows are some of the highlights from the National Pastoral Musicians Convention I recently attended in Louisville, Kentucky. Present were over three thousand musicians, liturgists, priests, along with Archbishop Kurtz, the Metropolitan of the Diocese of Louisville, and Cardinal DiNardo, who is the liaison between the American Bishops and the NPM.

NATIONAL PASTORAL MUSICIANS' CONVENTION

LOUISVILLE, KY JULY, 2011

We know that Christ is present in His Word and in His Sacraments. Christ is especially present when His Church gathers together and sings. For many years the Church has encouraged full, conscious, and active participation in her worship of the Lord. In our worship, we eagerly await the coming of Jesus!

Our upcoming changes are not about rules and regulations, but they are about Jesus! We are encouraged to have an open mind and heart. We are asked to support one another. We can give no greater worship to God than through the Eucharist. In the Eucharist, Christ is making present once again his saving Death on the Cross and His glorious Resurrection.

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What we pray should show what we believe.

Accuracy in translation is extremely important. We use the Psalms to help us understand who Christ is. That is why the pronouns are masculine.

Liturgical texts can only give us a glimpse into the death and resurrection of Jesus. Let us be patient with ourselves.

In our daily Eucharist we should have:

- Opening Hymn
- Gospel Alleluia with its Verse
- Holy, Holy, Holy (We join with all the angels and saints)
- Memorial Acclamation
- Doxology (Through Him, with Him...)

Music belongs to the Eucharist (Mass). It is not icing on the cake. Recall the days of the so-called "High Mass."

The Lector can read the Reading from the Word of God, and if necessary, the Cantor can sing "The Word of the Lord."

It is important to realize that we do not sing at Mass, but we sing the Mass. Why do we sing at all? Number one is because God sings; Jesus sings; the angels; the saints sing. In **Psalm 150** and in **Daniel, Chapter 3**, we are told that everything that has breath sings. Music makes the texts even more special. Music

fosters unity; it slows us down; it creates the conditions where God can speak to us, and we can listen. What is to be sung are the texts. Psalm 90 helps us understand the absolute importance of the Psalms.

True story: a young boy was misbehaving in church. His mother stands him in the corner in his room at home. Later, she hears singing. It is her boy singing. His mother listens. He is singing the psalm: "Be with me Lord, when I am in trouble."

The Psalms are so important. Only the Word of God can respond to the Word of God.

Communion is not only about receiving the Real Presence of Jesus. Communion is about the forgiving of our sins; it restores us to the community; and it prepares us for everlasting life. If you would question this, then refer to the beautiful Latin hymn, **O Sacrum Convivium (O Sacred Banquet)**.

Change happens. It is part of life. Whether change weakens or strengthens us as Catholics depends greatly on the way we enter the transition. From the very beginning of Jesus' Church, there has been change and transition. We as Catholics are steeped in change and transition. In our own lifetime we have seen the rise of the RCIA, the use of the Vernacular in our worship of God, the Diaconate, etc. How we change depends upon our understanding of God. Do we really believe that Jesus is with His Church as He promised? Undoubtedly, change and transition is slow and gradual. We must be patient with ourselves.

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Notice the priest is to have his hands joined when he sings (or says), "Let us pray." The joining of hands alerts the people to focus their attention on prayer to God. His joined hands will contrast with his **extended** hands during the words of the Opening Prayer (Collect).

When the priest proclaims "Let us pray," silence follows. This is so that everyone "may be conscious of the fact that they are in God's presence and may formulate their petitions mentally." The people have centered themselves in the presence of God and have directed their thoughts to Heaven. They seal these few moments with their acclamation (AMEN-either sung or recited). The Introductory Rites now draw to a close.

Children may be dismissed for their own Liturgy of the Word after the introductory rites. The dismissal of the children should be complete before the Liturgy of the Word begins.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The proclamation of the Scripture brings the community into the presence of the living God who speaks to them **here** and **now**. It is not a mere reading of old texts. When the Sacred Scriptures are read in the Church, God speaks to His people, and Christ, present in His own word, proclaims the Gospel. Christ is present above all in the Eucharist, but Christ is also present in the Scriptures. It is Christ who proclaims the gospel. The people hear His words through the medium of the priest's or the deacon's voice.

The Liturgy of the Word includes the readings from Scripture, the responsorial psalm, the gospel acclamation, the homily, the profession of faith, and the prayer of the faithful. In the prayer of the faithful those who have been nourished by God's Word pray for the needs of the Church and the world.

The lector will want to have the attention of all before proclaiming the first reading. If there is more than one reading (for example, each Sunday), it is preferable to use a different lector for each. Lectors wear ordinary attire, and are seated with their families within the church. When it is time for the reading, the lector comes into the Sanctuary (coming through the communion rail gates), makes a **profound bow** to the

Altar, and then proceeds to the Ambo. The word Ambo is the proper name for what many still call “pulpit” or “lectern.” At the proper time, the lector will leave the Sanctuary in the same manner. Please do not use the side steps.

It would be well to have the Lectionary opened to the proper page prior to the beginning of Mass. If a page does need to be turned, then do so before announcing the reading. The lector is cautioned **NOT** to begin by saying “the first reading is **a reading from...**” or “the second reading is **a reading from...**” The proper way is simply, “A reading from “

Eye contact with the people is always a plus. Yes, this takes time and a certain degree of confidence. Remember, you are not proclaiming your word but God’s Word. If a mistake is made in reading, back up a phrase and read it again without interjecting extra words such as “excuse me.”

At the conclusion of the reading, the lector should observe silence with everyone else. Sometimes the lector turns the page for the next reading or removes the **Lectionary** to make room for the **Book of Gospels**. The Lectionary is to be placed on the shelf below long ways. If at all possible, it is preferred that the people turn their attention to the reader instead of participation aids like the missalette. If someone **needs** the missalette, then that is fine. Note the lector pauses (for about **5 seconds**) when he or she finishes the reading before making the announcement “The Word of the Lord.” It is desired that these acclamations be sung. If the lector feels uncomfortable in doing this, then the cantor may do so. Notice when the readings have been proclaimed, the lector says “The Word of the Lord.” The lector should **NOT** say “This is the Word of the Lord.”

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

The Responsorial Psalm fosters meditation on the Word of God. The psalm should always be sung. The instrument that accompanies the singing of the psalm will break the silence with its introduction. Someone in the music ministry determines the length of the silence that follows the first reading. Usually, the pause is about 30 seconds. The assigned psalm usually coheres with the First Reading.

Ordinarily, the psalm is to be led from the ambo, however, “another suitable place” is acceptable.

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On November 27, 2011, the United States will join other English-speaking countries in implementing a new translation of the Third Edition of the **Missale Romanum (the Roman Missal)**, the official text for worship for the Latin Rite of the Catholic Church.

In 1969, shortly after the close of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), the emphasis was placed on conveying **the meaning of** the original Latin text of the Roman Missal rather than **the text itself**. The results were Mass translations into the English vernacular that sounded very modern and were easy to understand, **but at the price of significantly deviating from the original Latin text in many areas**. The 1974 and 1985 English translations of the First and Second Editions of the Missale Romanum were based on this same principle of easy, modern reading.

In 2001, the Congregation for Divine Worship issued a new Instruction. This new Instruction gave a new guiding principle for translators. This would involve rendering the Latin text of the Roman **Missal as faithfully as possible** into the vernacular. It was clearly stated: **“the original text insofar as possible, must be translated integrally and in the most exact manner, without omissions or additions in terms of their content, and without paraphrases or glosses.”** The result is an accurate and dignified translation of the Mass into English that allows the beauty and grandeur of the original Latin text to shine through.

We are being given a golden opportunity as English-speaking Catholics to review and reflect on the reality of what the Mass really is, as well as to deepen our appreciation for the rich liturgical heritage of the Catholic Church’s Latin Rite.

BE PREPARED FOR SOME STRONG WORDS FROM OUR HOLY FATHER.

Then Cardinal Ratzinger (now **Pope Benedict XVI**) makes the point that we are supposed to worship God the way He wants to be worshiped, not the way **we** want to worship Him. This is because liturgy is not our work but our participation in God’s work of redemption. With authority given by Christ Himself, the Church teaches

the truth, makes certain laws and sets the rules for worship. If we participate faithfully in the proper celebration of the Eucharist, we will glorify God and be the holy people God is calling us to be. However, if we ignore Church laws and elevate our personal ideas for worship above the Church's established liturgical rules, we insult God.

Evidently, humility and obedience are essential components of true worship. When it comes to Catholic worship today, there are those who think they know better than God and the Church. Their concept of liturgy has more in common with the feel-good pop psychology of the sixties than with ancient Jewish and Catholic worship traditions. "Authority" and "tradition" are bad words to them. They reject the Church's regulations for worship and its 2,000 year liturgical history out of hand in favor of their own innovative worship preferences. Such privately determined "worship" has no place in the Church. It is built on disobedience, the prideful exaltation of human ideas and preferences above God's Will. In fact, it is the ultimate form of idolatry, the worship of ourselves.

In the last 45 years, the sweeping liturgical and other reforms of Vatican II have been greatly misinterpreted as implying a radical change in the nature of the Mass and of the Church. Celebration of the liturgy in Latin, strict adherence to the prescribed rubrics, the concept of the Mass as sacrifice, and the dignity of the priesthood—the Church as the Bride of Christ with infallible teaching authority, preserving and handing on the deposit of faith—all of these have become old-fashioned, "pre-Vatican II" ideas, replaced with an "anything goes" mentality in "the spirit of Vatican II." The Mass is no longer seen as the Church's worship offered to God but as a celebration of human togetherness subject to the whims of the local community. Likewise, we have been told Vatican II transformed the Church from a monarchy into a democracy, so it's now up to the individual Catholic to believe and live as he pleases, regardless of official Church doctrine and laws. This unfortunate heresy known as "the spirit of Vatican II" has done catastrophic damage to the faith of millions of Catholics.

Yet, despite these grave misconceptions, there was nothing wrong with the Second Vatican Council. It simply applied traditional Church doctrine to the modern world, introduced reforms into the Church's liturgy and calendar, and changed certain Church laws, all to help Catholics better live the faith and to enable the Church to effectively evangelize the modern world. The chief problems for the Council's liturgical reforms have been misinterpretation and incorrect application of its directives by the clergy, and a lack of proper education with resulting misunderstandings by the laity.

The intention of Vatican II regarding the liturgy was to encourage "fully

conscious and active participation” in the Mass for the greater spiritual benefit of the faithful worldwide. To this end, a revised Order of Mass was compiled in Latin that simplified the text and rubrics of the Latin Rite Mass. Moreover, permission was given for the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy in the vernacular languages of the world; for priests to celebrate Mass facing the people if they wished; and for the reception of Holy Communion in the hand. What most people are unaware of is that these permissions are special privileges granted in exception to permanent Church laws governing the Roman Rite. None of them is mandated or required by Vatican II, and the Church has authority to extend these privileges indefinitely or to revoke any of them at any time.

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy clearly indicates that the purpose of the Second Vatican Council’s liturgical reforms was not to destroy the sacred character of the Mass but to preserve and hand on the Church’s greatest treasure to the Catholics of the modern world. The aim of these reforms was to promote a period of careful and strictly regulated liturgical experimentation to determine what would best help Catholics in the pews participate with their whole being in the Sacred Liturgy.

Vatican II never gave people authority to decide how the Mass is celebrated. It is up to the Church-specifically, to the Pope and his brother bishops united with him-to set the rules for Catholic worship. “No other person, even if he be a priest, may add, remove, or change anything in the liturgy on his own authority.”

Some Catholics are questioning: “why can’t the Church retain the familiar English Mass translation it has been using since Vatican II?” The answer is that the translation we are used to was intended by the Church to be part of the period of careful experimentation following the Council. The new liturgical translations following Vatican II were not meant to be carved in stone, but to be eventually reviewed and revised.

The new English translation of the Roman Missal includes a Mass text that is much more faithful to the original Latin than the 1974 and 1985 English Mass texts. Many Latin Rite Catholics today lack familiarity with the original Latin words of the Mass. As a result, they are comparing, analyzing, and judging the old and new English Mass translations based solely on their perceived merits and demerits in the vernacular. This is unfortunate, because being cut off from the mother language of the liturgy presents a barrier to the proper understanding of any vernacular Mass text that comes from it. The true standard by which a vernacular Mass translation may be judged is its fidelity to the Latin text of the Missale Romanum. That text deserves considerable respect because it contains the accumulated riches of 2,000 years of Catholic liturgical tradition.

Besides greater fidelity to the Latin, the new English Mass text has a more formal and reverent tone that is better suited to divine worship. The words of the new English liturgical text are simple and modern, yet they join together to form a beautiful poetic rhythm reflecting the rhythm of the Latin and suited to the great prayer of the Church.

The burden of adjustment will fall on the priests, since there are many more changes in the words of the priest than in the words of the people. In fact, a majority of the changes in the English Mass text occur in the four Eucharistic Prayers, where nearly every sentence has been reworded to better match the original Latin.

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No period of silence needs to follow the Responsorial Psalm. After the Second Reading from the New Testament, a helpful lector will move the Lectionary to the shelf below to make room for the Book of Gospels. Since the lector's place is outside the sanctuary, it would be appropriate for the lector to make a profound bow to the altar upon leaving the sanctuary.

The Gospel Acclamation follows the second reading. With this text the people welcome and greet the Lord who is about to speak to it in the Gospel and professes its faith in Him. The Gospel Acclamation is not led from the ambo. On Sundays, the Alleluia and the verse before the Gospel must be sung, and during it all stand. The Alleluia is sung by the whole of the people together. Those who recite the Gospel Acclamation quickly discover they have diminished its usefulness as a greeting to the Lord.

If incense is used, the thurifer or deacon bring the thurible to the priest, who spoons incense from the boat onto the burning coals and blesses the smoke silently by making the sign of the cross with his hand. Ideally, the priest does not proclaim any of the Readings. If the Gospel Book has been resting on a stand, this would be an appropriate time for a server to remove it from the altar to the credence table.

The reading of the Gospel is the high point of the Liturgy of the Word. "All the Scriptures are the Word of God, but Christ, present in His own word, proclaims the Gospel." The deacon or priest addresses the people with the traditional greeting, "The Lord be with you." He sings (or says) these words with hands joined. The people respond. "And with your spirit." After the Gospel has been proclaimed, the deacon will make a distinct pause before singing or saying "The Gospel of the Lord." The Book of Gospels is next enthroned on a stand by the ambo. The Gospel Book is opened where the priest will "break open" God's Word and explain and apply it to the people before him.

The homily is so integral to the Liturgy of the Word that it may not be omitted on Sundays or holy days. It is recommended on all other days. In parishes it is common to hear a homily every day of the year. The homily is ordinarily delivered by the priest who celebrates the Mass. At times, the priest may ask the deacon to preach the homily. The priest may never entrust the homily to a layperson.

In practice, some pastors have invited laypeople to speak during homily time about diocesan or parochial financial appeals. Religious and other lay missionaries have explained their work and sought support. But such instruction or testimony by a layperson should follow the prayer after Communion. Such talks cannot “be confused with the homily, nor is it permissible to dispense with the homily on their account.”

THE CREED

The people together proclaim the Creed. “I believe in one God.” This is my personal profession of faith. It is a summary of the principal beliefs of the Catholic Church in which I am professing my faith. If people do not rise at the appropriate time, a gesture to rise could be made-which would avoid a verbal instruction. During the Creed, at the words about the Incarnation, all make a profound bow toward the altar. Prior to the Second Vatican Council, everyone genuflected at these words. The Council called for a profound bow-not a head bow, and the bow is made in the direction of the altar. The priest may have to turn his body toward the altar. On March 25 (the Feast of the Annunciation) and December 25 (Christmas), the profound bow is replaced with kneeling.

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS

God’s People now pray for the needs of the Church and the world. The priest gives an introduction, petitions are offered (often sung by the cantor), and the people respond after each one, and the priest concludes with a prayer.

The priest leads the introduction from his chair with his hands joined. The priest at this point is addressing the people. The priest’s introduction is an invitation to present petitions. The petitioner will invite people to pray.

WERE YOU AWARE?

The petitions are usually led by the deacon at the ambo, unless the cantor is singing the intentions. If so, the cantor does this from the cantor stand. The intentions are to treat four areas: the needs of the Church, public authorities and the salvation of the whole world, those burdened by any kind of difficulty, and the local community. The intentions are addressed to the assembly, not to God. The petitioner announces the intentions, and the people pray for them.

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The intentions may be sung. The people's response is also variable. The response is addressed to God. It is this invocation that gives the Prayer of the Faithful its name. The person giving the petitions (if they are recited) remains still until after the priest's concluding prayer. In summary, the priest introduces this rite by addressing the people; the one giving the petitions announces (or sings) the intentions addressing the people; the people respond (either in word or song) addressing God; and the priest concludes addressing God. The priest extends his hands for the closing prayer.

Following the priest's closing prayer, the one giving the petitions returns to his or her place. When the petitioner leaves the sanctuary, it would be proper for him or her to make a profound bow to the altar.

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

If a collection precedes the procession of the gifts, music may begin with the collection. The actual singing of the hymn, however, should begin as the gifts (bread and wine) are being brought in procession to the altar.

One way for the people to express their participation at Mass is by offering gifts for the needs of the Church and the poor. The Catholic Church on occasions takes up a second collection for various global, national, and local needs. Baskets are often passed a second time for separate contribution for these specific purposes. While the collection(s) is (are) being taken up, the priest remains seated and waits. The preparation of the altar, however, can take place during the taking up of the collection.

It is the deacon's place to take care of the sacred vessels himself, assisted by other ministers, but in his absence the servers, may bring these items to the altar. The priest remains at his chair.

GIFTS

Bread, wine, and money or other gifts for the poor or for the Church are brought to the altar. The bread and wine will be transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ. The water cruet should not be brought forward in procession, nor does the chalice belong in the procession of the gifts. The procession should not include items that will be retrieved and returned to ordinary use after the celebration. For example, academic and sports insignia do not belong in the procession of the gifts.

The bread should be large enough to be broken into several pieces for distribution to at least some of the faithful. The regular use of larger breads will foster an awareness of the fundamental symbolism in which all, priest and people, share in the same host. At every Mass at least one large host is broken into several pieces. Whenever the number of communicants is fairly small, it is possible to use one or more large hosts for the entire assembly to foster an awareness of unity. (See **Corinthians 10:17**)

It is most desirable that the people receive the Lord's Body from hosts consecrated at the same Mass. Using a single vessel for the carrying of the bread in procession heightens the symbol of unity and permits the dividing of the consecrated bread (hosts) into ciboria during the Lamb of God.

The gifts are brought forward. The congregation's identification with the gifts is best expressed if the procession passes right through their midst. The few who bring the gifts represent the many who provide them.

Out of respect for the sacred vessels, ministers should not carry more than two each, even if it requires more ministers or more than one trip to the altar.

The arrangement of multiple chalices on the altar will depend on the number of chalices, the size and shape of the altar. Chalices should be arranged in a way that the principal chalice predominates. Sometimes it works best to place other chalices on corporals on one or both sides of the altar.

The gifts, the cross, the altar, the priest, and the people may be incensed. Incense may be used at any Mass, but it is recommended for special days. The thurifer (the server) brings the boat containing incense and the thurible containing hot coals to the priest. The priest spoons incense into the thurifer and blesses the smoke, making the sign of the cross with his hand but speaking no words.

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WASHING HANDS

As the priest washes his hands, he recites quietly a prayer asking God to cleanse him of sin. It is one of the private prayers he offers to exercise his ministry with greater devotion.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

The priest extends his hands and says the prayer over the offerings. This prayer prepares for the Eucharistic Prayer. The extension of hands indicates that the text is a prayer addressed to God.

PREFACE

In the name of the entire holy people, the priest proclaims the preface, a prayer of thanksgiving for God's work of salvation. The preface expresses **the reasons why** the people gives thanks to God on the occasion of its gathering.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Eucharistic Prayer is the prayer of thanksgiving and sanctification. It is the center and summit of the entire celebration of the Mass. In the Eucharistic Prayer the priest turns to God in the name of the whole people, gives thanks, and offers the living and holy sacrifice. He prays that the Body and Blood of Christ may be a sacrifice acceptable to the Father and salvific for the whole world. In the Eucharistic Prayer the Body and blood of Christ are made present by the power of the Holy Spirit, and the people are joined to Christ in offering His sacrifice to the Father. **The Eucharistic Prayer demands that all listen to it with reverence and in silence.**

It is very appropriate that the priest sing those parts of the Eucharistic Prayer for which musical notation is provided. The priest is encouraged to sing the entire Eucharistic Prayer, not just part of it.

The priest extends his hands over the offerings and prays for the coming of the Holy Spirit, that the gifts may become Christ's Body and Blood, and that they

may bring salvation to those who partake of them.

In many parishes at the consecration a server often rings a bell. In the past the bell was important to alert the people especially those who would not be receiving Communion that they could now adore Christ present in the consecrated host. Incense may also be used when the priest shows the consecrated bread and wine to the people.

The priest proclaims the moment for all to proclaim the mystery of faith, and the people respond with an acclamation. The new Roman Missal provides a choice of acclamations. The well-known acclamation “Christ has died “has been dropped because it is not a direct translation of any of the Latin acclamations. Ordinarily, the cantor (or choir) will start the acclamation once the priest sings, “Mystery of faith.”

After the consecration, the Church recalls especially the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. The Church gathered at this Eucharist offers in the Holy Spirit the spotless Victim to the Father. In this action the people learn to offer themselves to deepen their unity with God and with one another. Because of the significance of this offering, it should not be confused with the preparation of the altar. Earlier in the Mass the gifts were brought forward for their preparation, but not as an offering. This is when the offering takes place.

THE GREAT AMEN THE LORD’S PRAYER

At the conclusion of the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest sings the doxology (“Through Him, with Him, ...”). The people acclaim “**AMEN.**” To be most effective, the Great Amen may be repeated or augmented.

We now pray together in the words Jesus gave His disciples. No gesture is recommended for the people. In practice, some people join hands, probably to signify their unity as they pray in the first-person plural. Others lift their hands as the priest does. But no official instruction has been given regarding this. The prolonged holding of hands is of itself a sign of communion. It would, however, be excessive for the priest to invite this gesture because nothing should overshadow the symbol of unity in the Communion of the people.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

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(CONTINUED INSERT # 8)

The singing of the Lord's Prayer is encouraged. We are encouraged to learn to sing the Our Father in Latin, but it is recognized this will take some time to master. After the Our Father the priest expands the prayer with a petition for freedom from evil and sin. The people conclude the prayer with an acclamation. This acclamation is designed to be the people's response. The priest is to remain silent for it. The acclamation is based on a line that Christians of other church communities use to conclude the Lord's Prayer, but the Catholic tradition does not. The earliest manuscripts of Matthew's Gospel do not include this acclamation with the prayer Jesus taught His disciple, but it appeared in a Church document by the end of the first century and found its way into later Bibles and worship practices.

THE SIGN OF PEACE

The first Christians exchanged peace at the Eucharist, but the tradition fell into disuse until after the Second Vatican Council. Over the years this sign has become an important part of worship for many Catholics. This ritual exchange symbolizes peace, communion, and charity. This sign acknowledges that we belong to one another, that we will care for one another, that we are brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus.

The priest is not to leave the sanctuary when sharing peace with others. However, on occasions like funerals or weddings the priest may leave the sanctuary proper and offer the sign of peace to family members.

The people are to offer the sign of peace only to those who are nearest them. Each is encouraged to say, "The peace of the Lord be with you always." Some exchange a handshake. Some embrace. Some kiss. Some bow the head. Waving at someone or giving the peace sign are not acceptable in worship.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

The Acts of the Apostles refers to the Eucharist as “the breaking of the bread.” Just as many grains of wheat are ground, kneaded, and baked together to become one loaf, which is then broken and shared out among many to bring them into one table, so those gathered are made one body in the one bread of life that is Christ. (See **Corinthians 10:17**)

The priest is to break the consecrated bread into parts for distribution to at least some of the people. The breaking of the bread will bring it more clearly the force and importance of the sign of unity of all in the one Bread, and of the sign of charity by the fact that the one Bread is distributed among the brothers and sisters. Larger hosts would be even more appropriate.

The breaking of the bread reminds the people of the Passover lamb, slaughtered for the salvation of God’s people. All pray for mercy and peace.

It is desirable that the faithful, just as the priest himself is bound to do, receive the Lord’s Body from hosts consecrated at the same Mass so that Communion will stand out more clearly as a participation in the sacrifice actually being celebrated. It is understood that circumstances may call for the use of hosts from the Tabernacle.

The people pray silently to prepare themselves for Communion.

In practice, the people often sing the Communion hymn poorly. People are understandably focused on receiving Communion. The procession involves everyone, and its mechanics often take people’s attention away from the music. Depending on the length of Communion, it may be preferred to interrupt congregational singing with periods of instrumental music, or choral music.

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

When additional priests and deacons are not present Communion ministers may help if a particularly large number are to receive Holy Communion so that the rite does not become unduly long. Lay extraordinary ministers of Communion do not receive Communion in the manner of a concelebrating priest. This means they are not to self communicate. They are to receive Communion after the priest, not together with him. A priest or deacon hands a vessel to each Communion minister. The priest or deacon hands a purificator to the Communion minister with each chalice.

COMMUNION OF THE FAITHFUL

Communion under both kinds is encouraged. The faithful should be encouraged to seek to participate more eagerly in this sacred rite, by which the sign of the Eucharistic banquet is made more fully evident.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT NOVEMBER 27, 2011

(CONTINUED INSERT #9)

COMMUNION OF THE FAITHFUL (CONTINUED)

The deacon administers the chalice to the people. If anyone wishes to kneel for Communion, he or she may do so. In the United States each person, before receiving Communion, is to bow the head “as a gesture of reverence.” It is not explicitly stated when the sign of reverence is to be given. Some make it while the person ahead is receiving Communion. Others do so upon arriving at the station. Still others give it while answering “Amen.” It is desired that the Eucharistic minister establish eye contact with the communicant to deepen the sincerity of this brief dialogue. The words are: “Body of Christ.” And the response is: “Amen.” This response should be made strongly and confidently rather than mumbled. No other conversation is appropriate.

When receiving the Body of Christ in the hand, communicants are not to reach out and take it from the minister with their fingers. They are to receive it in the palm of their hand. Placing one hand beneath the other is the best way. If a person is wearing gloves, the gloves should be removed before receiving Communion. Nothing should be in one’s hands when receiving Communion in the hand. The person receiving Communion in the hand should step aside and pause to consume the host, making way for the next person.

After receiving the Body of Christ, the communicant moves to the next station and stands facing the Eucharistic minister of the chalice. He or she once again bows as a gesture of reverence. The minister holds out the chalice, shows it to the *communicant and says, “Blood of Christ.”* The communicant responds, “Amen.”

Each communicant drinks a little from the chalice. This means a sip, not a gulp, not a wetting of the lips. It should reverently resemble drinking.

A communicant is **not** to receive the host in the hand and personally dip it into the chalice. This has **never** been part of Catholic Communion practice. Self-intinction heightens concerns about sanitation during the Communion rite. The communicant always receives and never takes Communion. It comes as gift.

Some communicants never return to their seats. They leave the church after receiving Communion. Some come to Communion carrying car keys and jackets. Liturgical documents do not envision a self-dismissal of the people during the

Communion rite, which breaks the unity of the Body of Christ. The practice of “leaving early” indicates some of the people poorly appreciate the meaning of Communion and the value of the closing rites of the Mass.

In many parishes those bringing Communion to the sick bring a pyx* with them when they come to receive Communion. They hold the pyx open to the Eucharistic minister and indicate the number of hosts they need. The minister places that number in the pyx. The one bringing Communion to the sick closes the lid, places the pyx in his or her pocket, and then receives Communion from the Eucharistic minister. We would like to begin this practice here at St. Paul at this time. Communion ministers to the sick and homebound leave with the rest of the people, all of whom will be sent to serve the mission of the Church in the world.

Permission allows several ministers to reverently consume what remains of the Precious Blood. The ministers’ could also help consume what remains of the consecrated hosts if it is necessary to minimize the amount stored in the Tabernacle. It is never permitted to pour leftover Precious Blood into the ground or into the **sacrarium**.

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“Pyx (pronounced like “picks”) is the small, round, gold container which holds the consecrated hosts used to bring Communion to the sick and/or homebound.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT NOVEMBER 27, 2011

(CONTINUED INSERT # 9)

THANKSGIVING AFTER COMMUNION

The priest may go to his chair or if he wishes, he may remain at the altar to finish the Mass. The people of God should observe a period of silence for private prayer. They may sit or kneel during this time. In practice, many of the Catholic faithful kneel for a while as soon as they return to their places after Communion, and then sit. In other parishes, people who are still kneeling sit when the priest sits or when the Tabernacle door is closed.

Sometimes the choir sings an anthem here. Although some parishes call it a "meditation song," its purpose is really thanksgiving. The Prayer after Communion brings to completion the prayer of the People of God and concludes the entire Communion rite.

The priest sings or says, "Let us pray." The priest is to have his hands joined. A brief period of silence follows this invitation to prayer only if there were no silence preceding it. For the prayer, the priest extends his hands. This is the same gesture he used at the Collect. Singing this prayer is encouraged. The people respond "Amen" at the conclusion of the prayer, making its words their own.

CLOSING RITES

Brief announcements may be made if necessary. These should only follow the prayer after Communion. It is recommended that announcements be made by the priest, or if the priest so desires, another may make them. Announcements should NOT be made from the ambo for the ambo is the place where the Word of God is proclaimed. The only exception to this would be the General Intercessions if they are recited instead of sung. One suggestion is the cantor could make the announcements from his or her stand near the Choir.

THE BLESSING

The blessing may be preceded by a prayer over the people or a solemn blessing. A prayer over the people is a prayer concluding with a formula that prompts the people to respond "Amen." Solemn blessings are formulas in three parts, each calling for the people to respond with an "Amen." The deacon or the priest (in the deacon's absence) may introduce the blessing with the direction such as, "Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing."

DISMISSAL

The dismissal is given so that each may go out to do good works, praising and blessing God. The deacon or priest (in the deacon's absence) joins his hands for the dismissal. This is the same gesture used for the greeting before the Gospel and the invitation to offer peace.

If there is a recessional hymn for all to sing, it would be courteous for the priest and deacon to remain at their places, singing, until the song is nearly over. The priest and deacon venerate the altar by kissing it as they did at the beginning of Mass.

The Book of Gospels has already been enthroned. It is not retrieved for the recession. Lectors and Communion ministers do not walk out in procession.

All depart in peace, praising and blessing God until they gather for the Eucharist again.

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It is my prayer these "Inserts" have and will prove beneficial to you as we draw near to the first Sunday of Advent, November 27th. May these "changes" draw us closer into the world of the sacred, and enable us to deepen in our relationship with God.