



232/2019
15 March 2019

My dear brothers and sisters,

Peace and joy to you in Christ Jesus, our Risen Lord and Savior! May the Morning Star which never sets shine on you and your families this Divine Mercy and throughout the year!

After consultation with the Presbyteral Council and the Diocesan Liturgical Commission, I have elected to retain our current Communion Rite posture policy, first promulgated in 2003, which reinforces the universal Church’s policy of standing for the singing of the Communion Hymn, during the distribution and reception of Holy Communion. We will renew our practice of these postures beginning today, Divine Mercy Sunday.

When considering the postures we may have observed during Mass over the course of our lives, we must remain ever conscious that “liturgical services are not private functions but are celebrations of the Church..., the holy people united and organized under the authority of the bishops.”¹

For this reason, the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal, third typical edition* [hereafter, GIRM] has laid down normative postures for the celebration of Mass. The Church reminds us of the importance of unity in posture by stating that “in the celebration of Mass the faithful ...[are] to avoid any appearance of singularity or division, keeping in mind that they have only one Father in heaven and that hence are all brothers or sisters one to the other.”²


Thus, beginning Divine Mercy Sunday 2019, in the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland, the faithful will:

Stand...	...after the Great Amen, and remain standing after the Lamb of God and through the celebrant’s reception of Holy Communion.³ The faithful remain standing during the distribution⁴ and reception⁵ of Holy Communion for the singing of the Communion Hymn.⁶
<i>Sit or Kneel...</i>	<i>... if/ when necessary,⁷ in pastoral consideration of the needs of individual members of the faithful.</i>
Sit or Kneel...	...during the period of sacred silence...after the distribution of Holy Communion.⁸ This period of sacred silence should begin <u>as soon as the distribution of Holy Communion has been completed.</u>⁵ At this point the faithful may sit or kneel. The faithful are not required to stand during the purification of vessels, or until the reposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

Conscious that in our highly mobile society, many travel both within and outside the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland for celebrations of Mass, I further ask that the faithful of our diocese, acting in full charity towards their brothers and sisters in Christ, observe carefully and prayerfully the postures of the parish communities to which they may travel, even if these postures are different from the enclosed norms – “when in Rome, do as the Romans” – that all may indeed be one in Christ Jesus in the celebration of the Eucharist.

I humbly ask for your continued prayers, as you remain in mine.

Sincerely yours in Christ Jesus,



Most Reverend Nelson J. Perez, D.D.
Bishop of Cleveland

¹ CCC, 1140, c.f. *Sacrosanctum concilium* [SC], 27

² GIRM, 95

³ GIRM, 43

⁴ “The appropriate posture of the faithful during the distribution of Holy Communion is standing.” *BCL Newsletter*, July 2003, c.f. GIRM, 43, 86

⁵ Standing to receive Holy Communion is the normative posture for the reception of Holy Communion; however, a communicant is never to be denied Holy Communion if they choose to kneel. GIRM, 160

⁶ Standing for the singing of the Communion Hymn is the normative posture of the Catholic Church in the United States; however, this posture directive is not to be enforced so rigidly that those who wish to sit or kneel would not feel free to do so. c.f. footnote 11

⁷ “The prescription of the [GIRM] no. 43, is intended, on the one hand, to ensure within broad limits a certain uniformity of posture within the congregation for the various parts of the celebration of Holy Mass, and on the other, to not regulate posture rigidly in such a way that those who wish to kneel or sit would no longer be free.” Cardinal Francis Arinze, Prefect for the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments [CDWDS], Prot. n. 855/03/L, May 26, 2003, as quoted in the *BCL Newsletter*, vol. XXXIX, July 2003, pg. 133

⁸ GIRM, 88, 164. “After Communion, [the faithful] praise God in their hearts and pray to him.” GIRM, 45

⁹ GIRM 86: “the singing [of the Communion song] is continued for as long as the Sacrament is being administered to the faithful.” “The period of sacred silence would seem to begin, therefore, once all have received Holy Communion; hence the appropriate posture of the faithful during the distribution of Holy Communion is standing.” *BCL Newsletter*, July 2003, c.f. GIRM, 43