

**UNDERSTANDING WHEN TO  
KNEEL, SIT AND STAND  
AT A  
TRADITIONAL LATIN MASS**

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*A Short Essay on Mass Postures*

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by

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## I. Introduction

A Catholic assisting at a Traditional Latin Mass for the first time will most likely experience bewilderment and confusion as to when to kneel, sit and stand, for the postures that people observe at Traditional Latin Masses are so different from what he is accustomed to. To understand what people should *really* be doing at Mass is not always determinable from what people remember or from what people are presently doing. What is needed is an understanding of the nature of the liturgy itself, and then to act accordingly.

When I began assisting at Traditional Latin Masses for the first time as an adult, I remember being utterly confused with Mass postures. People followed one order of postures for Low Mass, and a different one for Sung Mass. I recall my oldest son, then a small boy, being thoroughly amused with the frequent changes in people's postures during Sung Mass, when we would go in rather short order from standing for the entrance procession, kneeling for the preparatory prayers, standing for the Gloria, sitting when the priest sat, rising again when he rose, sitting for the epistle, gradual, alleluia, standing for the Gospel, sitting for the epistle in English, rising for the Gospel in English, sitting for the sermon, rising for the Credo, genuflecting together with the priest, sitting when the priest sat while the choir sang the Credo, kneeling when the choir reached *Et incarnatus est* etc. (we should have been bowing while seated), sitting again for the rest of the Credo, rising when the priest rose, sitting for the offertory, etc. Not knowing any better, I simply followed what other people were doing, and what other people were doing was following the postures indicated in the Latin-English booklet missal published by Coalition in Support of Ecclesia Dei (hereinafter the "red booklet").

Over time I began to question the order of postures that people followed, particularly the distinction made between Low Mass and Sung Mass. It didn't seem right. However, all the books, booklet missals, videos and references that I could find all copied the postures of the red booklet. I could not find any authoritative source to challenge the red booklet postures until I read Fortescue/O'Connell/Reid's *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described* (fourteenth edition) and J.B. O'Connell's *The Celebration of Mass* (fourth edition). Fortescue and O'Connell are undoubtedly two of the greatest experts on the traditional Roman liturgy the English-speaking world has ever known from the pre-conciliar era.

Fortescue first published his book in 1917. He published a revised edition, the second edition, in 1919. Following Fortescue's early demise in 1923, O'Connell was asked to prepare a third edition of Fortescue's book, and over a span of thirty two years he revised it ten times. O'Connell's last revision (the thirteenth edition) of *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described* in 1962 remained untouched until Dr. Alcuin Reid OSB updated and revised it in 2003 (fourteenth edition) to bring it "into line with the specific requirements of the liturgical books of 1962"<sup>1</sup> and then again in 2009 (fifteenth edition) to update it in light of Pope Benedict XVI's *Summorum Pontificum*. On his own, Reid is regarded as the leading authority on the traditional Roman liturgy today.

O'Connell, on the other hand, first published his own book in 1940, which he revised and updated four times, the last of which was printed in 1964. O'Connell's monumental book is considered a must-have among priests, seminarians and servers wishing to study the rubrics of the Traditional Latin Mass and how to serve it.

Fortescue, O'Connell and Reid present an order of laity Mass postures that contrasts sharply with the postures indicated in the red booklet.

In June 2008 I assisted at a Solemn High Mass at St. Michael's Abbey in Silverado, California celebrated by The Very Reverend Dom Daniel Augustine Oppenheimer, CRNJ, prior of the Canons Regular of the New Jerusalem, on the occasion of the sixth anniversary of the founding of their order.

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<sup>1</sup> From the foreword to the fourteenth edition written by Dario Cardinal Castrillon Hoyos. This statement from Cardinal Hoyos indicates that O'Connell's last update in 1962 did not fully reflect "the specific requirements of the liturgical books of 1962," necessitating the update.

As the sacred ministers arrived at the foot of the altar and began the preparatory prayers, I distinctly recall Fr. Hughes Barbour, O. Praem., who was sitting at the edge of the monastic choir pew closest to the people, turn to face the congregation and motion for us to remain standing while they continued chanting the Introit even as the sacred ministers had arrived at the foot of the altar and begun the preparatory prayers. We were somewhat confused but complied nonetheless. Later, when I assisted at a Mass celebrated by Dom Daniel Augustine at the John Paul II Center in Yorba Linda, I saw the same Mass postures I had observed previously at St. Michael's Abbey. Intrigued, I talked to Dom Daniel Augustine about this after Mass, and his explanation deepened my resolve to enlighten my fellow Catholics about Mass postures. This short essay is the fruit of that resolution.

Most people are unaware that there were no officially-prescribed postures for the people for the 1962 Mass. However, there was also no official rubric directing the faithful to receive Communion kneeling on the tongue either. The absence of official rubrics does not mean that there was no standard order of postures that people followed; on the contrary, it assumes there was an order of postures handed down from tradition that people understood and followed even without an official rubric, just as it was in the case of the reception of Communion. Our task is to find out what this order was, through the eyes of the experts on the traditional Roman liturgy. To accomplish this I will rely primarily on the teaching of O'Connell, Fortescue, and Reid, and to a lesser extent on the opinion of lesser-known but equally competent authorities to prove the universality of O'Connell's and Fortescue's teachings.

## II. There were no officially-prescribed rubrics on Mass postures for the laity

The *ritus servandus* and general norms for the "traditional" missal were significantly overhauled in July 25, 1960 when Blessed John XXIII issued his *motu proprio* approving the new Code of rubrics of the Roman Breviary and Missal and imposing its observance on all who use the Roman Rite as of January 1, 1961. In 1962, Pope John XXIII made some minor revisions to this missal, and it is this revised Roman Missal<sup>2</sup> that is known today as the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite, or more commonly, the "Traditional Latin Mass."

Unlike in the Ordinary Form of the Mass (or "Novus Ordo") where people's Mass postures and gestures are specifically prescribed in the General Instructions of the Roman Missal, prior to 1970 there was only one rubric that has ever stated what the laity were to do at Mass, and that was to kneel at a Low Mass, except during the Gospel, and say nothing, even in Eastertide.<sup>3</sup> That specific rubric is found in par. 2, chapter xvii of *Rubricæ Generalis Missalis* of altar missals published prior to 1962 and states: "*Circumstantes autem in Missis privatis semper genua flectunt, etiam Tempore Paschali, præterquam dum legitur Evangelium*" (Those present at Low Mass kneel always, even in Eastertide, except while the Gospel is read). This, in fact, remains the practice at most Low Masses today. However, it must be pointed out that this specific rubric, even when it was in force, was not preceptive but merely directive, meaning the people were under no obligation to strictly follow it.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Pope Benedict XVI amended the Good Friday Prayer for the Jews of the 1962 Missal in 2008.

<sup>3</sup> "In accordance with a rubric of the pre-1962 missals (*Rubricæ Generalis Missalis* xvii, 2), now obsolete, those present at a Mass in which they are taking no active part are accustomed to kneel except at the Gospels, when they stand, and during offertory and ablutions, when they sit." *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described*, fourteenth edition, p. 230. Fortescue, O'Connell & Reid.

<sup>4</sup> Writing in 1945 when the fifth typical edition of the Roman Missal was in still force, Fr. Francis X. Lasance mentions the rubric found in par. 2, chapter xvii directing the laity to kneel throughout Low Mass except during the Gospel reading. However, he quickly adds, "De Herdt [Vol. I, n. 146] says that this rubric is not preceptive [*sic*] but directive only." – *The New Missal for Every Day*, p. 86. Francis X. Lasance. Writing even earlier in 1917, Fortescue says the same thing about this rubric: "The principle seems to be that this rule is not urged strictly in the case of lay people in the body of the church, who enjoy a certain natural liberty. But it is urged in the case of those who assist more officially, the server, clergy, others in choir, and so on." – *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described*, first edition, footnote 2, p. 78. Adrian Fortescue.

At any rate, that Low Mass rubric, in fact the entire chapter (xvii), which last appeared in the fifth typical edition (1920) of the Roman Missal, the typical edition before the 1962 typical edition (the sixth and last typical edition before the *Novus Ordo missal*), was suppressed and does not appear in the 1961 Rubrics of the Roman Breviary and Missal. Therefore, it is clearly the intention of the Church to suppress this practice of habitual kneeling and saying nothing for Low Masses.

### III. People are supposed to follow the postures of the clergy in choir

Fortescue says that for Solemn or Sung Mass the 1961 General Rubrics give no rules for the laity present either. They are supposed to take an active part in the ceremony with the sacred ministers and clergy, and so the rubrics assume that, as far as possible, the laity will conform to the rules laid down for the clergy when they are present in choir.<sup>5</sup> In *The Celebration of Mass: A Study of the Rubrics of the Roman Missal*, O’Connell enumerates these rules as follows:<sup>6</sup>

1. As the sacred ministers come in procession to the altar, the Introit is sung by all or by the choir. All stand until the ministers have saluted the altar; then kneel (unless they are singing the Introit). Those not singing may say silently the prayers of preparation, or other prayers in keeping with this part of the Mass, or listen to and meditate on the Introit.

2. Should the *Asperges* occur, all stand for it, join in the chant, and sign themselves when sprinkled. In this case the Introit is not sung until the *Asperges* is over and a suitable processional hymn may be sung as the ministers approach the altar or the organ played.

3. When the ministers go up to the altar all stand. They may sit during the incensation of the altar.

4. Standing, they sing (or alternate with the choir in singing) *Kyrie, eleison* and – after it has been intoned by the celebrant – *Gloria in excelsis* (when it occurs). Should the ministers sit for these chants the people may sit also.

5. When the ministers rise to return to the altar, all stand. They sing the responses *Et cum spiritu tuo* and *Amen* at the end of the Collect(s).<sup>7</sup>

6. They sit for the singing (of Lessons by a lector and) of the Epistle by the subdeacon and listen attentively, and for that of the Gradual, *Alleluia* verse, Tract or Sequence sung by the choir. If they can sing these they stand to do so.

7. When the procession to the place of the Gospel begins to move off, all stand for the singing of the Gospel by the deacon, answer *Et cum spiritu tuo* and *Gloria tibi, Domine*, and make the small sign of the cross on the forehead, lips, and breast.

8. All sit for the homily, when the ministers sit, and stand when they rise at its close.

9. If the Creed occurs, after the celebrant has intoned it, all sing it either entirely or in alternation with the choir. When the ministers genuflect at *Et incarnatus* in the recitation of the Creed all genuflect; when these words are sung all who are standing genuflect, *but all who are sitting bow only*.<sup>8</sup> If the ministers sit for the creed, all may sit, rising when the ministers do.

10. All sing *Et cum spiritu tuo* and sit after the celebrant has sung *Oremus*. They listen to the Offertory antiphon sung by the choir or to any Latin motet that may be sung, or they sing these.

11. When the deacon comes to incense the clergy in choir, all stand. They bow to the thurifer when he bows to them before and after incensing them and then sit.

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<sup>5</sup> *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rites Described*, fourteenth edition, p. 230.

<sup>6</sup> *The Celebration of Mass: A Study of the Rubrics of the Roman Missal*, fourth edition, pp. 600-602. J. B. O’Connell. The rules that follow next, from nos. 1-21, are reproduced verbatim from pp. 600-602, except where indicated otherwise.

<sup>7</sup> “At most Masses in violet vestments and at a requiem Mass all kneel for the Collects and Post Communions.” – *Ibid.*, footnote 17, p. 600.

<sup>8</sup> “Everyone kneels for the singing of these words on Christmas Day and on the feast of the Annunciation (March 25).” – *Ibid.*, footnote 20, p. 601.

12. All rise when the celebrant sings the conclusion of the Secret(s); they sing *Amen* and the responses to the dialogue that introduces the Preface and listen to the Preface. All sing *Sanctus-Benedictus* and then kneel and pray in silence during the entire Canon.

13. At the Consecration all bow but look up at the Host and chalice when elevated.

14. After the Consecration all stand and offer with the celebrant (saying the prayer *Unde et memores*) the sacrifice. At the end of the Canon all chant *Amen* and stand (if not already standing) for *Pater noster*, singing *Sed libera*, etc., at its close, and *Amen* and *Et cum spiritu tuo* in reply to *Pax Domini*, etc.

15. All sing *Agnus Dei* in its entirety or in alternation with the choir and then kneel to prepare silently for Communion. They may recite the celebrant's prayers of preparation or other suitable prayers.

16. When the bell is rung after *Agnus Dei* as a signal for the communicants to approach the altar; they do so without delay; and when the celebrant turns to them with the Sacred Host they recite aloud with him the triple *Domine, non sum dignus*.

17. If there is no one for Communion, the Communion antiphon is sung while the celebrant receives the Most Holy Sacrament. If there are communicants, it is sung during the distribution of Holy Communion, and it may be prolonged when there are many for Communion by adding verses of an appropriate psalm and repeating the antiphon after each or every two verses. The people join in singing this. When the Communion antiphon is finished a Latin motet suitable for this part of Mass may be sung by all or by the choir, or the organ may be played – except on a day when this is forbidden.

18. After the Communion those who have not received may sit during the ablutions, and while the celebrant recites the Communion antiphon.

19. All stand for *Dominus vobiscum* and sing the response and *Amen* at the end of the Postcommunion (s).

20. All sing *Et cum spiritu tuo* once more, and *Deo gratias* when the deacon has sung *Ite, missa est* (or *Benedicamus Domino*), then kneel for the blessing and answer *Amen*.

21. All stand for the last Gospel, during which a recessional hymn may be sung, or the organ played – except on a day when this is forbidden.<sup>9</sup>

With minor variations, the other well-known experts on the traditional Roman liturgy give similar rules as enumerated by O'Connell above: Fortescue, O'Connell and Reid in *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described*;<sup>10</sup> by Fr. Fulton J. Sheen in *The Fulton J. Sheen Sunday Missal*;<sup>11</sup> by Fr. Francis X. Lasance in *The New Missal for Every Day*;<sup>12</sup> by Fr. Frederick McManus in *Rites of the Holy Week*;<sup>13</sup> and by Fr. Aurelius Stehle in *Manual of Episcopal Ceremonies*<sup>14</sup> (see table on page 17 for a side-by-side comparison). Msgr. Laurence J. O'Connell and Rev. Walter J. Schmitz, in *The Book of Ceremonies* (1956), also say that “Lay people should follow the clergy as much as possible in kneeling, standing, sitting, etc,” making reference to vol. 1, p. 679 of O'Connell's second edition (1956) of *The Celebration of Mass*.<sup>15</sup> It is reasonable, therefore, to assume that this order of Mass postures for the laity must have been the accepted norm for the traditional Roman liturgy prior to 1970. These experts wrote and published their books during pre-conciliar times, when the Mass that we know today as the Traditional Latin Mass was normative for the Latin Rite.

<sup>9</sup> Fortescue says that the Last Gospel is really part of the celebrant's private thanksgiving after Mass and therefore it is more natural for all to remain standing throughout and not to genuflect together with the priest at *Et Verbo caro factum est*. See *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described*, first edition, footnote 1, p.85.

<sup>10</sup> *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described*, fourteenth edition, pp. 230-232.

<sup>11</sup> *The Fulton J. Sheen Sunday Missal*, 1961, pp. xliv – xlvi. Fr. Fulton J. Sheen.

<sup>12</sup> *The New Missal for Every Day*, 1945 edition, pp. 86-89. For requiem and ferial Masses on p. 88, Lasance gives an order of postures that differ significantly from the other authors. This is discussed in chapter IX, p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> *Rites of Holy Week*, Chapter VII, 1956, pp. 112-113. Rev. Frederick McManus.

<sup>14</sup> *Manual of Episcopal Ceremonies*, fifth edition, vol. 1, Ordinary Episcopal Ceremonies, pp.13-14. Rt. Rev. Aurelius Stehle.

<sup>15</sup> *The Book of Ceremonies*, footnote 2, p. 173. Msgr. Laurence J. O'Connell & Rev. Walter J. Schmitz.

The notable exception to this traditional order of postures is found in the *Latin-English Booklet Missal for Praying the Traditional Mass* (the “red booklet”), first published in September 1990 by Coalition in Support of Ecclesia Dei. For the most part the laity postures indicated in the red booklet are similar to the postures for Sung Mass – but not for Low Mass – taught by Fortescue, O’Connell et al. But there are several places that differ significantly, starting with the posture for the preparatory prayers and Introit. Let us analyze these differences.<sup>16</sup>

#### IV. The High Mass is the liturgical norm

In an article for the Catholic Encyclopedia in 1910, Adrian Fortescue, described by the late British traditionalist Michael Davies<sup>17</sup> as “probably the most outstanding scholar among the clergy of the English-speaking world in the first three decades of this century,”<sup>18</sup> wrote, “This High Mass<sup>19</sup> is the norm; it is only in the complete rite with deacon and subdeacon that the ceremonies can be understood. Low Mass, said by a priest alone with one server, is a shortened and simplified form of the same thing. Its ritual can be explained only by a reference to High Mass.”<sup>20</sup> Consequently, in the absence of officially-prescribed order of postures, the people should follow the postures of the clergy in choir for Solemn or Sung Mass as much as possible. All the pre-conciliar experts agree on this point.<sup>21</sup>

What about Low Mass? O’Connell chimes in: “The 1958 Instruction<sup>22</sup> did not determine in detail the ceremonial of the people at Mass. In general, it is the same as that of the clergy in choir – which is ruled by the rubrics of the Ceremonial of Bishops,<sup>23</sup> the Roman Missal, and the breviary – and it should be taught to the people (from the pulpit, by leaflets, etc.) and, when the occasion offers, directed by a priest or by a commentator.”<sup>24</sup> He further clarified that the directions “which are suggested *infra* for the ceremonial of the people at (a) solemn Mass and (b) low Mass are based on the rubrics of the liturgical books, on the 1958 Instruction, on the directories of various hierarchies, and on the teaching of approved authors.”<sup>25</sup>

Since Solemn Mass is the liturgical norm for the Roman Rite, it follows that people at Low Mass ought to follow the postures of the people at Solemn Mass, which are based on the postures of the

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<sup>16</sup> Although the red booklet is the object of comparison here, there are other sources that copy the Ecclesia Dei laity postures, i.e., the Latin-English Sunday Missal published by Roman Catholic Books; the training video made by the Canons Regular of St. John Cantius, available on their web site (Incidentally, CRSJC’s founder, Fr. C. Frank Phillips, C.R., is a member of the national board of Coalition in Support of Ecclesia Dei); the Baronius Press *Summorum Pontificum* edition hand missal sold by the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter includes an insert showing the laity postures for various parts of a Low and High Mass that are exactly the same as those shown in the red booklet. Interestingly, the booklet missal posted by EWTN online for the Solemn High Mass on Sept. 14, 2007 (celebrated by Fr. Josef Bisig, FSSP) followed exactly O’Connell’s order of postures, not the red booklet’s postures.

<sup>17</sup> Michael Davies was also president of the International Federation of Una Voce from 1992-2004.

<sup>18</sup> *The Wisdom of Adrian Fortescue*, p. 6. Roman Catholic Books, 1999. Michael Davis. “This century” of course refers to the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>19</sup> The 1961 General Rubrics uses the term “Solemn Mass” instead of “High Mass” to refer to Sung Masses and Solemn Pontifical Masses.

<sup>20</sup> *Liturgy of the Mass*, the Catholic Encyclopedia, 1910. Adrian Fortescue. See also *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described*, fourteenth edition, p. 62.

<sup>21</sup> Lasance: “The rubrics give no directions. Gavantus and Pouget say that the people may conform to the rules given for those who are in choir.” – *The New Missal for Every Day*, p.87; “In general those present at a Solemn or Sung Mass follow, as far as possible, the ceremonies observed by the clergy who may be present in choir at Mass.” – *The Fulton J. Sheen Sunday Missal*, p. xlv.

<sup>22</sup> This refers to the Instruction issued by the Sacred Congregation of Rites on 3 September 1958, *De musica sacra et sacra liturgia* (Instruction on Sacred Music and Sacred Liturgy).

<sup>23</sup> “This book (*Caer. Ep.*), although intended in the first place for bishops, contains very full directions for all people at most functions; so that, in spite of its title and inconvenient arrangement, it is really a book of ceremonies in general.” – *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described*, first edition, footnote 2, p. 19. Adrian Fortescue.

<sup>24</sup> *The Celebration of Mass*, fourth edition, p. 600.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 600.

clergy in choir as directed by the ceremonial of bishops, the Roman Missal and the breviary, and on the directories of the various hierarchies and approved authors. This is in contrast to the directions in the red booklet, which prescribes contrasting postures for the people at different parts of the Mass depending on whether the Mass is Low or Sung. This position is not supported by any of the pre-conciliar experts on the traditional Roman liturgy.

## V. Posture at preparatory prayers and introit

Following the posture of the clergy in choir,<sup>26</sup> the authors say that all kneel for the prayers of preparation, but rise once the priest says *Oremus* and ascends the altar. O'Connell adds that people should stand if they sing the Introit, but they could kneel and silently say the prayers of preparation, listen to the choir or meditate on its text if they don't sing the Introit. Reid echoes O'Connell.<sup>27</sup> Sheen, Lasance and McManus simply say that people kneel at the preparatory prayers but rise as soon as the priest says *Oremus* and ascends the altar steps.

However, people accustomed to following the postures in the red booklet would continue to kneel from the preparatory prayers (regardless if one is singing the Introit or not) until the Gloria is intoned during Sung Mass, or until the reading of the Gospel during Low Mass. None of the pre-conciliar experts teach this, yet this is the widespread practice today in the U.S. Moreover, whereas O'Connell teaches that the Introit is sung as the sacred ministers come in procession to the altar, the general practice today is to wait for the celebrant to reach the foot of the altar before beginning the Introit chant. This is all confusing, and highlights the reason why it is important to have an understanding of the nature of the liturgy in order to know what to do.

Dom Daniel Augustine, CNRJ, explains, "The prayers at the foot of the altar belong to the clergy, not the faithful."<sup>28</sup> Since the normative liturgy is sung, not recited, these prayers function as they were intended: they are a preparation for the clergy. They are said as the Mass begins with the Introit,<sup>29</sup> sung by the choir *as a substitute for the people*. Since the people should be singing the Introit – it is the opening song, just as it is called in the new rite (it should be a psalm historically) – it is contrary to the liturgy itself, its form and its function, for the people to kneel and try to follow inaudible prayers which do not belong to them."<sup>30</sup>

O'Connell emphasized that the "special choir is not intended to replace the congregation, but to *aid and encourage in every possible way the general singing* and to replace the clergy and people only for the more difficult pieces, which the general body could not sing properly."<sup>31</sup> O'Connell continues: "St. Pius X, Pius XI, and Pius XII have strongly urged that every effort must be made to induce those

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<sup>26</sup> Not all clergy in choir kneel for the preparatory prayers. Prelates and vested canons remain standing during the preparatory prayers, even while lower-ranked clergy in choir kneel. See *The Celebration of Mass*, fourth edition, p. 451.

<sup>27</sup> "3. All kneel for the prayers of preparation (up to *Oremus*), unless they sing the introit, and stand when the celebrant ascends the altar steps." *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described*, fourteenth edition, p. 231.

<sup>28</sup> "The psalm "*Iudica me*," the Confession, and the other prayers said at the foot of the altar, are all part of the celebrant's preparation, once said (with many other psalms and prayers) in the sacristy, as the *Præparatio ad Missam* in the Missal now is." – Adrian Fortescue, "*Liturgy of the Mass*" in the Catholic Encyclopedia, 1910. O'Connell makes the same observation. See *The Celebration of Mass*, fourth edition, n. 3(d), p.600; and footnote 32, p. 603.

<sup>29</sup> "The Introit (*Introitus*) of the Mass is the fragment of a psalm with its antiphon sung while the celebrant and minister enter the church and approach the altar. In all Western rites the Mass began with such a processional psalm since the earliest times of which we have any record." – Adrian Fortescue, "*Liturgy of the Mass*" in the Catholic Encyclopedia, 1910.

<sup>30</sup> Quotes from Dom Daniel Augustine are taken from his explanation on the subject given to me in private correspondence, and published here with his permission.

<sup>31</sup> *The Celebration of Mass*, fourth edition, p. 435.

present at the Holy Sacrifice to *sing* the Mass.”<sup>32</sup> In liturgical services, the normal (and also the natural) position for singing is standing.<sup>33</sup>

Notwithstanding the teaching by O’Connell and others for those not singing to kneel at the preparatory prayers while the Introit is being sung during Solemn or Sung Mass, I have to agree with Dom Daniel Augustine that it would actually be more consistent with the 1958 Instruction and the exhortations by St. Pius X, Pius XI, and Pius XII on active participation if all the faithful were to remain standing during the preparatory prayers at Sung Masses and try to sing it or at least “pretend to” by following the text of the Introit being sung by the special choir. Otherwise, what’s the point in having a special choir chant the Introit if nobody’s going to pay attention? The choir is not there to provide background music.

To emphasize the importance of the Introit as an entrance song to be sung by the people, not only does *De musica sacra et liturgia* encourage the people to sing it,<sup>34</sup> it actually says this: “If the priest and his ministers go in procession by a long aisle, it would be permissible for the choir, after the singing of the Introit antiphon, and its psalm verse, to continue singing additional verses of the same psalm. The antiphon itself may be repeated after each verse or after every other verse; when the celebrant has reached the altar, the psalm ceases, and the Gloria Patri is sung, and finally the antiphon is repeated to conclude the *Introit* procession.”<sup>35</sup> Note well that it says the singing of the Introit could be extended “until the celebrant has *reached the altar*,” not until the celebrant has reached the foot of the altar.

This instruction is contrary to the present practice today of beginning the Introit chant only when the celebrant has arrived at the foot of the altar to begin the preparatory prayers.<sup>36</sup> Lest anyone thinks this smacks of modernism, Fortescue says this practice of singing the Introit to signal the start of the entrance procession was well in place by the fifth century (and perhaps even earlier) as recounted in *De Sacramentis*.<sup>37</sup> If followed strictly to the letter, this would preclude the singing of any other entrance song other than the Introit and hardly leaves room for the people to join in the preparatory prayers since the priest only arrives at the altar after ascending the altar steps upon the conclusion of the preparatory prayers.<sup>38</sup> Even if we interpret “altar” to include the foot of the altar, still the preparatory prayers would

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<sup>32</sup> Not only that they should not be “merely detached and silent spectators” (Pius XI), nor merely singing *at* Mass, but they should sing the text of the Mass – *De musica sacra et liturgia*, 24, 25.

<sup>33</sup> In *Tra le Sollecitudini* Pope Pius X declared, “Special efforts are to be made to restore the use of the Gregorian Chant by the people, so that the faithful may again take a more active part in the ecclesiastical offices, as was the case in ancient times.” It is often overlooked that in religious orders where the divine office is chanted, those chanting would always stand. Here, Pope Pius X is encouraging the laity to regain their ancient practice of taking an active part in chanting the “ecclesiastical offices,” understood here to include not only the divine office but the celebration of the Mass.

<sup>34</sup> *De musica sacra et liturgia*, n. 25(c).

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 27(a).

<sup>36</sup> Ironically, in modern times the only instances I have seen of the Introit being sung while the sacred ministers are processing to the altar have been Masses in the Ordinary Form. The midnight Mass of Dec. 24, 2009 at Westminster Cathedral, available online at <http://www.newliturgicalmovement.org/2009/12/introit-from-midnight-mass-westminster.html>, is a splendid example of a choir singing additional verses of the psalm before the final *Gloria Patri* and antiphon is sung after the celebrant (Archbishop Vincent Nichols) arrives at the altar. The Norbertines of St. Michael’s Abbey in Silverado, California also chant the Introit as the sacred ministers process into the church.

<sup>37</sup> “By about the fifth century we begin to see more clearly.... From this document (*De Sacramentis*) we can reconstruct the following scheme: ... The people sing “*Introibo ad altare Dei*” as the celebrant and his ministers approach the altar (the Introit)...;” “From these (Roman Ordines) and the sacramentaries we can reconstruct the Mass at Rome in the eighth or ninth century. There were as yet no preparatory prayers said before the altar. The pope, attended by a great retinue of deacons, subdeacons, acolytes, and singers, entered while the Introit psalm was sung.” – *Liturgy of the Mass*, Catholic Encyclopedia, 1917. A. Fortescue.

<sup>38</sup> If the Introit chant is begun immediately as the priest and servers are processing into the church and is not extended by the singing of additional verses, it would be over quickly, probably around the time the priest reaches the foot of the altar and begins the preparatory prayers. It would be too early for the choir to begin the Kyrie at that point, thus creating a silent gap in the liturgy between the Introit and the Kyrie that could allow the faithful to join the audible preparatory prayers. But this is not the custom in the Roman rite.



have been well under way already by the time the choir finishes singing the *Gloria Patri* and repeats the final Introit antiphon from that point.

Since the Kyrie is chanted immediately following the Introit and the people are also supposed to sing it together with the choir, the structure of the liturgy during Sung Mass does not really provide a convenient intervening gap for people to join in the preparatory prayers from the very beginning, unless they abruptly interrupt their participation in the singing of the Introit, which is not only awkward and unseemly but also contributes to the confusion in their proper role during this part of the Mass: Should the people follow the priest and drop to their knees, or ignore him, stay the course and carry out their Church-assigned role (which is to participate in the singing of the Introit and Kyrie)?

When the choir is singing the Introit, the dialogue between the priest and server becomes inaudible to the people. This forces some of those who choose to kneel and persist in joining the preparatory prayers to say both the priest's and server's parts aloud. They do so completely oblivious to the imprudence of saying "*Introibo ad altare Dei*" (and the parts said by the celebrant) when it is the celebrant, not them, who enters into the altar of God. They could, of course, say the preparatory prayers silently as O'Connell says, but wasn't the point of kneeling at the preparatory prayers in order to join or at least follow silently the dialogue between the priest and server? How is this accomplished when you can't hear them and are forced to say all the parts by yourself? These difficulties, however, do not present themselves in a Low Mass. Dom Daniel continues:

The Low Mass is a liturgical derogation of High Mass. Therefore to understand the place and function of the prayers at the foot of the altar at a Low Mass it is necessary to know their place and function in the solemn form of the liturgy, their proper setting. From a different point of view, the *Church* wills – this is very plain from all the legislation leading up to the 1962 Missale itself – that the faithful, themselves, take up their rightful role in a direct interplay with the liturgical action.<sup>39</sup> While this does not constitute an attack or undermine the practice of private devotions – these are *very* important and are legitimate developments in the Latin Church – it *does* mean that the *Church* wants the faithful to have *direct contact* with the liturgy itself as it unfolds. That said, and High Mass being the norm, the Low Mass presents a different encounter with the liturgical texts.

Leaving to the side whether or not a truncated form of the liturgy should be permitted to create, *de facto*, the impression of *it* being the norm when it is not, there does arise in the Low Mass format a new set of circumstances. Certain prayers, normally completely inaudible in High Mass because they take place under cover of music are now audible to the faithful in a Low Mass. Thus, in a liturgically coherent undertaking of this form, how should the *faithful* interact with these prayers now audible to them?

One aspect of the principle of liturgical restoration is that the faithful speak for themselves and carry themselves in a manner suited to the action of the ceremonies at hand. In view of this principle, at Low Mass – when the faithful carry out responses and postures as they should – what *should* the faithful do during the prayers at the foot of the altar? These (and the *Orate Fratres*) do not belong to the faithful but to the clergy. Since these are now audible to everyone at Low Mass the Church permits and encourages that these prayers be *accommodated to the faithful since they are audible to them*. In the case of the opening preparatory prayers, since all the clergy are kneeling (except the celebrant) the faithful quite naturally kneel with the clergy as well. Why would they stand since they are not singing or reciting the Introit? Logically they should kneel with those who are kneeling at the altar and join the dialog. If they absolutely do not want to join in vocally, *then they should also remain standing*.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> See *The Celebration of Mass*, fourth edition, par. 2, p. 603.

<sup>40</sup> Interestingly, a Pontifical Low Mass celebrated by Mgr. Émilien Frenette, bishop of Saint-Jérôme, on September 25, 1960 in the studios of *Radio-Canada*, Canada's national French language media, shows the faithful standing as they said their

As for the faithful responding to the celebrant during these prayers, it should be remembered that the liturgical role of the Low Mass *server(s)* is a substitution for the acolyte. His function is the carrying of a candle and the conveyance of cruets.<sup>41</sup> His function does not include making responses – although as a Christian at Mass he would naturally also respond to liturgical salutations. But since there is no deacon and subdeacon to answer the celebrant at a Low Mass, who does so?<sup>42</sup> The servers, of course, *by way of accommodation since it is not their function to do so*. In an analogous way the faithful – whose function in Mass certainly includes making responses – may also be accommodated to a complete participation in the prayers at the foot of the altar.<sup>43</sup> As for the tie off on the prayers at the foot of the altar, once they are finished everyone rises together as the celebrant goes to the altar to recite the Introit, the beginning of the Roman Mass, properly speaking.<sup>44</sup>

Many are unaware that the prayers at the foot of the altar are not part of the Mass itself; neither is the *Asperges* rite. Solemn or Sung Mass begins with the singing of the Introit by the choir while the priest and servers are saying the preparatory prayers; Low Mass begins when the priest crosses himself at the Epistle side to recite the Introit after ascending the altar steps following the preparatory prayers.<sup>45</sup>

It is understandable if people resist the idea of standing for the singing of the Introit while the preparatory prayers are being said. Old habits die hard. If people insist in doing so anyway during Sung Mass they should at least rise once the priest says *Oremus* and ascends the altar steps. To continue kneeling beyond that point is downright silly.

## VI. Standing for the Secret, Sanctus and Agnus Dei

O’Connell says that people should stand for the Secret since it is a presidential prayer, rising when the celebrant turns to the people and says *Orate, fratres*.<sup>46</sup> At Sung Mass with incense, the *Orate Fratres* often occurs just before or around the time people rise to be incensed by the thurifer, so it would be better for the people to remain standing after incensation in preparation for the *Orate Fratres* and the Secret Prayer.

A posture that needs urgent attention is the tendency for people to kneel as soon as the bell rings for the *Sanctus* and when the *Agnus Dei* is recited or sung; this is incorrect. This is probably due to the fact that the red booklet shows an image of three small bells to indicate three rings and the words “All Kneel” in bold at the very beginning of *Sanctus*.

The *Sanctus* bell is not rung as a signal for people to kneel immediately; rather, the purpose of ringing it is threefold: (1) to create a joyful noise for the Lord; (2) give notice to the faithful that

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responses during the preparatory prayers. The video of the Mass, said facing the people, can be found here: [http://archives.radio-canada.ca/societe/religion\\_spiritualite/clips/11088/](http://archives.radio-canada.ca/societe/religion_spiritualite/clips/11088/). Although this video shows the liturgical experimentation with Mass facing the people, it is noteworthy in that it also shows that in some places before the council it was the custom to remain standing during the preparatory prayers, even at Low Mass.

<sup>41</sup> “In general their office (as the ordination of an acolyte shows) is to minister to the deacon and subdeacon, and through them to the celebrant.” – *The Celebration of Mass*, fourth edition, p. 408.

<sup>42</sup> The deacon and subdeacon, of course, do not kneel but remain standing to the right and left of the celebrant during the preparatory prayers.

<sup>43</sup> “The serving of low Mass is dealt with only incidentally throughout the *Ritus* of the Missal. The details are not fixed and are determined by applying general principles of the ceremonial, by analogy between the duties of the deacon and subdeacon, at solemn Mass and those of the server at low Mass, by some decisions of the S.R.C, and by local usage. The serving of Mass is dealt with only in outline here. Nowadays account must be taken of the active participation of the congregation at a low dialog Mass.” – *The Celebration of Mass*, fourth edition, footnote 1, p.353.

<sup>44</sup> Footnotes 22-24, 27, and 29-32 were added by me to supplement the explanation of Dom Daniel Augustine.

<sup>45</sup> “The recital of the Introit should be considered as the real beginning of Mass, since what has gone before is rather of the nature of the celebrant’s preparation.” – Adrian Fortescue, “Introit” in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1910.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, footnote 21, p. 601. O’Connell acknowledges, however, that the general practice is to remain seated until the end of the Secret since the prayer is not said aloud until its concluding words.

something divine and miraculous is about to take place; (3) to help focus the attention of the faithful inside the church on the miracle that is taking place on the altar of sacrifice.<sup>47</sup>

With the exception of Lasance, whose directions are not as precise as those of his contemporaries and could therefore be interpreted either way, Fortescue, O’Connell, Reid, Sheen, and McManus state categorically that people should remain standing until *after* the *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei* are said or sung, and rightly so, because these prayers are the Ordinary parts of the Mass that the Church has appointed specifically for the faithful’s active participation.

The Ordinary parts of the Mass are the *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Credo*, *Sanctus-Benedictus*, and *Agnus Dei*; together with the liturgical responses, they are recited or sung *standing*, never kneeling.<sup>48</sup> Unlike in the Novus Ordo which has a “linear” liturgy that makes the celebrant wait for the conclusion of the singing of the *Sanctus* before he can begin the canon, the Traditional Latin Mass has a “layered” liturgy that permits the celebrant not to wait for the singing to finish before proceeding to canon. The people, however, are not to concern themselves with the parts that belong to the priest; they have their own parts assigned to them in the Eucharistic liturgy which Holy Mother Church expects them to carry out. It is, therefore, improper to kneel while the choir is still singing the *Sanctus* because the people, who are supposed to be singing it, are not yet in the canon (even if the priest is) until after the singing of the *Sanctus* has concluded. The same principle applies to *Agnus Dei*.

## VII. Standing immediately after the elevation of the chalice

Many trads would be scandalized to learn that Fortescue and O’Connell actually direct people to stand immediately after the elevation of the chalice. Such sentiments betray a lack of understanding of the history and development of the traditional Roman liturgy, for Sheen, Lasance and McManus also say the same thing. In fact, Fortescue, Sheen and Lasance say that after the second elevation people should stand and remain standing until after the celebrant has consumed the Precious Blood.<sup>49</sup> The exception to this rule would be during a requiem Mass, when all in choir, including prelates and canons, kneel until the end of the canon.<sup>50</sup> If we follow exactly as O’Connell says, we should stand immediately after the elevation of the chalice and remain standing until at least after *Agnus Dei*, when we kneel, unless of course, we decide to follow Fortescue, Sheen and Lasance and remain standing.

Interestingly, O’Connell’s teaching is also the normative posture for Mass in the Ordinary Form in the Universal Church outside the U.S., when people rise at the end of the consecration as the priest says or sings *Mysterium fidei* and remain standing until after *Agnus Dei*, when they kneel (except in California and a few other dioceses in the Western United States, where people remain standing until after the celebrant has consumed the Precious Blood).

This is a radical departure from the practice in the Traditional Latin Mass today, but it would be more in keeping with the traditional Roman liturgy than the current practice, which makes the brief

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<sup>47</sup> See *Sanctus Bells: Their History and Use in the Catholic Church*, Vol. XI, No. 1, March 2005 Adoremus Bulletin Online Edition. Matthew D. Herrera.

<sup>48</sup> “That the faithful may take a more active part in divine worship, let Gregorian chant be restored to popular use in the parts proper to the people.” – Pope Pius XI, *Divini cultus* 9; Pope Pius XII, *Mediator Dei*, 192; “25. In solemn Mass there are three degrees of the participation of the faithful: (a) First, the congregation can sing the liturgical responses. These are: *Amen; Et cum spiritu tuo; Gloria tibi, Domine; Habemus ad Dominum; Dignum et justum est; Sed libera nos a malo; Deo gratias*. Every effort must be made that the faithful of the entire world learn to sing these responses; (b) Secondly, the congregation can sing the parts of the Ordinary of the Mass: *Kyrie, eleison; Gloria in excelsis Deo; Credo; Sanctus-Benedictus; Agnus Dei*. Every effort must be made that the faithful learn to sing these parts...” – *De musica sacra et liturgia*, n. 25.

<sup>49</sup> “They kneel till after the elevation of the chalice, then stand till the end of the celebrant’s communion.” – *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described*, first edition, p. 85; “(11) ... After the elevation all stand and remain standing until the celebrant has drunk the Precious Blood...” – *The Fulton J. Sheen Sunday Missal*, p. xlv-xlvi; “13. Stand – from the elevation of the chalice until the celebrant has consumed the precious blood.” – *The New Missal for Every Day*, p. 88.

<sup>50</sup> *The Celebration of Mass*, fourth edition, p. 535.

rising after the end of the canon for the *Pater Noster* and Preface, only to fall down to one's knees again at *Agnus Dei*, appear like an incongruous interruption to an otherwise harmonious regimen of continuous kneeling from the start of the canon till Communion. It wouldn't seem that way if people rose immediately after consecration, but that is not the practice in the U.S., and we can only speculate as to how a posture for a requiem Mass came to be the normative posture for regular Mass.<sup>51</sup>

O'Connell notes that "in some places lay persons remain kneeling until the end of the canon,"<sup>52</sup> in which case he directs them to stand (if not already standing) for *Pater Noster*, and kneel after *Agnus Dei*.<sup>53</sup> Since the custom in United States and in many places<sup>54</sup> is to kneel until the end of the canon even in the Novus Ordo, it may be prudent to continue this practice where it has become the post-conciliar custom unless people want to reintroduce the venerable practice of the traditional Roman liturgy (which I prefer and recommend for those outside the U.S.) of standing immediately after consecration.

### VIII. Ferial and Requiem Masses

Finally, a posture that is often overlooked and forgotten, perhaps because it is observed only during ferial and requiem Masses, is the requirement for the clergy in choir, even prelates, to kneel for the Collects, Post-communion prayers and *Oratio super populum* at the ferial Masses of Advent, Lent, Passiontide, the Ember days of September, vigils of II and III class outside Paschaltide, and in Requiem Masses.<sup>55</sup> At these Masses the priest's vestments are either violet or black (for Requiem Masses). Since the people generally ought to follow the postures of the clergy in choir, the authors also direct the people to kneel during these occasions.<sup>56</sup>

### IX. Lasance's Postures

This now brings us to the point raised in footnote 12 on page 4. There are some who believe that Lasance teaches that people should kneel from the beginning of the canon, through the *Pater Noster* and Preface, until Communion. This view is based on Lasance's directions for requiem and ferial Masses found on page 88 of *The New Missal for Every Day*. What does Lasance say exactly? Let's take a look:

#### Requiem and Ferial Masses

The Rules given above are to be observed, except that the people –

1. Kneel during the prayers before the Epistle and after the Communion.
2. Kneel – from the Benedictus . . . Hosanna in excelsis to the Pax Domini before the Agnus Dei.

Lasance's first point is consistent with the traditional practice of kneeling for the Collect and Post Communion prayers for Requiem Masses and most ferial Masses in violet vestments. This is mentioned by the authors of *The Celebration of Mass* and *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described* and applies to both the clergy in choir and the people.

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<sup>51</sup> It must be noted, however, that while Fortescue was an Englishman and O'Connell was a secular priest of the Diocese of Menevia (Wales), McManus was a priest of the Archdiocese of Boston, so his direction for people to rise after consecration would suggest that such practice may have also been widespread in the United States before the Second Vatican Council.

<sup>52</sup> *The Celebration of Mass*, fourth edition, footnote 23, p. 601.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 14-15, pp. 601-602.

<sup>54</sup> With over 300,000 Latin Mass booklet missals sold by Coalition in Support of Ecclesia Dei, the U.S. custom of kneeling throughout the canon at Sung Mass has caught on in the English-speaking world and seems to be practiced everywhere the red booklet is found.

<sup>55</sup> *The Celebration of Mass*, p. 451.

<sup>56</sup> In contrast, the requiem booklet missal published by Coalition in Support of Ecclesia Dei directs people to stand for the Collects and Post-communion prayers at Sung Requiem Masses.

The second point appears to contradict what Lasance said just a few sentences earlier on page 87 that “the rubrics give no directions” and that “the people may conform to the rules given for those who are in choir.” However, writing even earlier in 1917, Fortescue actually says the same thing:

At ferial Masses of Advent, Lent, Ember days, vigils kept with fast, and at Masses for the dead the members of the choir kneel during the collects, post-communions and *Oratio super populum*, also from the *Sanctus* to the end of the response to *Pax domini sit semper vobiscum*. The exceptions to this rule are the eves of Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Pentecost, and the Ember days in Whitsun week.<sup>57</sup> (underscoring supplied)

If people were to follow Fortescue and Lasance exactly on this point, during requiem and ferial Masses they should kneel from the beginning of the canon, through the *Pater Noster* and Preface, but stand just before *Agnus Dei* and remain standing until after the priest has consumed the Precious Blood (since Lasance also says the “rules above are to be observed,” rule n. 13, wherein he directs people to stand from the elevation of the chalice until the celebrant has consumed the precious blood and found on the same page, would also apply.) Ironically, those who stubbornly insist that this 1945 Lasance posture is still applicable to the 1962 Mass do not follow exactly as he wrote with regards to it when they continue to kneel for *Agnus Dei* and beyond.

In any case, three things are factually beyond doubt: (1) Lasance’s point no. 2 (as well as Fortescue’s) applied only to requiem and ferial Masses and therefore did not apply to non-requiem and non-ferial Masses; (2) More importantly, Lasance wrote this back in 1945 when the fifth typical edition (1920) was in force, and Fortescue, even earlier in 1917 when the fourth typical edition (1884) was in force; Sheen’s and O’Connell’s books, on the hand, published closer to 1962 and therefore reflecting the teachings of the 1958 Instruction on active participation and the 1961 rubrics of the Roman Missal (the sixth typical edition) and breviary, repeat no such posture for requiem or ferial Masses for either clergy or faithful other than to kneel for the collect and post communion prayers; (3) Reid did not repeat Fortescue’s direction to “kneel . . . from the *Sanctus* to the end of the response to *Pax domini sit semper vobiscum*” at requiem and ferial Masses in violet vestments when he updated and published the fourteenth and fifteenth revised editions of *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described*, further evidence that this posture is no longer consistent with the praxis of the 1962 Mass.

Therefore, given a choice between following a dated order of postures intended only for requiem and ferial Masses practiced circa 1945 and earlier and one written and updated for regular use for the 1962 Roman Missal, it is obvious that the latter should have more credibility. After all, *Summorum Pontificum* was about the 1962 Roman Missal, not any of the earlier typical editions.

## **X. Similarity with Novus Ordo postures**

Liturgically-minded readers will easily note the similarity in Mass postures with the Novus Ordo and wonder why I’m advocating them; I am not. The similarity here with the instructions in the Novus Ordo directing people to stand from the Introit (entrance song) and at all ordinary parts of the Mass, to rise before the *Orate Fratres*, to remain standing until after the *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei*, and to rise immediately at the end of the consecration reflect rather the influence of the pre-conciliar Roman liturgy on the development of the Novus Ordo and not vice versa, since these postures predate the Novus Ordo: Fortescue’s *Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described* was published in 1917; Lasance’s *The New Missal for Every Day* was last updated and published in 1945; O’Connell’s *The Celebration of Mass*, first published in 1940, was last revised in 1963 and printed in 1964; Sheen’s *The Fulton J. Sheen Sunday Missal* was published in 1961; McManus’ *Rites of Holy Week* was published in 1956. None of these authors could possibly have been influenced by the Novus Ordo, which was introduced only in 1969.

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<sup>57</sup> *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described*, first edition, p. 85.

However difficult it may be for some people to accept, it is most likely that the Consilium<sup>58</sup> headed by Fr. Anibale Bugnini simply adopted the laity Mass postures prevailing at that time (circa 1965) and incorporated them into the Novus Ordo Mass that the Concilium created and first presented as a prototype Mass before a select group of bishops in the Sistine Chapel on Oct. 24, 1967.<sup>59</sup> This explains the uncanny similarity in Mass postures between the two forms.

Although Bugnini may have fabricated the liturgy,<sup>60</sup> he cannot be accused of making up laity Mass postures, for the evidence shows they are same as those espoused by pre-conciliar experts dating as far back as 1917 and perhaps even earlier. Rather, as far as Mass postures are concerned, I submit that the Novus Ordo postures (the licit ones described in the General Instructions of the Roman Missal) should serve as our historical reference when rethinking our own Mass postures because they reflect the postures prevailing at the time when the 1962 Missal was in force.

## **XI. A critique of the postures in the red booklet**

There is no liturgical or even practical reason why people should kneel from the prayers at the foot of the altar all the way up to the reading of the Gospel during Low Mass, but then rise for the singing of the *Gloria* at High Mass as is done now in many places. There is also no good explanation why people sit at Low Mass from the homily onwards, through the *Pater Noster* and Preface and all the way up to the ringing of the *Sanctus* bell, whereas at High Mass they would stand at the conclusion of the Secret, remain standing for the *Pater Noster* and through the Preface, and then kneel again at the *Sanctus*. It's the same Mass, but why the different postures?<sup>61</sup>

Many blindly follow the postures in the red booklet since they don't know any better and people around them are doing it. Others contend that since there were no official rubrics directing laity postures anyway,<sup>62</sup> they can follow what they believe and remember to be the local custom and practice at that time. But what is their proof that what they believe to be the local practice was actually the correct local practice for the 1962 Mass? Besides, what may once have been the norm in a certain period may no longer be in different era as frequently happened throughout history each time the Church updated her rites.

In the course of my research into the issue of laity postures, I had the occasion to talk to Mrs. Mary Kraychy, executive director of the Coalition in Support of Ecclesia Dei, the publisher of the popular red booklet missal. According to Mrs. Kraychy, she did not consult any book on liturgy or any authorities regarding laity postures, but based them solely on information she gathered from priests and people whom she consulted when she was putting the red booklet together. This is hardly authoritative, yet it is surprising how many people cloak the red booklet with the mantle of infallibility and tenaciously defend the laity postures indicated there as if they were defending articles of faith without bothering to check where Mrs. Kraychy got her information.

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<sup>58</sup> The Concilium was an advisory body created by Pope Paul VI in 1964 to implement the liturgical reforms called for by *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, (Constitution of Sacred Liturgy), the first document passed by the Council Fathers (4 December 1963).

<sup>59</sup> A sung Mass which was celebrated in Italian by Anibale Bugnini himself. Cf. *The Reform of the Liturgy, 1948-1975*. Liturgical Press, 1990. Anibale Bugnini.

<sup>60</sup> "After the Council...in the place of the liturgy as the fruit of organic development came fabricated liturgy. We abandoned the organic, living process of growth and development over centuries, and replaced it - as in a manufacturing process - with a fabrication, a banal on-the-spot product." – Preface to Msgr. Klaus Gamber's "The Reform of the Roman Liturgy: Its Problems and Background" by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger.

<sup>61</sup> "To rise for someone is a sign of reverence. Thus, in the Mass it is proper to rise at the Gospel because the Gospel is the word of God; similarly, the congregation rises for the celebrant who is about to greet them with the words *Dominus vobiscum*." See *The Book of Ceremonies*, footnote 2, p. 29. Those following the red booklet postures for Low Mass would be kneeling or sitting four out of six times the *Dominus vobiscum* is said, but would be standing for all six times during a Sung Mass.

<sup>62</sup> This is true of course, as also evidenced by numerous paintings of centuries past showing laity at Mass in various postures.

As explained at the beginning, the rubric directing laity to kneel constantly and say nothing was meant for those present at a private (Low) Mass *for which they take no active part*. The 1961 rubrics eliminated the notion of a “private” Mass, and called on the laity to actively participate in the Mass “after the manner proper to them.”<sup>63</sup> It also directed all to follow the 1958 Instruction *De musica sacra*, which repeated previous papal exhortations for more active participation of the faithful in the liturgy: “The participation of the congregation becomes more complete, however, when, in addition to this interior disposition, exterior participation is manifested by external acts, such as bodily position (kneeling, standing, sitting), ceremonial signs, and especially responses, prayers, and singing.”<sup>64</sup>

A congregation that is participating by external acts and responses (such as in a Dialog Mass) cannot be said to be not taking an active part, which had been the underlying justification for the all that kneeling and silence during a private Mass where people are deemed to just “be present” instead of “assisting at,” which connotes a more active participation. If some folks continued this practice after 1961 in the mistaken belief that they were being faithful to the Old Mass (actually they weren’t even if they thought they were, since they sit from the offertory onwards up to *Sanctus*, when old rubric clearly said they should be kneeling throughout except for the Gospel) this was more likely out of habit and ignorance, which is not unexpected given the fact that the ink was hardly dry on the 1962 missal when the Sacred Congregation of Rites, acting on the recommendation of Bugnini’s Concilium, revised the liturgy just two years later in 1964,<sup>65</sup> and again in 1969. Whatever the case, it would be impertinent to dismiss the opinion of the known authorities on the traditional Roman liturgy and rely solely on people’s personal recollections or opinions as basis for determining people’s postures.

I do not blame Mrs. Krachy, who deserves only our praise for keeping the Traditional Mass going through the publication of affordable booklet missals through those dark years when 1962 hand missals were out of print and hard to come by. I do, however, find fault with those who knew the red booklet postures were wrong or should have known they were wrong by virtue of their special education and training yet took no corrective action. As a consequence of this inaction, the red booklet’s erroneous postures have become so pervasive that even the Dominican Rite booklet missal put together by Fr. Augustine Thompson, O.P. adopts the red booklet postures.<sup>66</sup>

No doubt many traditional Catholics will take umbrage at the notion that the postures they’ve been religiously following all this time are wrong. It is not my intention to offend or embarrass anyone; I am simply presenting the facts and opinion of experts and the teachings of the Church. If anyone has a contrary opinion, let him show where Fortescue, O’Connell, Lasance, McManus, Sheen and Reid are collectively in error, *if he could*, for it would be difficult to find anybody more knowledgeable about the ceremonies of the traditional Roman liturgy than these experts.

## **XII. Doing the right thing – postures and gestures do matter**

In light of these revelations, it has been suggested that we nevertheless follow the postures in the red booklet simply because these are the postures the present generation of traditional Catholics have become accustomed to and changing now would only sow confusion and cause division over a matter of insignificant consequence. It is precisely this kind of mentality that allowed liturgical practices that started out as abuses (Communion in the hand, altar girls, washing of women’s feet on Maundy Thursday, etc.) to creep into and become accepted into the *Novus Ordo*. Rather, the question we should ask ourselves is this: Should we conform ourselves to what everybody else is doing simply because it is convenient, or do we do what is right? If the former, we risk creating our own liturgy.

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<sup>63</sup> General Rubrics of the Roman Breviary and Missal (1961), part 3, chapter 1, n. 272. The Latin term for “Low Mass” was also changed to “*Missa lecta*.” Previously, the Latin for “Low Mass” was synonymous to “private Mass.”

<sup>64</sup> *De musica sacra et liturgia*, par. 22(b).

<sup>65</sup> *Inter oecumenici*, issued 26 September 1964, becoming effective on 7 March 1965.

<sup>66</sup> See *Dominican Rite Mass*, Dominican Liturgy Publications. Fr. Augustine Thompson, O.P.

Those inclined to think that I'm attempting to make a mountain out of molehill over an insignificant issue as laity Mass postures would do well to ponder how they would react during the singing of the *Pater Noster* at a Traditional Latin Mass if groups of people were to hold hands with one another and across the aisles, waive their hands in the air like charismatics, or extend their hands at midriff in the *orans* position in the manner of a priest. Or how about if people thrust their arms towards the priest when replying *Et cum spiritu tuo*, or snap a Hitler salute when Fr. Joe asks them to join him in blessing Mr. and Mrs. Smith? Or how about if people remain seated or standing during the consecration, receive Communion in the hand while seated, or receive it kneeling but in the hand? After all, these postures are observed in the Latin rite, and there are no official norms governing laity Mass postures in the 1962 Mass anyway.<sup>67</sup> Would people still be indifferent, or would these postures and gestures that are alien to the Traditional Latin Mass bother them enough to elicit a reaction?

Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, former secretary of the Congregation of Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments and now archbishop of Colombo, Sri Lanka, aptly warns us: "Liturgy for this reason can never be what man creates. For if we worship the way we want and fix the rules ourselves, then we run the risk of recreating Aaron's golden calf."<sup>68</sup> While the cardinal was directing his comments at liturgical abuses in the Novus Ordo, we must also ask in all candor if traditional Catholics have created a golden calf by creating and worshipping their own rules. The intolerance and dismissive attitude shown to those who would dare suggest changes in Mass postures to comport with the pre-conciliar teaching of the Church on active participation in light of the preponderance of evidence is an indication that many traditional Catholics, priests included, have elevated the red booklet postures to the status of a hallowed eighth sacrament, utterly oblivious to the irony that they would be no better than the aging Novus Ordo hippies who wantonly disregard established liturgical norms in the false spirit of Vatican II by stubbornly persisting in a manner of participation that is clearly contrary to the mind and desire of the Church.

In view of its miraculous revival after a long and unjust period of suppression that nearly saw its extermination, this present generation of traditional Catholics has a grave responsibility as temporary custodians of the Traditional Latin Mass to preserve the authentic traditional Roman liturgy and pass it down *unaltered* to future generations. If we continue, however, to do nothing and allow ourselves to be herded like sheep by those who believe they know better than the real experts of the traditional Roman liturgy, we will surely fail in carrying out that solemn responsibility.

### **XIII. Ideal Postures for the Traditional Latin Mass**

Whether the Mass is Low or Sung, ideally people in the U.S. should (i) stand for the Introit, *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, Collects;<sup>69</sup> (ii) sit for the Epistle, Gradual, Alleluia (tract, sequence); (iii) stand for the Gospel; (iv) sit for the homily; (v) stand for the *Credo*, and *Oremus*; (vi) sit during the Offertory; (vii) stand at *Orate Fratres*; (viii) kneel after the *Sanctus*; (ix) stand at *Per omnia saecula saeculorum* at the end of the canon just before the *Pater Noster*; (x) kneel after the *Agnus Dei* and throughout Communion; (xi) sit for the ablutions;<sup>70</sup> (xii) stand at *Dominus vobiscum* before the Post-communion prayers; (xiii) stand during Post-communion prayer and the dismissal (*Ite Missa est*); (xiv) kneel for the final blessing; (xv) stand for the Last Gospel; (xvi) and stand for the recessional. In effect, the only difference in people's

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<sup>67</sup> While *Universae Ecclesiae* 28 protects the 1962 Mass from "those provisions of law, connected with the sacred Rites, promulgated from 1962 onwards and incompatible with the rubrics of the liturgical books in effect in 1962," it does not stop people from spontaneously introducing illicit customs and practices associated with the Novus Ordo, given that there were no officially-prescribed laity postures and gestures for the 1962 Mass.

<sup>68</sup> Letter addressed to the *Foederatio Internationalis Una Voce* dated 24 August 2011 and presented to the assembly gathered during FIUV's 20th General Assembly held November 5-6, 2011 in Rome.

<sup>69</sup> Except in most Masses in violet vestments and at requiem Mass, where all kneel for the Collect(s) and Post-communion(s). *The Celebration of Mass*, fourth edition, footnote 17, p. 601.

<sup>70</sup> For those who have not received Holy Communion – *Ibid.*, n. 18, p. 602



postures between a Low Mass and a Sung Mass ought to be during the prayers at the foot of the altar, when the people kneel during Low Mass (but rise immediately after the priest says *Oremus* and ascends the altar), but remain standing during Solemn or Sung Mass. Thereafter, the people's postures at Low Mass should mirror those at Sung Mass. This order of postures, summarized in table 2 on page 18, is in essence O'Connell's and Reid's order of postures for the 1962 Mass since it directs people to remain standing during the singing of Introit during Sung Mass while directing people to kneel after Agnus Dei. In countries where it is not the custom to kneel throughout the canon, I think it would be better to return to the traditional Roman posture advocated by Fortescue, Lasance and Sheen to stand immediately after the second elevation and either (a) kneel again only after the singing of Agnus Dei, or (b) remain in the standing position until after the priest has consumed the Sacred Species. Since both (a) and (b) options have also been adopted into the Novus Ordo (and not the other way around), it may actually help newcomers from the Novus Ordo in places where this is the practice to adjust quickly to the Traditional Latin Mass since it is one less difficulty to overcome if the postures are similar. A summary of these postures is shown in table 3, using the more common option (a).<sup>71</sup>

It is my sincere prayer that this short essay on Mass postures will remove the veil that covers the eyes of many traditional Catholics, so that their minds may be illuminated and they can objectively rethink their Mass postures in a manner consistent with the mind of the Church.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> On February 7, 2012 I assisted at a *Missa Cantata* in a private school in the Philippines attended by the entire high school batch of over 300 students together with their teachers and many parents, an overwhelming majority of whom had never before assisted at a Traditional Latin Mass, where the postures shown in table 3 were followed, including standing during the singing of the Introit and rising after the second elevation. A video of the Mass could be found here: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J\\_3vgntHrs0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_3vgntHrs0). From my observation and what many people told me afterwards, the similarity in postures with the Novus Ordo (it is the custom in the Philippines to rise immediately after the second elevation, following the general Roman practice) helped the congregation adjust to the novelty of the new experience and allowed them to keep their focus on the essence of the liturgy undistracted by some "strange, new postures" alien to their experience.

<sup>72</sup> I welcome questions or comments. Email me at [richardfriend62@gmail.com](mailto:richardfriend62@gmail.com).

Table 1

### Comparison of Teachings on the Order of Postures for Sung Sunday Mass

	CM	CRRD	Lasance	Sheen	RHW	Eccl. Dei
Prayers at the foot of the altar:	-	-	Kneel	Kneel	Kneel	Kneel
If not singing the Introit	Kneel	Kneel	-	-	-	-
If singing the Introit	Stand	Stand	-	-	-	-
Priest ascend the altar	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Kneel
Priest recites Introit	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Kneel
Kyrie	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Kneel
Gloria	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Collect	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Epistle	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit
Gradual, Alleluia (Tract, Sequence)	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit
Gospel	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Sermon	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit
Credo	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
At “Et incarnatus est...”	Kneel	Kneel	Kneel	Kneel	Kneel	Kneel
After “Oremus” before Offertory	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit
Offertory	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit
Incensing of people	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
At “Orate, fratres”	Sit <sup>1</sup>	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit
Secret	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit
At “Per omnia” after Secret	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Preface	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Sanctus	-	-	-	-	-	Kneel
During the singing of Sanctus	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	-
After Sanctus is sung	Kneel	Kneel	Kneel	Kneel	Kneel	Kneel
After elevation of the chalice	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Kneel	Kneel
At “Per omnia” at the end of the canon	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Pater Noster	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Agnus Dei	-	-	-	-	-	Kneel
During the singing of Agnus Dei	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	-
After Agnus Dei is sung	Kneel	Kneel <sup>2</sup>	Stand	Stand	Kneel	Kneel
Communion of the priest	-	-	-	-	-	-
Priest consumes Sacred Host	Kneel	Kneel <sup>2</sup>	Stand	Stand	Kneel	Kneel
After priest drinks Precious Blood	Kneel	Kneel	Kneel	Kneel	Kneel	Kneel
At “Dominus vobiscum”	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Post-communion	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
At “Ite missa est”	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Final blessing	Kneel	Kneel	Kneel	Kneel	Kneel	Kneel
Last Gospel	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Recessional	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand

Notes:

- (1) O’Connell says it is more correct to stand here (as well as during the Secret) although he acknowledges that in many places the practice is to remain seated because the Secret Prayer is inaudible.
- (2) In the first edition of CRRD, Fortescue says people should stand after the second elevation and remain standing until after the celebrant has drunk the Precious Blood.

Symbols:

CM = The Celebration of Mass, fourth edition (1964). J.B. O’Connell.

CRRD = The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described, fourteenth edition. Fortescue, O’Connell, Reid.

Lasance = The New Missal for Every Day, 1945 edition, Francis X. Lasance.

Sheen = The Fulton J. Sheen Sunday Missal. Fulton J. Sheen

RHS = Rites of Holy Week (1956). Frederick McManus.

Eccl. Dei = Latin-English Booklet Missal for Praying the Traditional Mass (the “red booklet”).

Table 2

### The Order of Kneeling, Sitting and Standing (U.S.)

	Regular		Requiem	
	Low Mass	High Mass	Low Mass	High Mass
Entrance procession	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Asperges	Stand	Stand	N/A	N/A
While priest vests	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit
When priest returns from vesting	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Prayers at the foot of the altar <sup>1</sup>	Kneel	Stand	Kneel	Stand
Priest ascends the altar	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Priest recites the Introit	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Kyrie	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Gloria	Stand	Stand <sup>2</sup>	N/A	N/A
Collect	Stand <sup>3</sup>	Stand <sup>3</sup>	Kneel	Kneel
Epistle	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit
Gradual	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit
Alleluia (Tract, Sequence)	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit
Gospel	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Sermon	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit
Credo	Stand	Stand <sup>2</sup>	N/A	N/A
At “Et incarnatus est...”	Kneel <sup>4</sup>	Kneel <sup>4</sup>	N/A	N/A
After “Oremus” before Offertory	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit
Offertory	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit
Incensing of people	N/A	Stand <sup>5</sup>	N/A	N/A
At “Orate, fratres”	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Secret	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Preface	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
After Sanctus	Kneel <sup>6</sup>	Kneel <sup>6</sup>	Kneel <sup>6</sup>	Kneel <sup>6</sup>
At “Per omnia saecula saeculorum” <sup>7</sup>	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Pater Noster	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
After Agnus Dei	Kneel <sup>6</sup>	Kneel <sup>6</sup>	Kneel <sup>6</sup>	Kneel <sup>6</sup>
Communion	Kneel	Kneel	Kneel	Kneel
At “Dominus vobiscum”	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Post-communion	Stand <sup>3</sup>	Stand <sup>3</sup>	Kneel <sup>8</sup>	Kneel <sup>8</sup>
“Ite missa est” <sup>9</sup>	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Final blessing	Kneel	Kneel	N/A	N/A
Last Gospel <sup>7</sup>	Stand	Stand	Stand <sup>7</sup>	Stand <sup>7</sup>
“Et Verbum caro factum est” <sup>7</sup>	Genuflect	Genuflect	Genuflect <sup>7</sup>	Genuflect <sup>7</sup>
Leonine prayers <sup>10</sup>	Kneel	N/A	Stand <sup>10</sup>	Stand <sup>10</sup>
Recessional	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand

*Notes:*

1. The psalm *Iudica me* is omitted at a Requiem Mass
2. Sit when the priest sits; stand when the priest rises to return to the altar.
3. Kneel at ferial Masses in violet vestments.
4. Bow instead of kneel when seated. However, all must kneel on March 25 and December 25.
5. Bow to the thurifer before and after incensation, and remain standing.
6. Kneel only *after* the *Santus*/Agnus Dei is recited or sung.
7. Omitted at a Requiem Mass if the Absolution follows immediately.
8. Rise immediately after the postcommunion prayer.
9. “*Requiescat in pace*” at a Requiem Mass.
10. The Absolution replaces the Leonine prayers at a Requiem Mass.

Table 3

### The Order of Kneeling, Sitting and Standing

	Regular		Requiem	
	Low Mass	High Mass	Low Mass	High Mass
Entrance procession	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Asperges	Stand	Stand	N/A	N/A
While priest vests	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit
When priest returns from vesting	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Prayers at the foot of the altar <sup>1</sup>	Kneel	Stand	Kneel	Stand
Priest ascends the altar	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Priest recites the Introit	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Kyrie	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Gloria	Stand	Stand <sup>2</sup>	N/A	N/A
Collect	Stand <sup>3</sup>	Stand <sup>3</sup>	Kneel	Kneel
Epistle	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit
Gradual	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit
Alleluia (Tract, Sequence)	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit
Gospel	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Sermon	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit
Credo	Stand	Stand <sup>2</sup>	N/A	N/A
At “Et incarnatus est...”	Kneel <sup>4</sup>	Kneel <sup>4</sup>	N/A	N/A
After “Oremus” before Offertory	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit
Offertory	Sit	Sit	Sit	Sit
Incensing of people	N/A	Stand <sup>5</sup>	N/A	N/A
At “Orate, fratres”	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Secret	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Preface	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
After Sanctus	Kneel <sup>6</sup>	Kneel <sup>6</sup>	Kneel <sup>6</sup>	Kneel <sup>6</sup>
At “Per omnia saecula saeculorum” <sup>7</sup>	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Pater Noster	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
After Agnus Dei	Stand	Stand	Kneel <sup>6</sup>	Kneel <sup>6</sup>
After priest’s Communion	Kneel	Kneel	Kneel	Kneel
At “Dominus vobiscum”	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Post-communion prayer	Stand <sup>3</sup>	Stand <sup>3</sup>	Kneel <sup>9</sup>	Kneel <sup>9</sup>
“Ite missa est” <sup>10</sup>	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand
Final blessing	Kneel	Kneel	N/A	N/A
Last Gospel <sup>8</sup>	Stand	Stand	Stand <sup>8</sup>	Stand <sup>8</sup>
“Et Verbum caro factum est” <sup>8</sup>	Genuflect	Genuflect	Genuflect <sup>8</sup>	Genuflect <sup>8</sup>
Leonine prayers <sup>11</sup>	Kneel	N/A	Stand <sup>11</sup>	Stand <sup>11</sup>
Recessional	Stand	Stand	Stand	Stand

*Notes:*

1. The psalm *Iudica me* is omitted at a Requiem Mass
2. Sit when the priest sits; stand when the priest rises to return to the altar.
3. Kneel at ferial Masses in violet vestments.
4. Bow instead of kneel when seated. However, all must kneel on March 25 and December 25.
5. Bow to the thurifer before and after incensation, and remain standing.
6. Kneel only *after* the *Santus*/Agnus Dei is recited or sung.
7. At the conclusion of the Secret.
8. Omitted at a Requiem Mass if the Absolution follows immediately.
9. Rise immediately after the postcommunion prayer.
10. “Requiescat in pace” at a Requiem Mass.
11. The Absolution replaces the Leonine prayers at a Requiem Mass.

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