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ASTARE CORAM TE ET TIBI MINISTRARE

On Standing after the Consecration to the Doxology of the Eucharistic Prayer

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On March 19, 2016, Archbishop Socrates B. Villegas, D.D., acting in his capacity as CBCP President, issued a pastoral letter "On the Question of Kneeling or Standing after the Consecration until after the Great Amen during the Eucharistic Celebration."[1] He addressed the pastoral letter to his fellow bishops, explaining the decision of the CBCP Permanent Council that "we must abandon the practice of standing after the Consecration until the Amen." The reason that he cited for this is the lack of authority on the part of the CBCP to make such an adaptation or to implement it. Given this, he said, their decision is to revert to the "previously established practice." He then added a spiritual motive to this rubrical indication: "to deepen our reverence for the Most Blessed Sacrament."[2]

The said directive met with varied reactions. Some parishes and dioceses promptly introduced the changes after the document was

[1]Archbishop Socrates B. Villegas, Pastoral Letter *On the Question of Kneeling or Standing after the Consecration until after the Great Amen during the Eucharistic Celebration* (March 19, 2016), http://www.cbcpnews.com/cbcpnews/?p=74706 (accessed August 3, 2016).

[2]Villegas, Pastoral Letter *On the Question of Kneeling or Standing after the Consecration until after the Great Amen during the Eucharistic Celebration.*

circulated—as of the time of writing, most churches have begun to observe it. However, there are also parishes and dioceses that have not done so. Notable among this latter category, the Liturgy Commission Directors of the Metropolitan Province of Manila, after meeting together with some professors of San Beda Graduate School of Liturgy on March 31, 2016 at San Carlos Seminary, have agreed to retain the status quo which is to stand instead of kneel in this part of the liturgy.[3] The said group of liturgists subsequently wrote a letter to the CBCP to explain their position, prompting some of the bishops, such as the Archbishop of San Fernando, to defer implementation of the directive.[4] Nevertheless, the bishops of the dioceses of Novaliches and San Pablo, both suffragans of Manila, would later order its implementation in their respective territories.[5] Some hoped that it could be included in the agenda of the July 2016 meeting of the CBCP, but it was not deliberated on. Eventually, the Archbishop of San Fernando promulgated it in his own territory, effective August 14, 2016.[6]

These differences have brought awkward disparity if not serious division not only among the local dioceses but even within a diocese and within a particular liturgical assembly. For instance, in the Archdiocese of Manila, most parishes have not implemented the directive with the exception of a few such as Mary the Queen in Greenhills, San Juan, and San Agustin Church in Intramuros. The same is true within the Diocese of Cubao, where the directive is already being followed in

[3]See Diocese of Parañaque Circular No. 2016-029 (April 27, 2016).

[4]See Archdiocese of San Fernando Circular No. 23, S. 2016 (August 10, 2016).

[5]Bishop Tobias of Novaliches declared that "regarding the question of standing or kneeling throughout the Consecration up to the Great Amen, *normally*, barring from the rare situations requiring the contrary, the Faithful at Mass have to remain kneeling during the whole consecration up to the Great Amen" (Diocese of Novaliches Circular 2016-10 [July 14, 2016], emphasis in original). Meanwhile, the Diocese of San Pablo posted the CBCP letter on its official Facebook account on July 18 and set its implementation in the diocese on July 24.

[6]Archdiocese of San Fernando Circular No. 23, S. 2016.

Santa Maria della Strada Parish but not in Our Lady of Pentecost Parish just across Katipunan Avenue. In fact, it has not become unusual these days to see divergent postures among the members of the assembly in this part of the Mass. This is the case especially in transparochial settings like shrines, malls, and schools, such as in the University of Santo Tomas where people from different places that have different stances about this directive converge. From after the Consecration to the Great Amen, some remain kneeling while others rise up, either too sure or not quite sure of what they are doing.

While this may seem to be a minor and inconsequential rubrical issue, it is at the very least an undesirable and disedifying rupture, all the more ironic given its context within the very sacrament that reveals our unity in Christ. As the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM) says, "a *common* bodily posture, to be observed by all those taking part, is a sign of unity of the members of the Christian community gathered together for the Sacred Liturgy, for it expresses the intentions and spiritual attitude of the participants and also fosters them."[7] Regarding disunity on matters concerning the celebration of Mass, Blessed Paul VI once declared that for "Catholics, the *Ordo Missae* of the Roman Rite is a singular sign of their unity …. We cannot permit the divine Eucharist, sacrament of unity, to be made the source of division …."[8]

This article, then, in light of the foregoing, tackles this important liturgical issue from a rubrical, historical, theological, and pastoral perspective. While both kneeling and standing have their own value and significance, this article will focus on the value and significance of standing at this point in the liturgy since this is what is on the line at the moment. In this study, we strive to obey the instruction of the current GIRM that "attention must therefore be paid to what is determined by this *General Instruction* and by the traditional practice of

[7]2002 GIRM, 42. Emphasis added.

[8]Paul VI, Epistle *Cum te* to Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre (October 11, 1976), *Notitiae* 12 (1976): 417–427; also in International Commission on English in the Liturgy, *Documents on the Liturgy 1963–1979: Conciliar, Papal, and Curial Texts* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1982), 569 (hereafter referred to as DOL).

the Roman Rite and to what serves the spiritual good of the People of God, rather than private inclination or arbitrary choice."[9] Thus, with full respect and filial reverence for our esteemed bishops, this article hopes to humbly offer its arguments in favor of retaining the practice of standing after the Consecration and for the rest of the Eucharistic Prayer.

What do the rubrics say?

One recalls that prior to the liturgical reform of Vatican II, there was but one rubric that pertained to the posture of the assembly. Back then, the rubrics were concerned mainly with the ritual actions of the priest, and scant emphasis was put on the people's participation. This rubric indicated that in Low Masses (*Missa Privata*), those assisting at Mass are to kneel throughout the celebration, even in the Easter Season, except for the reading of the Gospel.[10] However, this lone

[9]2002 GIRM, 42.

[10]"Circumstantes autem in Missis privatis semper genua ectunt, etiam Tempore Paschali, præterquam dum legitur Evangelium," *Rubricae Generales Missalis* XVII, 2. Note that *Missa Privata* is the equivalent not of what are now called Masses without a Congregation but of the *Missa Secreta* or *Missa Solitaria*. Hence, *Missa Privata* is more clearly translated in English as Low Mass, as opposed to High Mass or Sung Mass (*Missa Cantata*). Low Masses recited by the priest in a barely audible voice were relatively fast and short, and so having many transitions in posture would have been too awkward and cumbersome. Michael Sternbeck comments that

> this arrangement, which only appeared around the time of the "Reformation" and which was derived from the actions of the server (who in Masses without congregations knelt throughout), took little account of the more solemn and less solemn parts of the Mass, nor of the ancient practices of standing for the singing of the Collect, the Preface and the Lord's Prayer.

See Michael Sternbeck, *The Order of Mass according to the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite: The Missal of Blessed John XXIII* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008), 8.

rubric was understood to be more directive rather than preceptive and the people were seldom obliged to follow it strictly.[11] For instance, the people were commonly permitted to sit at certain parts of the Mass.

Steps to fill up this lacuna were taken, beginning in July 25, 1960, through a *motu proprio* from St. John XXIII who authorized a new set of rubrics both for the celebration of the Mass and the Divine Office. The rubric for habitual kneeling was suppressed and precise postures were indicated for the clergy in choir during a High Mass that the people were also expected to follow. In this set of new participation rubrics, "the proper liturgical posture is standing; only the times for kneeling and sitting are enumerated."[12] Here we find the Consecration, but not the entire Canon, included among the times for kneeling. For penitential and requiem Masses, however, among the times when kneeling is prescribed was "from the completion of the Sanctus up to the preface of the Pater Noster, exclusively."[13]

In the meantime, no corresponding rubrics were indicated for Low Mass, which at that time continued to be the usual form of celebrating the Mass in many places, even on Sundays. Thus, the elimination of the lone rubric for habitual kneeling left the Low Mass practically unregulated and open to adaptation. While variations in posture were now introduced that generally followed the postures of the clergy in choir at the Sung Mass, other variations occurred, such as extending

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[11]Richard Friend, *Understanding When to Kneel, Sit and Stand at a Traditional Latin Mass: A Short Essay on Mass Postures* (https://sanctatrinitasunusdeus.files.wordpress.com/2014/04/un derstanding-when-to-kneel-sit-and-stand-revised-april-25-2014.pdf), 2 (accessed August 3, 2016).

[12]Frederick R. McManus, *Handbook for the New Rubrics* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1961), 189.

[13]McManus, *Handbook for the New Rubrics*, 190. We find exactly the same indications in an even earlier commentary: Joseph Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development* (New York: Benzinger Brothers, Inc., 1961), 172–173. The version here consulted is the 1961 centennial edition; the first edition of Jungmann's book, more popularly known as *Missarum Solemnia*, first came out in 1951.

the kneeling throughout the entire Canon even outside of penitential and requiem Masses.

Richard Friend notes that in what he calls the "red booklet,"[14] the posture indicated beginning from the Consecration and for the rest of the Eucharistic Prayer is to kneel. This can give the impression that this was the established practice in Masses prior to the reform of the Council. However, he also observes that in other sources on celebrating the Tridentine Mass, the posture is to kneel only for the Consecration and to stand afterwards for the rest of the Canon, following the posture indicated for the clergy assisting in choir. He finds this to be the case, for instance, in the commentaries of acknowledged authorities such as Fortescue, Sheen, and Lassance, as well as in other hand missals then in circulation like the *Fulton J. Sheen Sunday Missal* and *The New Missal for Everyday*. Here it is very significant to find a known promoter of the Traditional Latin Mass arguing for standing after the Consecration in the Traditional Latin Mass itself. As Friend knowingly remarks: "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."[15]

Now we turn to what is indicated in the rubrics according to the reformed liturgy of Vatican II. A notable characteristic of the first typical edition of the *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani* (IGMR) of 1969 was its emphasis on the participation of the faithful, in line with the

[14]By this he is referring to the economical Mass participation guide widely distributed within the circles of what is now called the Extraordinary Form. It is entitled *Latin-English Booklet Missal for Praying the Traditional Mass* and is published by the Coalition in Support of Ecclesia Dei.

[15]Friend, *Understanding When to Kneel, Sit and Stand at a Traditional Latin Mass: A Short Essay on Mass Postures*, 10. Indeed, while Friend also acknowledges that "it may be prudent to continue this practice where it has become the post-conciliar custom" (11), he ultimately sides with standing, and this is for the Extraordinary Form (12). In this essay, he argues the thesis that the post-conciliar postures (including standing after the Consecration) were modeled on what was already being practiced before the Second Vatican Council.

clarion call of the Council for *participatio actuosa*.[16] At long last, we find in an official liturgical document a precise set of directives on what is expected of the gathered assembly. In relation to this, there is a concern for *uniformitas* when it comes to gestures and postures among the faithful.[17] Aside from fostering active participation, this uniform movement would serve as "a sign of the community and the unity of the assembly" (*signum est communitatis et unitatis coetus*),[18] in contrast with the former notion of hearing or attending Mass with a tendency towards individualistic piety on the part of those present. Indeed, the same GIRM exhorts the faithful to "shun any appearance of individualism or division" and truly become "one body in Christ," and so one clear way of showing and strengthening this unity is by joining in and conforming with the community's actions and postures.[19]

With regard to the specific question we have at hand, the 1969 IGMR clearly states that the people are to stand from the *Oratio Super Oblata* until the end of the Mass but are to kneel for the Consecration, unless prevented by particular circumstances.[20] It likewise entrusted to the conferences of bishops the work of adapting bodily gestures

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[16] *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 14.

[17] 1969 IGMR, 21. See also 1975 GIRM, 21; DOL 1411. The 1975 GIRM closely follows the 1969 IGMR and retains the same marginal numbers.

[18] 1969 IGMR, 21. See also 1975 GIRM, 21; DOL 1411. This point is reiterated in number 62 which states that:

> They should become one body, whether by hearing the word of God, or joining in prayers and song, or above all by offering the sacrifice together and sharing together in the Lord's table. There is a beautiful expression of this unity when the faithful maintain uniformity (*communiter servatis*) in their actions and in standing, sitting or kneeling.

[19] See the 1969 IGMR, 62. See also 1975 GIRM, 62; DOL 1452.

[20] 1969 IGMR, 21. See also 1975 GIRM, 21; DOL 1411. It gives two examples of these circumstances that call for an exception, namely, the lack of space and the number of people present.

and postures as envisioned in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 39.[21] Here it is also very important to note that with their publication, the new Missal and the new liturgical norms were promulgated to be used henceforth for all celebrations in the Roman Rite, effectively abrogating the older norms and Missal then in use.[22] In this way, as decreed by Blessed Paul VI, the new Missal with its *Institutio Generalis* came into force and became binding for the entire Catholic Church of the Roman Rite on November 30, 1969. As such, regardless of whether people were standing or kneeling in this part of the liturgy prior to November 30, they are now required to stand by virtue of the 1969 IGMR.

Soon after the publication of the 1969 IGMR, the follow-up Instruction *Constitutione Apostolica* from the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship called once again upon the bishops' committees and liturgical institutes to undertake "the responsibility of making the necessary decisions on matters that the General Instruction of the Roman Missal leaves up to them." The first of these matters enumerated in the Instruction pertained to "the faithful's movements, standing, kneeling, and sitting during Mass."[23] During this period, for example, the American bishops voted to retain their practice of kneeling from the Sanctus until the end of the Great Amen. Their reason at that time for such a decision is worth considering—it was simply to "postpone" the introduction of further changes in the liturgy as much as possible, given that the people were already "profoundly disturbed" by all the

[21]1969 IGMR, 21. See also 1975 GIRM, 21; DOL 1411.

[22]See the 1969 IGMR, 1. See also 1975 GIRM, 1; DOL 1376. See also Paul VI, Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum* (approving the new Roman Missal), in *AAS* 61 (April 3, 1969): 217–222, *Notitiae* 5 (1969): 142–146, DOL 1365–1366. See also Sacred Congregation of Rites, Decree *Ordine Missae* (promulgating the *editio typica* of the *Ordo Missae* and issuing the General Instruction of the Roman Missal), in *Notitiae* 5 (April 6, 1969): 147, DOL 1367.

[23]Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, Instruction *Constitutione Apostolica* (on the gradual carrying out of the Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum*), in *AAS* 61 (April 3, 1969): 749–753, *Notitiae* 5 (1969): 418–423, DOL 1740.

changes in the Mass which were being implemented at that time.[24] It was not that they considered kneeling to be more in keeping with tradition or fitting for this part of the liturgy, nor was this setup originally envisioned to be permanent.

The second typical edition which came out in English translation as the 1975 *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM) retained the same direction of standing from the *Oratio Super Oblata* until the end of the Mass while kneeling for the Consecration.[25] Even at that time, there was already the issue of "a great variety of gestures and postures during a celebration" as raised in a Query addressed to the Consilium. Concerning this moment in the Eucharistic Prayer, the clear reply of the Consilium was to reiterate the instructions of the GIRM which included that "[the faithful] also stand throughout the eucharistic prayer, except the consecration. The practice is for the faithful to remain kneeling from the epiclesis before the consecration until the memorial acclamation after it."[26]

Like its 1969 predecessor, the 1975 GIRM again explicitly entrusts to the conferences of bishops the role of adapting the actions and postures to the custom of the people, taking care that such adaptations "correspond to the meaning and character of each part of the celebration."[27] As provided for in the Constitution on the Sacred

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[24]See the November 1969 *Report of the Liturgy Committee* as quoted in John K. Leonard & Nathan O. Mitchell, *The Postures of the Assembly during the Eucharistic Prayer* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1994), 77–78.

[25]1975 GIRM, 21; DOL 1411.

[26]*Notitiae* 14 (1978): 300–301; DOL 1411, footnote R2.

[27]1975 GIRM, 21; DOL 1411. To gain perspective, Leonard and Mitchell give us a picture of the way GIRM 21 was adapted by the bishops and practiced in different places: some opted to stand for the entire Eucharistic Prayer, such as in Belgium, the Netherlands, France, and French Canada; apart from the U.S., some decided to kneel for the entire Canon, such as in the English sector of Canada; others such as Spain and Italy chose to simply follow the GIRM and stood throughout except for the Consecration. See Leonard & Mitchell, *The Postures of the Assembly During the Eucharistic Prayer*, 76.

Liturgy, these adaptations are to be submitted to the Apostolic See "by whose consent they may be introduced."[28]

It is in light of this provision that the *1990 Guidelines for the Eucharist* and the *2002 Philippine Adaptations to the General Instructions of the Roman Missal* proposed by the CBCP are to be considered. As adaptations with regard to the celebration of the liturgy, they are proposed by the local conference of bishops subject to the confirmatory approval of the Apostolic See. As quoted in the aforementioned CBCP pastoral letter, Number 3 of the *1990 Guidelines* states that the "people should kneel from the Sanctus until the end of the Eucharistic Prayer …. If the acclamation after the consecration is sung, the people may stand for it and keep standing." Meanwhile, the *2002 Philippine Adaptations* includes the proposal that in "the Philippines, the people kneel after the Sanctus, rise for the memorial acclamation, and kneel after the Lamb of God."[29]

Taking into consideration what the 1975 GIRM says, which was in force at the time of these proposals, what precisely are the adaptations that were in effect being proposed by the CBCP? In the *1990 Guidelines*, would it not be the part which says that the "people should kneel from the Sanctus until the end of the Eucharistic Prayer," since the 1975 GIRM states that they should kneel only for the Consecration, and not the latter part which says that if "the acclamation after the consecration is sung, the people may stand for it and keep standing"?[30] For the *2002 Philippine Adaptations*, would it not be the part that says "and kneel after the Lamb of God" since the 1975 GIRM does not indicate kneeling at this point?

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[28] *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 40.

[29] Villegas, Pastoral Letter *On the Question of Kneeling or Standing after the Consecration until after the Great Amen during the Eucharistic Celebration.*

[30] In which case, this would be the exception to the exception they are requesting.

A survey conducted by the Episcopal Commission on Liturgy in 1984 showed that congregations in 25 out of the 32 ecclesiastical territories were still kneeling instead of standing at this point in the liturgy, a practice preferred by 23 out of 31 bishops who were surveyed then.[31] However, despite being the majority, those bishops seemed to be aware that they needed to make proper representation to obtain a confirmation from Rome to legitimately retain the practice as a local adaptation. In line with this, the bishops, in their January 1970 meeting, had earlier proposed that "the people kneel during the Eucharistic Prayer, from immediately after the *Sanctus* until the beginning of the doxology …"[32] of which the similar petition in the *1990 Guidelines* now appears to be a follow-up. Up to the present, however, neither the 1984 or 1990 proposed adaptation ever received the confirmation from Rome which is required by *Sacrosanctum Concilium* before any such adaptations can be introduced.[33] In the meantime, standing instead of kneeling had become the predominant practice in this part of the liturgy and was the status quo prior to the recent CBCP pastoral letter.

To put things in perspective, let us look at the practice in two other places at that time. As mentioned earlier, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, in its November 1969 plenary session, resolved to propose among its adaptations for the United States to kneel from the Sanctus until the Great Amen. This local adaptation obtained a *recognitio* or confirmation from the Holy See, was appended to the GIRM as early as 1975, and later on was integrated into the body of the 2002 GIRM

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[31]See Florencio I. Testera, "Local Legislation on the Holy Eucharist," *Boletin Eclesiastico de Filipinas* LXIII/692–693: 440.

[32]Testera, "Local Legislation on the Holy Eucharist," 440. See also Camilo J. Marivoet, "Decisions of the Bishops' Conference and Confirmations by Rome," *Liturgical Information Bulletin of the Philippines* XII/6: 144, and Florencio I. Testera, *Canon Law Digest of the Philippine Catholic Church* (Manila: Faculty of Canon Law of the University of Santo Tomas, 1987), 47, and Florencio I. Testera, *Canon Law Digest of the Philippine Catholic Church* (Manila: Faculty of Canon Law of the University of Santo Tomas, 1995), 108.

[33]*Sacrosanctum Concilium* 40.

for the United States.[34] At the same time, we also note that the practice in Papal Masses has always been to kneel for the Consecration and to stand afterwards for the rest of the Eucharistic Prayer in accordance with the GIRM in force for the Universal Church. With this, we may see that kneeling for this part of the Eucharist is a local adaptation specific to the United States[35] (and other places which may have or may still obtain confirmation for such an adaptation), whereas standing has been the normative if not the established practice elsewhere in the Catholic Church since 1969.[36]

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[34]We can note however that, this notwithstanding, there were still some bishops in the United States who would follow the general norms of the GIRM instead of this local adaptation. Following a more recent directive from the Congregation for Divine Worship to integrate all the adaptations into the text instead of appending them, these were inserted into the text of the GIRM itself, but clearly as a local adaptation. As such, we read in our missals if they are imported from the United States, beginning with the third typical edition (2002 GIRM) published in 2003: "*In the dioceses of the United States of America*, they should kneel beginning after the singing or recitation of the *Sanctus* until after the *Amen* of the Eucharistic Prayer …" (43, emphasis added).

[35]"A particular norm for the Dioceses of the United States, which differs from the universal norm" is how it is explicitly described in Joseph DeGrocco, *A Pastoral Commentary on the General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2011), 30. Another commentary is in agreement concerning this and adds that "the continuation of this US pattern of kneeling after the *Sanctus* requires serious catechesis" in order to clarify potential misunderstandings that it might foster, such as considering the Preface and Sanctus as separate from the rest of the Eucharistic Prayer (see Edward Foley, Nathan D. Mitchell, & Joanne M. Pierce, eds., *A Commentary on the General Instruction of the Roman Missal* [Collegeville, MI: Liturgical Press, 2007], 131–132). Moreover, even the page of the 2002 GIRM on the English Vatican website refers to these as adaptations for the dioceses of the United States of America (see http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_20030317_ordinamento-messale_en.html [accessed August 3, 2016]).

[36]To give an illustration of current liturgical practice, such is the indication we find in Bishop Elliot's rubrical guide (Peter J. Elliot, *Ceremonies of the Modern Roman Rite: The Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours*, 2nd ed. [San Francisco: Ignatius

The third typical edition or 2002 GIRM likewise sustained the same standing posture but adds that where "it *is* the practice for the people to remain kneeling after the Sanctus until the end of the Eucharistic Prayer and before Communion when the Priest says Ecce Agnus Dei, it is laudable for this practice to be retained."[37] This general permission and even praise for an existing practice is what we now find in the 2011 Philippine Edition of the Roman Missal. In effect, this allowed those who were practicing it in 2002 to retain its practice, which is now made licit as a local variation.[38] However, we must note that this is not an instruction but a permission strictly speaking, nor was it the practice in the Philippines in 2002, and so this does not apply to us.

Historical Perspectives

"In the gospels, whenever a posture is indicated for the meals of Jesus, it is always the posture of *reclining*."[39] As such, we may reasonably infer that the Lord's Supper was first celebrated in a reclining posture, the posture at meals for free males according to Jewish custom at that time. Leonard and Mitchell, however, are quick to add that for the Passover meal, as the Lord's Supper was, all present traditionally reclined at table, regardless of social status, in order to partake of the banquet of freedom.[40] This implies not only a uniform posture in the first Eucharist but a sign of inclusive participation and solidarity as well.

Press, 2004], n. 297) and in Turner's as well (Paul Turner, *Let Us Pray: A Guide to the Rubrics of Sunday Mass* [Makati: Saint Paul's Philippines, 2007], n. 588).

[37]2002 GIRM, 43 (emphasis added).

[38]As an aside, this has effectively legitimized our practice of kneeling before Communion after the singing of the Agnus Dei.

[39]Leonard & Mitchell, *The Postures of the Assembly during the Eucharistic Prayer*, 48. See Mt. 9:10, 26:7, 26:20; Mk. 2:15; Lk. 7:36, 11:37, 14:15, 22:14.

[40]Leonard & Mitchell, *The Postures of the Assembly during the Eucharistic Prayer*, 50.

With the passage of time, standing became the normative posture in the Eucharistic liturgy where the participants came to be commonly referred to as the *circumstantes* or *circumadstantes*,[41] those who stand around the table of the Lord. We can readily establish this by studying Jewish influences on, as well as by surveying the earliest accounts of, the Eucharist and the extant euchological texts.

For instance, Cardinal Ratzinger points out that "in Jesus' time standing was the ordinary posture for prayer among the Jews."[42] Even the famous penitential prayer of the tax collector who would not dare lift his eyes to heaven in Luke 18 is prayed in the standing position.[43] Likewise, in his study of the liturgical texts of the first four Christian centuries, Lucien Deiss underscores the influence of the quintessential Jewish prayer *Shemone Esre* on the structure and content of the Eucharistic prayer, recalling that the *Shemone Esre* is also known as "the *Amidah*, from the word *amad,* 'be standing,' because they are recited while standing …."[44] It should come to us then as no surprise that the early Christians took on standing as their standard prayer posture and adopted the same for the celebration of the Eucharist. Moreover, this was a prayer posture that was rich in meaning for them, as we will expound in the last section of this article.

We likewise see this standard posture confirmed by the witness that we encounter in the extant accounts of the celebration of the Eucharist. The earliest testimony we find regarding this is found in the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus (ca. 215), which has become the basis for what is now our *Eucharistic Prayer II:*

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[41]We find a trace of this, for example, in the lone pre-Vatican II rubric for the participation of the people that we mentioned earlier, which instructs the people to kneel but calls them *circumstantes*.

[42]Joseph Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, trans. John Saward (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000), 194–195.

[43]See Lk. 18:13.

[44]Lucien Deiss, *Springtime of the Liturgy: Liturgical Texts of the First Four Centuries*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Collegeville, MI: The Liturgical Press, 1979), 9.

> Remembering therefore your death and your resurrection,
> we offer you the bread and the wine,
> we thank you for having judged us worthy
> to *stand* before you and serve you.[45]

We also read about it in the famous second-century account (ca. 250) of St. Justin the Martyr as he narrates how the early Christians celebrated the Sunday Eucharist; it is perhaps worth quoting at length:

> On the day we call the day of the sun, all who dwell in the city or country gather in the same place. The memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read, as much as time permits. When the reader has finished, he who presides over those gathered admonishes and challenges them to imitate these beautiful things. Then *we all rise together* and offer prayers for ourselves … and for all others, wherever they may be, so that we may be found righteous by our life and actions, and faithful to the commandments, so as to obtain eternal salvation. When the prayers are concluded we exchange the kiss. Then someone brings bread and a cup of water and wine mixed together to him who presides over the brethren. He takes them and offers praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and for a considerable time he gives thanks that we have been judged worthy of these gifts. When he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all present give voice to an acclamation by saying: "Amen." When he who presides has given thanks and the people have responded, those whom we call deacons give to those present the "eucharisted" bread, wine and water and take them to those who are absent.[46]

We also find clear references to the standing posture of the assembly in the eastern *Anaphora of Addai and Mari* (ca. 3rd or 5th CE)[47] and in the "Clementine Mass" attributed to Clement of Rome, which

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[45]Deiss, *Springtime of the Liturgy: Liturgical Texts of the First Four Centuries*, 131 (emphasis added). The title of this article, *Astare coram te et tibi ministrare*, is taken from here.

[46]*Apol.* 1, 65–67: PG 6, 428–429 (emphasis added).

[47]"And we too, Lord/your weak, frail, and lowly servants/who have gathered and are *standing* before you at this moment …" (Deiss, *Springtime of the Liturgy: Liturgical Texts of the First Four Centuries*, 162 [emphasis added]).

is preserved in the *Apostolic Constitutions* (ca. 380).[48] In addition, we note that in the Alexandrian *Anaphora of Saint Basil*, the deacon invites the seated congregation to rise toward the end of the Preface, precisely at the mention of the heavenly beings who stand in the presence of God (*cui adstant Angeli et Archangeli* …), as if to invite them to assume the same bodily posture and join with the celestial hosts for the singing of the Sanctus.[49]

With later shifts in Eucharistic theology, however, the posture during the Eucharistic Prayer gradually developed. More emphasis was put on adoration of the real presence of Christ in the Sacrament, from the monastic introduction of bowing during the Eucharistic Prayer until the eventual introduction of kneeling. As John Baldovin put it in his introduction to the book of Leonard and Mitchell, "Kneeling was introduced as a gesture of adoration combined with supplication in the course of the Middle Ages, when full participation gave way to devotional attendance and controversies arose regarding the presence of the Lord in the eucharistic elements."[50] Due to the theological emphasis, which was then necessary to defend the correct doctrine on the Eucharist, the people became more conscious of the Real Presence of Christ but less involved in the liturgy which more and more became the sacrosanct precinct of the clergy.

The earliest surviving evidence for kneeling during the Eucharistic Prayer is found in the *Ordo Romanus Quartus* (*Ordo IV*) from the late eighth century.[51] Nevertheless, Leonard and Mitchell note that it was probably not very widespread at that time since this practice is

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[48]"We give you thanks through him/for having judged as worthy *to stand* before you and exercise the priesthood for you …" (Deiss, *Springtime of the Liturgy: Liturgical Texts of the First Four Centuries*, 234 [emphasis added]).

[49]Cipriano Vaggagini, *The Canon of the Mass and Liturgical Reform* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1967), 51.

[50]Leonard & Mitchell, *The Postures of the Assembly during the Eucharistic Prayer*, 8.

[51]For a detailed account of the gradual evolution of postures, see Leonard & Mitchell, *The Postures of the Assembly during the Eucharistic Prayer*, 63–67.

not corroborated in other period texts. Besides, the *Ordo IV* itself testifies that standing remained the norm on Sundays and feasts and for those exercising liturgical roles. "In other words, the *ordo* does not connect kneeling with the canon *per se* but rather with the rank of the day and whether or not one is exercising the fullness of one's liturgical ministry."[52]

"Gradually the consecration and the elevation rather than the prayer of thanksgiving and the reception of communion came to be regarded as the high points of the liturgy, at least for the laity."[53] Together with this theological shift and in the absence of rubrics guiding the participation of the people, kneeling naturally became more and more widespread at least for the Consecration, if not the whole Canon or the whole Eucharist. As seen in the *Ceremonial of Gregory X*, even the Pope, when he was not presiding, was to kneel for the whole Canon on ferial days or stand without miter but kneel at the Consecration on festal days.[54]

As such, we will eventually find, in the lone rubric for the participation of the faithful, "Circumstantes autem in Missis privatis semper genua ectunt, etiam Tempore Paschali …." Here the faithful are still called *circumstantes* but they are now instructed to kneel all throughout the Low Mass, even if it was Easter,[55] except for the reading of the Gospel. We find a kind of *via media*, however, in the case of the

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[52]Leonard & Mitchell, *The Postures of the Assembly during the Eucharistic Prayer*, 67.

[53]Joseph Martos, *Doors to the Sacred: A Historical Introduction to Sacraments in the Catholic Church* (Liguori, Missouri: Liguori Publications, 2001), 238.

[54]See Leonard & Mitchell, *The Postures of the Assembly during the Eucharistic Prayer*, 70.

[55]This is to make a conscious exemption from an ancient liturgical practice. Canon 20 of the Council of Nicaea (325) prescribes standing as the posture of prayer on Sundays and throughout the fifty festival days of Easter: "Forasmuch as there are certain persons who kneel on the Lord's Day and in the days of Pentecost, therefore, to the intent that all things may be uniformly observed everywhere, it seems good to the holy Synod that prayer be made to God standing" (http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3801.htm [accessed August 3, 2016]).

Sung Mass where the ancient posture of standing is retained in the Eucharistic Prayer but the assisting clergy and the people are asked to kneel for the Consecration, and from the Sanctus onward, throughout the rest of the Canon, for Penitential and Requiem Masses.

Unfortunately, the Low Mass was the usual form in which Mass was almost always celebrated even on Sundays, and except for the rarest solemnities. Thus, the people became accustomed to kneel throughout the Eucharistic Prayer, which was true for most of the Mass anyway. In some cases, this practice was carried over even in Sung Masses, including those which were neither penitential nor requiem. Meanwhile, the ancient posture of standing and its rich theological significance and pride of place in the celebration of the liturgy was gradually forgotten. For instance, we will later encounter the likes of Andrew Beards, who feared that standing might lead to the abandonment of kneeling in the liturgy altogether, and Peter M. J. Stravinskas, who considered the clamor to stand during the Eucharistic Prayer as the "latest effort at desacralization."[56]

Theological Significance

In keeping with the Council's call for *participatio actuosa*,[57] the post-conciliar *Novus Ordo Missae* was a truly participatory Mass which took the place of the heretofore widespread Low Mass. It included a full complement of gestures and postures for the people's participation that were patterned largely on what was already in use for the Sung Mass. As to our specific question, we recall the previous point from Friend that, as far as the established authorities were concerned, standing during the Eucharistic Prayer, except for the Consecration, was the norm even for the pre-conciliar Mass. As such, there was actually no restoration, so to speak, but merely the continuation of an existing practice. We have validated this by comparing the postures for the

[56]These two examples are cited in Leonard & Mitchell, *The Postures of the Assembly during the Eucharistic Prayer*, 88, endnote 73.

[57]*Sacrosanctum Concilium* 14.

Eucharistic Prayer in the *Novus Ordo Missae* with what is indicated in the *Handbook for the New Rubrics* of Frederick McManus, which is also corroborated by Joseph Jungmann's *The Mass of the Roman Rite*.

Moreover, the liturgical reform of the Council, like that of St. Pius V in 1570, sought to restore the celebration of the Eucharist *ad pristinam sanctorum Patrum normam ac ritum*.[58] Going back to the patristic practice of standing at least for most, if not the entire, Eucharistic Prayer where this has been lost corresponds organically with this vision. As we saw, even the U.S. adaptation of retaining the practice of kneeling from the Sanctus and for the rest of the Eucharistic Prayer was originally intended as a temporary deferral due to attendant circumstances and not as a permanent setup. However, aside from its fostering the participation of the faithful and reverting to the practice of the Fathers, we also want to ask whether standing rather than kneeling is really the posture that corresponds theologically to this part of the liturgy.

Hopefully there is no question here of undermining the importance of kneeling since, as we have seen, this has its proper place in the Eucharistic Prayer during the Consecration, its rarity and focus serving to highlight what its banality or protraction might prejudice. As Baldovin says, "The question rather has to do with whether kneeling is appropriate at the eucharistic prayer."[59] Gestures and postures, after all, are not arbitrary bodily movements and positions; they are highly symbolic actions laden with meaning which can enhance or detract from the liturgical celebration or one of its particular moments. As the GIRM envisions, the gestures and postures of all who partake in the Eucharist should "be conducive to making the entire celebration resplendent with beauty and noble simplicity, to making clear the true and full meaning of its different parts, and to fostering the participation of all."[60]

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[58]Pius V, *Quo Primum* (July 14, 1570). See also *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 50 as well as Paul VI, *Missale Romanum*; DOL 1361.

[59]Leonard & Mitchell, *The Postures of the Assembly during the Eucharistic Prayer*, 10.

[60]Leonard & Mitchell, *The Postures of the Assembly during the Eucharistic Prayer*, 10.

Standing certainly does not mean a lack of reverence or a refusal to adore the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. As Romano Guardini said: "Standing is the other side of reverence toward God. Kneeling is the side of worship in rest and quietness; standing is the side of vigilance and action. It is the respect of the servant in attendance, of the soldier on duty."[61] In fact, standing is the same posture we adopt in the liturgy to honor God's presence at the proclamation of the Gospel. In any case, the congregation will end up standing for the Lord's Prayer after the Great Amen, and in neither case does this standing posture imply sacrilege. The priest, too, stands the whole time the Lord is present on the altar, and genuflects only thrice: once at each of the two elevations and once again at the Fraction.[62]

There is thus no posture that exclusively conveys a meaning and no meaning exclusively conveyed by one posture. As such, "any posture can express several different relationships simultaneously, while a particular emphasis or focus is determined by the ritual context."[63] At the same time, the meaning of a posture can also be determined by the semiotic value attached to it in a given culture. As Dennis Smolarski said:

> The question really is not whether an assembly should be sitting, standing or kneeling at a certain point in the liturgy, or whether they should hold hands or lift them toward the heavens at the Our Father. The question, rather, is what is the meaning of these gestures or postures within the tradition of Judaeo-Christian prayer and also within our local culture. If a certain posture seems to indicate passivity (such as sitting) or penitence or adoration (such as kneeling), that posture is

[61]Romano Guardini, *Sacred Signs*, trans. Grace Branham (Charleston: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015), 17. In this precious little volume, Guardini reflects on the significance of many of the gestures and actions in the liturgy.

[62]If kneeling were the only form of showing reverence that could be considered appropriate to honor the Eucharistic presence, then the Portuguese practice of kneeling for as long as the body of the Lord is on the altar, i.e., until after the priest's communion, should be made the universal norm.

[63]Leonard & Mitchell, *The Postures of the Assembly during the Eucharistic Prayer*, v.

> probably inappropriate during a point of the liturgy that should resonate with activity and joy (such as the eucharistic prayer).[64]

It might be good to begin by observing that all four of our major Eucharistic Prayers contain some reference to the standing posture of the assembly, at least in the original Latin.[65] In the *Commemoratio Pro Vivis* of the Roman Canon, the assembly is called *circumstantes* although this is rendered as "and all gathered here."[66] As we have mentioned earlier, Eucharistic Prayer II contains the beautiful phrase "astare coram te et tibi ministrare" but this is translated as "to be in your presence and minister to you."[67] Meanwhile, Eucharistic Prayer III petitions God to hear the prayers of the family he has willed to stand before him ("Votis huius familiae, quam tibi astare voluisti, adesto propitius") but this is expressed in English as "hear the prayers of the family you have gathered here before you."[68] Lastly, as in the Roman Canon, the newly composed Eucharistic Prayer IV also avails of the term *circumstantes* which is currently translated as "those here present." Is it possible to infer from this consistent reference that standing itself is significant in expressing the meaning of the Eucharistic Prayer?

Aside from being the ancient practice of the Church, standing during the Eucharistic Prayer was a posture rich in meaning for the Church Fathers. Lucien Deiss comments on the text of St. Justin:

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[64]Dennis C. Smolarski, *Sacred Mysteries: Sacramental Principles and Liturgical Practice* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1995), 27–28.

[65]This fact is quite surprising particularly in the latest English translation which supposedly espouses the principle of formal equivalence.

[66]*The Roman Missal*, English Translation According to the Third Typical Edition (Collegeville, MI: Liturgical Press, 2011), 636.

[67]*The Roman Missal*, 648. We find a critique of this ICEL2010 translation in Edward Foley, ed., *A Commentary on the Order of Mass of the Roman Missal* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2012), 332. Among the things that are lamented is the loss of a literal translation of "astare," which was originally the case in ICEL2006 and ICEL1975. Our present *Aklat ng Pagmimisa sa Roma* also carries a literal translation.

[68]*The Roman Missal*, 779.

> In the early Church the normal posture for prayer was standing. This was more than an attitude of respect for God, more than a simple inheritance from the Jewish tradition. It was, before all else, an expression of the holy freedom the Lord had given his followers by his resurrection. It was also a sign of expectation of the Lord's coming (see Lk 21: 36); this expectation was especially keen on Sunday, the day that was a kind of expectation of the eternal Day of God.[69]

In the same commentary that highlights the Paschal and eschatological meaning of standing, Deiss quotes from St. Basil the Great's *De Sancto Spiritu:*

> We pray standing on the first day of the week …. We do so because we are risen with Christ and must seek the things that are above [Col. 3:1]; therefore on the day consecrated to the resurrection, by standing when we pray we call to mind the grace given to us. But we also stand because Sunday is a kind of image of the world to come.[70]

In connection to this, one may recall, for example, the invitation from the letter to the Ephesians, which we hear from the mouth of the Risen One in the ancient homily for Holy Saturday as He makes Adam and Eve rise from the sleep of death: "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light."[71]

Similarly, then Cardinal Ratzinger wrote that standing was the primary Easter form of prayer "in which we show forth the Paschal victory of the Lord, even in the posture of our prayer."[72] The future Pope Benedict XVI likewise pointed out the eschatological significance of standing: "standing prayer is an anticipation of the future, of the glory that is to come …. Insofar as liturgical prayer is an anticipation

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[69]Deiss, *Springtime of the Liturgy: Liturgical Texts of the First Four Centuries*, 93, footnote 11.

[70]Deiss, *Springtime of the Liturgy: Liturgical Texts of the First Four Centuries*, 93, footnote 11.

[71]Eph. 5:14. See also the *Ancient Homily for Holy Saturday* (http://www.vatican.va/spirit/ documents/spirit_20010414_omelia-sabato-santo_en.html [accessed August 21, 2016]).

[72]Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 194–195.

of what has been promised, standing is its proper posture."[73] In line with this, and despite its effective relaxation in the current rubric to kneel for the Consecration regardless of the liturgical day or season, we need to remember Canon 20 of the First Council of Nicaea. This ancient prescription of standing and its corollary proscription of kneeling during the liturgy on Sundays and throughout the Easter season are strong testaments to the Christian association of standing with honoring and proclaiming the Resurrection.[74]

Indeed, such is our Paschal joy especially in this privileged liturgical moment of anamnesis that we could not but rise to our feet on account of it. "The death and resurrection of Jesus constitute the defining nucleus of our life; thus every time this truth resounds in our assemblies we cannot keep from springing to our feet to express our deep gratitude."[75] Morever, Antonio Donghi adds, this posture expresses our aspiration to grow in conformity with our Crucified and Risen Lord because "it expresses the joy of our believing heart that longs to grow to the full stature of Jesus Christ."[76] He also joins in affirming its eschatological significance by saying that "he who is standing is ready to accomplish what the Spirit [says] to the church, to be able then to participate in the paschal victory of the Teacher in the eternal Jerusalem," and even likens this posture to "the sentinel who waits in the morning for the sun to rise."[77]

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[73]Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 196. Ratzinger adds that however, "insofar as liturgical prayer belongs to that 'between' time in which we live, then kneeling remains indispensable to it as an expression of the 'now' of our life." Although he identified standing as the posture proper to liturgy, he maintains that kneeling also plays an essential part in it.

[74]We still find a trace of this in the rubric in the Rites of Ordination which omits kneeling for the Litany of the Saints on Sundays and during the Easter season. See *Ceremonial of Bishops*, 507, 529, 556, 580.

[75]Antonio Donghi, *Words and Gestures in the Liturgy* (Collegeville, MI: Liturgical Press, 2009), 11.

[76]Donghi, *Words and Gestures in the Liturgy*, 12.

[77]Donghi, *Words and Gestures in the Liturgy*, 12.

Aside from its Paschal and eschatological significance, liturgical experts also point out the priestly character of the standing posture. Anscar Chupungco writes: "In a sense every liturgical posture is a theological declaration. Kneeling and genuflection are postures that express adoration and reverence, sitting denotes openness to teaching, and standing symbolizes priestly prayer."[78] We find this concept in the New Testament, for instance in the book of Hebrews, which states that "every priest stands day after day at his service …,"[79] and also in the Old Testament, on which the lines of the ancient anaphora of Hippolytus were probably based: "For the Lord your God has chosen [Levi] out of all your tribes to stand and minister in the name of the Lord …."[80]

Basing off of this text of the Hebrew Scriptures, Benedict XVI described the Second Eucharistic Prayer's *astare coram te et tibi ministrare* as "the essence of the Old Testament priesthood."[81] He takes it to mean a life lived in God's presence, a deep relationship coupled with "a ministry of representing others."[82] He likewise saw it as a reminder that we ought to be awake and "keep the world awake for God."[83] According to him, this paradigmatic posture is qualified by its juxtaposition with the word "serve"—it is simultaneously an office of

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[78]Anscar J. Chupungco, *What Then Is Liturgy?* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2010), 183.

[79]Heb. 10:11–14.

[80]Deut. 18:5. See also verse 7.

[81]Benedict XVI, *Chrism Mass Homily* (March 20, 2008), http://w2.vatican.va/content/ benedict-xvi/en/homilies/2008/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20080320_messa-crismale.html (accessed August 5, 2016).

[82]In another work, he sees the Roman custom of the stational or standing Eucharist as the symbol of our unity as One Body in Christ, our standing together before God, gathered as one by the Lord despite our differences. Joseph Ratzinger, *God Is Near Us: The Eucharist, the Heart of Life* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003), 107–110.

[83]Ratzinger, *God is Near Us: The Eucharist, the Heart of Life*, 107–110.

worship, of being God's close-in servant, and of being at the service of our brothers and sisters.

Donghi similarly tells us that "the standing assembly expresses the living relationship by which it is united to God, and it exhibits that the people are aware that their lives are an upward course toward the fullness of communion with God in glory."[84] This kind of attitude or disposition, he says, making a parallel between the Creed and the anamnesis of the Eucharistic Prayer, becomes "particularly significant" as we profess our faith, "since with this gesture we proclaim before the world that the truth that comes from on high and illuminates our spirit unites us in an intimate communion with Christ."[85]

Furthermore, Jungmann sees in the assembly's posture of standing around the altar ("circum adstantes") their full and unqualified participation in the offering of the sacrifice. He notes that the original text of the Roman Canon

> ascribes to the faithful the offering of the sacrifice without any special restriction "who offer to Thee this sacrifice of praise" (*quae tibi offerunt hoc sacrificium laudis*). They are not idle spectators, even less a profane crowd; rather they are all together sharers in that sacred action in which we stand before Thee, O God.[86]

This uniform posture at the Eucharistic Prayer with no distinction or demarcation among all the participants better mirrors the unity of posture in the Passover meals where all reclined at the table of freedom regardless of status. This likewise corresponds with the Pauline ideal of the Eucharistic banquet where divisions are surmounted: "Here

[84]Donghi, *Words and Gestures in the Liturgy*, 11.

[85]Donghi, *Words and Gestures in the Liturgy*, 11.

[86]Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development*, 399–400. It was not until much later that the words would be prefixed with *pro quibus tibi offerimus vel* which would sometimes come to be equated with those who paid the stipend for the Mass to be offered.

there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all."[87]

Pastoral Considerations

As we have seen, uniformity in the actions of the liturgical assembly has always been a pastoral concern of the liturgical reform from the 1969 IGMR all the way to the 2002 GIRM. Without mincing words, the reply we mentioned earlier from the Consilium in 1978 on the variety of postures at certain moments of the Eucharistic celebration adds with force:

> The points determined are in no way to be considered trivial, since their purpose is to ensure uniformity in posture in the assembly celebrating the eucharist as a manifestation of the community's unity in faith and worship. The people often give the impression immediately after the *Sanctus* and even more often after the consecration by their diverse postures that they are unmindful of being participants in the Church's liturgy, which is the supreme action of a community and not a time for individuals to isolate themselves in acts of private devotion.[88]

In essence, there is nothing wrong with kneeling at this or at any point to adore the Lord in the Sacrament. Making acts of private devotion and worship are good in themselves. However, the liturgy is not the ideal setting or context in which to indulge such private devotions which must never compete with it, since the liturgy itself is the "source and summit" (cf. SC 10) of the Christian life and must always take precedence over such "forms of prayer alternative to, or substitutive of, the liturgical action itself." In line with this, it behooves all pastors to ensure that "the faithful should be made conscious of the preeminence of the Liturgy over any other possible form of legitimate Christian prayer."[89]

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[87]Col. 3:11.

[88]*Notitiae* 14 (1978): 300–301; DOL 1411, footnote R2.

[89]Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy*, 11.

Again, it has to be clear that the question is not about legitimacy but about propriety. For instance, the practice popular before the Council of praying the Rosary and other devotional prayers while the Eucharist was being celebrated is to be discouraged. This does not mean, however, that they are to be discontinued altogether, but only that they be taken outside the setting of the Eucharistic celebration. Similarly, Eucharistic adoration has its proper place in the Eucharist, particularly at the Consecration and during Communion. However, those who wish to prolong their adoration may do so at another time outside of the Mass.

Praying as one Church is essential in the Eucharistic Prayer, perhaps more than anywhere else. As the GIRM describes it:

> Now the center and summit of the entire celebration begins: namely, the Eucharistic Prayer, that is, the prayer of thanksgiving and sanctification. The priest invites the people to lift up their hearts to the Lord in prayer and thanksgiving; he unites the congregation with himself in the prayer that he addresses in the name of the entire community to God the Father through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the meaning of the Prayer is that *the entire congregation of the faithful should join itself with Christ in confessing the great deeds of God and in the offering of Sacrifice* ….[90]

St. Cyprian of Carthage, commenting on the introductory dialogue of the Eucharistic Prayer, explains the beautiful phrase *Sursum corda:* "When we rise to pray, we must be careful to give our attention whole-heartedly to the prayers we say. Every thought of the world or worldly things must retire into the background so that the soul may contemplate nothing but the content of the prayer."[91] As a seasoned pastor, Cyprian knew very well how our minds tend to drift away during the Eucharistic Prayer in which the predominant role of the presider can easily eclipse the role of the participants. Our hearts then sink into ourselves and our own concerns instead of joining in the prayer of the Church.

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[90]2002 GIRM, 78 (emphasis added).

[91]Quoted in Sternbeck, *The Order of Mass according to the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite: The Missal of Blessed John XXIII*, 35.

Making the assembly kneel instead of stand does nothing to help this situation. Instead, it puts each person even more in a state of personal prayer, of adoration or meditation, and often in supplication about one's own cares and anxieties. It is not difficult to pray about everything else except the content of the Eucharistic Prayer while kneeling before God. Thus, rising to stand can also mean lifting up our hearts, rising from ourselves to join in the one prayer of the universal Church, instead of engaging individually in adoration, supplication, or meditation. These forms of prayer, while praiseworthy, are highly personal in nature and tend to isolate us from the liturgy and the rest of the people of God gathered around the Lord's table. As Chupungco reflects:

> Liturgical spirituality requires that we pay full attention to the meaning of the words we recite and the ritual actions we perform. Someone inquired whether it was a form of distraction to gaze on the crucifix with full concentration during the Eucharistic prayer such that the prayer serves as a kind of backdrop to meditation. Liturgical spirituality means that [we] are consciously engaged in the celebration and are able to relish its spiritual wealth and beauty.[92]

Conclusion

What may seem like a trivial question of rubrics is actually an important issue of ecclesial unity in the very sacrament that expresses the mystery of the Church as One Body partaking of the One Bread. These present differences concerning posture are a true disservice to the sacred liturgy and should not be left hanging or unaddressed, especially when they are becoming a habitual cause of distraction, confusion, and possible qualms of conscience.

From the rubrical aspect, standing has been the established practice in the Roman Rite since 1969 and earlier and has remained in force in the Philippines. From the side of history and theology, this has been the ancient and constant practice of the Church, and to make a return

[92]Chupungco, *What Then Is Liturgy?*, 255.

to "established practice" is to remain standing and perhaps rediscover its rich significance. Finally, from a pastoral perspective, such a posture better contributes to active participation and fosters the unity of the liturgical assembly. As such, retaining the status quo of standing better corresponds to what the rubrics say, to the tradition of the Church, and to what the liturgy signifies theologically and demands pastorally.