

About the Author

Fr. Robert J. Fox is a priest who is loved and admired by both young and old alike. Throughout his fifty plus years as a priest, serving and teaching the people of God, only goodness and dignity attached itself to his spotless reputation.

His greatest joy was to work with the youth. Even now, in his eighties, he will grin and say, "I don't like to associate with old people." Father enjoys being with young people, and over the many years of his priesthood, until age and health issues slowed him down, Father would spend his vacation days bringing young people to Fatima each summer. He used these trips to teach and encourage the young people. His spiritual guidance was instrumental in approximately two hundred young men becoming priests of God, and numerous young ladies choosing religious life. Now, this is the mark of a Godly priest. Christ said, "By their fruits you will know them."

Our youth of today need more priests like Fr. Fox. There were no grandstands or bandstands, just a priest of God who loved bringing Christ to all he met. He loved the youth and they loved him.

All my children were edified listening to Father's stories about the saints on audio cassettes and reading the many books he wrote on what a Christian should be. Father knew how to make our children laugh and enjoy life. However, he also knew where to draw the line. Father always distinguished the difference between an auditorium, where our youth can have a good time and be taught the faith in an appropriate manner, and the church, the house of God, where we go to worship and adore our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Father understood the saying, "Your children more attention pay to what you do than what you say."

By Gwen Gil

REVERENCE IN CHURCH - WHY?

The Gospels of Saints Matthew, Mark, and Luke all speak of our Lord's Holy Anger. It is known as the "Cleansing of the Temple." Why did Jesus get so angry? Why did He cast out certain people? "He overturned the tables and seats... Moreover, He would not permit anyone to carry things through the temple area." (Mt.21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:45). Jesus left no doubt why He was angry. It was the House of God. It was the Temple of His heavenly Father. He quoted scripture to justify His holy anger. "**My house shall be called a house of prayer.**" And He added: "**You have made it a den of thieves.**"

The Church building is a sacred structure devoted to divine worship of God. It is not a social hall. It is not a place of entertainment. The Catholic Church, especially when the Most Blessed Sacrament is reserved in the tabernacle, is **the HOUSE OF GOD. We go there to worship, to participate in the greatest act of worship possible**, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which perpetuates Jesus' Sacrifice on the Cross. This is infinite worship. This infinite act of reparation in God's House demands reverence on the part of all who enter. It is Jesus Christ, God become man, who is present in the Holy Eucharist. Jesus offers at Holy Mass the self same Sacrifice He offered on the Cross of Calvary. The ordained priest acts in the Person of Christ. Jesus is both Priest and Victim in every Sacrifice of the Mass. The House of God is therefore a sacred place for adoration and worship of infinite value.

What is reverence?

It is a virtue. In general, there are four forms of reverence, corresponding to four forms of dignity of persons. 1. There is familial reverence toward one's parents. 2. There is civil reverence toward persons holding civil authority and responsibility. 3. There is ecclesiastical reverence concerning persons of special authority in our holy Catholic Church; this is reverence due first to the Pope, then bishops and priests, and other consecrated persons in special service of the Church. 4. There is religious reverence toward any person, place, or object related to God.

The highest and greatest reverence is due the Holy Eucharist.

*Since the degree of reverence we owe corresponds to the dignity of the person, when it comes to the **House of God**, and the **Holy Eucharist** in the tabernacle, the dignity of the Person we speak of is One who is **INFINITE**, God Himself. Therefore, the greatest reverence we can give is reserved for **JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF** in the Holy Eucharist.*

Baptism received before Eucharist

None of the seven Sacraments which Jesus Christ gave His Church may be received validly and with the faith and the reverence we owe them unless we are first baptized. By Baptism, we are made a member of the Church. We enter the Church through Baptism. We are to recall our own dignity as a son or daughter of God through Baptism each and every time we enter God's House.

The church building or House of God where we worship is an image of our heavenly home and the Kingdom of God. Since Baptism admits us to the Church and new life in Christ, each time we enter the church building, this sacred place, we are to bless ourselves with Holy Water, the sacramental symbol of our Baptism into the Church.

The use of the sacramental of Holy Water is a reminder of Baptism and a means of sanctification. We need Baptism for entrance into the Church, Christ's Mystical Body, and for entrance into heaven. We dip our fingers into the blessed water of the Holy Water font and we sign ourselves in the form of the Cross— In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

When you bless yourself with Holy Water, recall that you received the Sacrament of Baptism which brought you into the Church. Effects of Baptism are eternal, the indelible character of Christ, with which you were sealed at Baptism, will remain in your soul for all eternity. You then received Sanctifying Grace for the very first time. Bless yourself with Holy Water thoughtfully, not hurriedly. Recall its meaning each time.

Genuflection, an Act of Reverence and Adoration

Just before entering the pew, one should genuflect. A genuflection is the bending of the knee to the floor as an act of reverence. (There is the saying: LEFT KNEE TO THE KING, RIGHT KNEE TO GOD.) By this simple act you are showing adoration to Jesus Christ, present in the tabernacle. The tabernacle should be in a visible place in the church with a sanctuary lamp or candle always burning. **Whenever you pass before the Most Blessed Sacrament (*Jesus*) in the tabernacle, you should also (*thoughtfully*) genuflect.**

These fundamental acts upon entering a Catholic Church (blessing with Holy Water to recall Baptism and genuflecting to adore the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament) have prepared you for Divine Worship of the Sacrifice of the Mass.

Many Catholics have started the beautiful practice of making visits to adore our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, in the Most Blessed Sacrament. Even though we are there for just a visit, we should still bless ourselves with Holy Water upon entering and genuflect to the Real Presence of JESUS CHRIST in the tabernacle.

Kneel in Silent Adoration

Kneeling is an act or gesture of adoration. Thus, after we enter the church pew we should spend time kneeling in prayer, at least for a short time, even though the Holy Mass may not begin for another ten minutes or more. We should kneel straight in prayer, not slouched down or half sitting. Some elderly or infirm persons may not be able to kneel upright and with a straight back, but reverence requires that we do the best we can according to our health conditions. We should always arrive at church with enough time to recollect ourselves before the Mass begins. This reflection will help us to understand that it is truly our Lord and Savior who is present on the altar.

Those minutes before Mass are NOT a time for socializing. We should remain silent, in a spirit of adoration. Visit Jesus Christ, not those sitting around you. The tradition of the Catholic Church is to retain a silence in reverence for the House of God and the REAL PRESENCE of Jesus Christ except when there is congregational singing, or responding to the proper prayers of the Divine Liturgy at which time we are directing praise to our Lord Himself. If you are in a church where silence before, during or after Mass is not observed, then obey the directives of the Church and the traditional spirit of reverence. Then, hopefully, by your good example, others will be reminded that this is the House of God. Our faith in the REAL PRESENCE and the reality of the Mass as the Sacrifice of Christ on the Cross is weakened when we do not observe reverential silence and the spirit of adoration. Faith in the REAL PRESENCE may even be destroyed within us when the House of God becomes a social hall for visiting, rather than for reverential praying and adoring. It is important to remember that the graces we receive are in direct proportion to our love and reverence. Consequently, our disrespect at Mass diminishes graces and, if willfully done, could be a sacrilege. Disrespectful actions have also caused many of our youth to lose belief in the Real Presence of our Lord in the Eucharist.

Are the Holy Angels horrified?

It does not take great imagination to understand how the holy angels would be horrified today in some

parishes where reverence is lacking. Can you hear Jesus say, as He did in the “Cleansing of the Temple” – “My house shall be called a house of prayer.” It is a question of reverence for the entire Blessed Trinity. Where the Son of God, the Word made flesh, is present in the Holy Eucharist, there is a special presence of the entire Blessed Trinity. All three infinite, Divine Persons in the One God, are present in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Introductory Rites of the Mass

When the priest enters the church for the procession, all should *stand* and remain standing until the priest begins. All should make a distinctive *Sign of the Cross* with the priest and do so with reverence, not hastily, nor haphazardly, but carefully.

When the priest invites the people to recall their sins, each one should silently examine his conscience, express sorrow to God in one’s soul and resolve to go to confession as soon as reasonably possible. If one has committed mortal sin since one’s last good confession, this examination of conscience and the prayer to follow, does not suffice to admit one to Holy Communion.

Before receiving Holy Communion, one must go to confession. It would be good to remember St. Paul’s warning concerning the condemnation of those who receive the Eucharist unworthily. How many of our youth have lost the faith due to receiving our Lord in the Eucharist, unworthily?

We should strive to participate with the people in making all the responses, according to our ability. It was St. Augustine who said, “He who sings well prays twice,” so let’s sing. We should think of the meaning of the words we say or sing, and join our intellects, our hearts and souls to pray with the Church. We should not simply “hear” the Mass but “pray” the Mass, and that requires effort on our part. You don’t accidentally give God reverence; it requires effort.

Full and active participation

Pope Benedict XVI has pointed out that full and active participation of all the faithful in the Mass basically meant that in our minds and hearts we are to be attentive and conscious of what is happening in the Mass. While it may seem passive to some, in reality, it is actively the lifting of our minds and hearts to God. *It is possible for the body to be moving and our minds be asleep or somewhere else.* We must always be mindful that we are offering to God the Father, the same Sacrifice offered on Calvary.

Unfortunately, in some areas, participation in the Mass has come to involve many doing non-essential things, even questionable things, that are not a part of the official Divine Liturgy of the Church. When things are done at Mass not according to the official directives of the Church, those acts become divisive. Divine Eucharistic Liturgy, the official public worship of the Church, is essentially JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF AS HIGH PRIEST acting and worshiping God the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit. *The Catholic priest at Mass acts in persona Christi (Person of Christ) when he conducts the Liturgy as the Church directs.*

Liturgy of the Word of God

During the Introductory Rites, all remain standing... Call to mind your sins with sorrow at the invitation of the priest. Strike your breast at the words “I have sinned through my own fault...” during the Confiteor or the “I confess” prayer as a mark of sorrow for sin. When the lector (reader) goes to the rostrum for the first Bible reading, SIT down. There are Scriptural readings from the Old Testament and New Testament at each Mass. These are read by the lector during which the people sit down and listen attentively. Christ speaks to us when the Scriptures are read. We must be open to letting the Word of God touch our hearts. As the priest approaches the pulpit, all stand for the priest or deacon to proclaim the Gospel. When the priest begins by signing the cross

on his forehead with his thumb, all should do the same. Trace the cross on your own forehead so that you may know and believe the Word of God; on your lips that you may profess the Word of God; on your heart that you may love the Word of God. After the Gospel sit down to listen attentively to the homily. If our hearts are open to our Lord, Jesus will speak to each person in some manner.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

During this Liturgy of the Eucharist, Jesus Christ will offer Himself in Sacrifice to God the Father. Then He will give to us in the Eucharist, His most precious Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. This will perpetuate not only what He did at the LAST SUPPER, but what He accomplished on the Cross of Calvary on Good Friday.

Two-Fold Consecration and Elevation

All remain kneeling in profound silence, awe and adoration, when the priest says, ***“THIS IS MY BODY.”*** The ELEVATION follows, that is, the priest holds up for all to see and adore the consecrated Host which is now the LIVING BODY OF JESUS CHRIST, TRUE GOD and TRUE MAN. We should look up at the elevated Host, adore, strike our breasts and whisper, ***“MY LORD AND MY GOD.”*** Next, the priest repeats the words of Jesus Christ over the wine: ***“THIS IS THE CUP OF MY BLOOD, THE BLOOD OF THE NEW AND EVERLASTING COVENANT.”*** A second elevation follows as the priest lifts up the chalice with the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ in it. Again, all should look up at the chalice with the Precious Blood and in adoration whisper, ***“MY LORD AND MY GOD.”***

The Lord’s Prayer & Holy Communion

When the priest introduces the Lord’s Prayer, all should stand to pray or chant the “Our Father.” We should make a special effort to think about the meaning of the words.

At the time for Holy Communion, those whose souls are spiritually prepared, that is, those who made a good confession and whose soul is in the state of Sanctifying Grace, may approach the altar to receive the Lord’s living Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. This should be done in a solemn, quiet manner with the utmost reverence. The sacred Host may be swallowed when one has returned to his pew, if not before. Then one should immediately **kneel** in prayer, reverence, and adoration.

At the time of this writing, wide publicity has been given to *withdrawing* the practice of receiving Our Lord in the hand. The prefect of the Vatican’s Congregation for Divine Liturgy has indicated that the time may well have arrived to return to the practice for centuries that permitted Holy Communion to be received only on the tongue, and not in the hand. There have been abuses reported too frequently. Hosts, thought to be consecrated, have been found in pews, on the floor, or even in song books.

History has taught how Satanists have sought to obtain the consecrated Host in order to desecrate it, show dishonor and hatred for Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ in so called “black masses.” We cannot be too careful in the matter of divine worship, and the adoration that is due the Most Blessed Sacrament. To receive the consecrated Host in the state of mortal sin, or to show lack of reverence, adoration and respect for the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the consecrated Host, or to place it in such places mentioned here or to leave Church with it on one’s person but not consumed, is a serious sin of sacrilege.

To handle or receive the Sacred Host without proper reverence and adoration is not only disrespectful, it is the serious sin of sacrilege. Mother Teresa of Calcutta, (Now Blessed Mother Teresa) seeing the irreverence and abuses, which has crept into the liturgy, felt it was due to Communion in the hand. As a priest, now in my 54th year in the priesthood, with nine parish assignments behind me, and while engaged in an international

Apostolate for at least a quarter of a century, having offered Mass in various parts of the world, I can lend my voice to expressing an understanding why the Church is becoming concerned about Communion in the hand. I agree with Blessed Mother Teresa. Thus, I urge readers to reverently receive Our Divine Lord in Holy Communion on the tongue as the safest manner to protect the reverence we owe to the REAL PRESENCE of Jesus Christ who comes to us in the Eucharistic Banquet.

Go Silently and Live the Mass.

When Mass has ended, (*and one should not leave before it has ended*) it is ideal to remain, at least a short time, in silent thanksgiving. (The Real Presence of Jesus Christ remains in us at least 15 minutes, or longer, depending on our body metabolism.) We should leave the church in silence, not speaking until outside the main body of the church intended for divine worship. Talking within the church as the congregation files out, leads to attitudes of forgetfulness that this is the HOUSE OF GOD. Children then, do not learn proper respect and the sense of adoration for the Most Blessed Sacrament. Faith thus lessens and irreverence spreads. Unfortunately, such talking in church has in too many cases been introduced, perhaps unintentionally, by priests, or greeters, standing at the entrance to or near the main body of the church, greeting parishioners as they arrive or are departing. If such greeting or farewells are to exist in a parish, the pastors should give serious and responsible thought to the possible consequences that rest on their consciences as custodians of the Holy Eucharist. Priests, deacons, or others, should be cautious when offering greetings or farewells, that they don't cause people to back up into the main body of the church, thus encouraging talking within the House of God.

A Final Word on Reverence

A Catholic tradition that existed for generations concerned the manner of clothing one wore for Sunday Mass. "*Wear your Sunday best*" was the guiding factor in getting dressed to go to the House of God for worship on the Lord's Day. Even poor people who did not have expensive clothing still wore the best they had. Sunday Mass also is not a time for a fashion parade. It is not a time for showing off. It is a time to be especially conscious that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit and we are to be present in the House of the Lord to worship *with both our bodies and our souls*. On weekday Masses when, due to work schedules, Catholics cannot wear their "Sunday best", neat and clean clothes will suffice. The disposition of one's soul is what is most important.

Conclusion

Sunday Mass is not a time for T-shirts and jeans. The House of the Lord is never a place to appear in clothing, as one may see on the beach or at sporting events. Just as the Church requires priests, and all who serve at the altar, within the sanctuary, to have special attire, albs, stoles, chasubles and such, *so too the Church expects that of all the faithful who participate at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, be conscious of the dignity of their bodies as members of the Mystical Body of Christ.*

It is truly gratifying to see girls and ladies throughout the land rediscovering the reverence associated with wearing the veil in church. This act of reverence described by St. Paul, 1st Cor.11;1-16, was attacked by the feminists back in the sixties. Good Catholics were deceived into believing the Church had changed its teaching and wanted the veils off the heads of women. This was absolutely false.

Our silence, the use of Holy Water and making the Sign of the Cross with care, kneeling, striking the breast as a sign of contrition, standing at the Gospel and Profession of Faith, sitting with attentive ears to the Word of God, etc. all are marks of faith and reverence.

Unbelievable
Bishop warns Catholics to avoid services started by Life Teen founder

In a Jan. 3rd. statement, “The diocese wishes to express its grave concern for Catholics who may be misled or confused by the actions of Dale Fushek (Life Teen founder) and Mark Dippre.” Dippre is a former associate pastor of St. Timothy who left public ministry in 2002 and later married. The diocesan statement described Dippre as “a priest not in good standing” and said both men’s actions “are not in union with the Catholic Church”. The article goes on to state, “It is important for the faithful to know that both priests are acting contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church and remain disobedient to directives of the bishop of Phoenix to whom they pledged obedience.”

“The diocesan statement reminds Catholics that the ultimate form of praise and worship is and always will be the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and we urge them to keep the Mass as the center of their lives. There is no substitution for the graces received at Mass and no prayer more edifying.”

For many years C. F. O. has spoken out against teen Masses that bring about a casual attitude in our churches. Many good parents thought it good that their children were participating in the teen Masses only to find that their children later would leave the Church. The diocesan statement that “no prayer is more edifying than the Mass” is absolutely correct. However, one must ask the question: Did Life Teen edify the Mass, or did it degrade the Mass and distract the youth from its sacrificial aspects? Do these Teen Masses bring our young people to a better understanding of what is happening on the altar, (Christ becoming present-body, blood, soul and divinity)? Or is the youth Mass nothing more than a scandalization of the Mass that destroys our young people’s belief in the real presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament?

The question must be asked: How is it possible for our youth to grow into strong Christian adults, if they have to be entertained to get them to go to Mass? There is no doubt in the minds of many Catholics that the problem the Church is experiencing with the founder of Life Teen did not start last month or last year. The whole philosophy was flawed from the very start. A jazzed up mockery of the Mass will never inspire our youth to holiness.