



The Roman Missal and the Celebration of the Passion of the Lord

The very first rubric for Good Friday indicates that only the sacraments of the Anointing of the Sick and Penance are celebrated on Good Friday and Holy Saturday (*Missale Romanum*, "Rubrics for Good Friday" (GF, no.1.)

The rubric for the celebrant's and deacon's reverence has been somewhat changed. "After making a reverence to the altar, they prostrate themselves or, according to circumstances humble themselves on their knees and pray for a while. All others humble themselves on their knees" (GF, no. 5). The "Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts" describes the significance of this action as "the abasement of 'earthly man' and also the grief and sorrow of the Church" (no. 65).

The new rubric in the *Missale Romanum* makes it explicitly clear that the celebrant says the opening prayer with hands outstretched "omitting the invitation, *Let us pray*" (GF, no.6).

Liturgy of the Word

The rubrics indicate that at the end of the homily, "the faithful may be invited to spend a brief period of time in prayer" (GF, no. 10).

General Intercessions

The General Intercessions come down to us in a form derived from ancient tradition and they reflect the full range of intentions. In case of serious public need, the diocesan Bishop may either permit or decree the addition of a special intention (GF, no. 13).

The previous rubrics spoke of the deacon as giving the introductions to the General Intercessions. The *Missale Romanum* indicates that a "lay minister" may do this in the absence of a deacon (GF, no. 11).

The deacon's invitation *Let us kneel- Let us stand* may be used as an invitation to the priest's prayer. The Conference of Bishops may provide other invitations to introduce the prayer of the priest (GF, no. 12). The *Missale Romanum* notes that when the deacon's invitations are used then the prayer is sung in a solemn tone by the priest (GF, no. 13). These tones are given in the *Missale Romanum* in the Appendix.



Adoration of the Holy Cross

The rubrics for this section begin immediately with the first form of Showing the Cross. The deacon or another suitable minister goes to the sacristy and obtains

the veiled cross. Accompanied by two ministers with lighted candles, the veiled cross is brought to the center of the sanctuary in procession. The priest accepts the cross and the standing before the altar (not "at the altar" as previously indicated) and facing the people, uncovers the upper part of the cross, the right arm and then the entire cross. Each time he sings *Behold the wood of the cross . . .* (GF, no. 15).

The second form of the adoration of the cross which takes place at the door of the church, in the middle of the church and before entering the sanctuary has not changed (GF, no.16).

The priest or deacon may then carry the cross to the entrance of the sanctuary or another suitable place (GF, no.17).

The first person to adore the Cross is the priest celebrant. If circumstances suggest, he takes off his chasuble and his shoes. The clergy, lay ministers and the faithful then approach (GF, no.18).

The personal adoration of the cross is an important feature in this celebration and every effort should be made to achieve it. The rubrics remind us that "only one cross" should be used for adoration. If the numbers are so great that all can not come forward, the priest, after some of the clergy and faithful have adored the cross, can take the cross and stand in the center before the altar. In a few words he invites the people to adore the Cross. He then elevates the cross higher for a brief period of time while the faithful adore it in silence (GF, no. 19). Pastorally, it should be kept in mind that when a sufficiently large cross is used even a large community can reverence it in due time. The foot of the cross as well as the right and left arm can be approached and venerated. Coordination with ushers and planning the flow of people beforehand can allow for this part of the liturgy to be celebrated with decorum and devotion.

The *Missale Romanum* gives specific directions as to the music used during the adoration. The antiphons *We adore your Cross, O Lord*, the reproaches, the hymns *Faithful Cross*, or other suitable songs are sung. Totally new is the indication: "In accordance with local circumstances or popular traditions

and if it is pastorally appropriate, the *Stabat Mater* may be sung, as found in the *Graduale Romanum*, or another suitable chant in memory of the compassion of the Blessed Virgin Mary." (GR, no. 20).

The cross is then carried by the deacon or other suitable minister to its place at the altar. Lighted candles are then placed around or on the top of the altar or near the cross (GF, no. 21).

Holy Communion

The rubric is specific that either the deacon or priest bringing the Blessed Sacrament to the altar puts on a humeral veil. Rather than indicate there is no procession, the rubric says the deacon or priest brings the Blessed Sacrament back from the place of reposition "by a shorter route." All stand in silence. The rubric for the priest has been shortened, indicating that "the Priest goes to the altar and genuflects" (GF, no. 22).

The priest communicates after *Behold the Lamb of God*. There is a new rubric that notes the priest is to say privately, *May the Body of Christ keep me safe for eternal life*. (GF, no. 27).

Mention is made that Psalm 22 (21) may be sung during the distribution of communion or another appropriate chant (GF, no. 28). After Communion either the deacon or another suitable minister takes the ciborium to a place prepared outside the church, or, if circumstances require, may place it in the tabernacle (GF, no. 29).



The priest then says *Let us pray* and, "after observing, according to circumstances, some period of sacred silence, says the prayer after Communion" (GF, no. 30). The *Missale Romanum* in this instance emphasizes the period of silence after *Let us pray*.

Before the *Prayer Over the People* the priest, if there is no deacon, may say the invitation: *Bow down for the blessing* (GF, no. 31).

The previous rubric mentioned only that all depart in silence. The new rubric notes "after genuflecting toward the Cross," all depart in silence (GF, no. 32).

It is then indicated that the altar is stripped after the celebration. "The cross remains upon the altar with two to four candles" (GF, no. 33).