

PROSTRATION

- ◆ Prostrations, which signify total humility and penance, are made during the Rite of Ordination, during rites of religious profession, as penance in religious orders, and by anyone during private prayer before a Crucifix or the Blessed Sacrament. It is also occasionally made by adults, at the priest's invitation, before the Profession of Faith in the solemn Rite of Baptism.

KISSES

- ◆ Kissing Crucifixes and Icons: In icons that depict more than one person, kiss first Our Lord (His Feet, Hem of His garment, or hands), then Our Lady (her hands or veil), then the angels and Saints. To reverence a Crucifix or icon that you can't reach too well with your lips, kiss your fingers and then touch where you would kiss.
- ◆ Kissing rings of hierarchs: see above under "Genuflection on Left Knee".
- ◆ Kissing a priest's hands: the priest's hands may be kissed when greeting or leaving him because **they alone are able to confect the Holy Eucharist**. They are also kissed on Palm Sunday when receiving a palm (which is also kissed). During the Mass, the priest's hands are kissed by the acolytes/altar boys.

ORANS

(RAISING ARMS EITHER AT YOUR SIDES AND WITH HANDS UP TO SHOULDER HEIGHT, OR RAISE ARMS UP OVER HEAD AS A CHILD WOULD WHEN WANTING HIS FATHER TO PICK HIM UP).

- ◆ *Priests* perform this gesture (the first method mentioned) during the Mass.
- ◆ Laymen sometimes adopt this position during *private* prayer. It should not be used by laymen at the Mass.

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

When Catholics undergo the Sacrament of Confirmation, the Bishop (sometimes a priest) seals the sign on our foreheads with holy chrism.

This was given to us as a sign on our forehead, for by it we believers are separated and distinguished from unbelievers.

Let us, therefore, not be ashamed of the Cross of Christ;

but though another hide it, do thou openly seal it upon thy forehead, that the devils may behold the royal sign and flee trembling far away.

Make then this sign at eating and drinking, at sitting, at lying down, at rising up, at speaking, at walking: in a word, at every act.

Words of St. Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem (d. A.D. 386)

Crossing one's self recalls this seal and the invocation that is said while making this holy sign calls on our God— the Father, His Son, and the Holy Ghost —and is a sign of our belief; it is both a "mini-creed" that asserts our belief in the Triune God, and a prayer that invokes Him. The use of **holy water** when making this sign, such as we do when we enter a church, also recalls our Baptism and should bring to mind that we are born again of water and Spirit, **thanks be to God!** *(excerpted from www.fisheaters.com)

Postures and Gestures



Make the Sign of the Cross and make it often!

Teach it to your children - - even the tiniest of children.
If they are infants, take their hands
and make the movements for them!

Making the Sign should feel as natural as breathing...

POSTURE AND GESTURE

*In a speech delivered at the twelfth convention of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, John M. Haas spoke of how certain Catholic practices made such an impression on him when he was still a Protestant. He wrote of how the "advertising of Our Lord" manifest in the Catholic custom of bowing the head in honor of the Real Presence when passing a Catholic church affected him:

And other Catholics could surely add innumerable other [Catholic Practices]: some silly, some profound, some a source of comfort, others the source of light-hearted humor. Catholic practices make up the daily life of a Catholic individual and a Catholic society. The *morning offering*, the invocation of *Jesus, Mary and Joseph*, the *sprinkling of holy water on children at bedtime*, the *incantation to Saint Anthony* ("*Tony, Tony, come around; something's lost and can't be found*"), the *pleas to Saint Jude to prevent a bankruptcy*, the *novenas for a sick spouse*. All of these many practices fill the lives of the faithful, enrich, comfort and orient them. Often it is difficult to trace their origin, and the ones which seem most intimate and natural were never even introduced by ecclesiastical authority. They emerged as natural, faith-filled expressions of love or joy or thanksgiving or grief or desperation.

The one characteristic these Catholic practices all seem to share is their ability to turn people away from the mundane, the worldly, the everyday, and direct them toward the sacred, the transcendent and the eternal. One could be travelling on the streetcar thinking about how to make new sales contacts or how to position oneself to meet the new girl in the office when suddenly, on the part of a half-dozen people, there was an adverting to another reality, another dimension, not separate from this realm, but permeating it, leavening it, making sense of it. Perhaps the adverting to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament by those on the street car was only fleeting, with virtually no break in the train of thought regarding increasing sales or meeting the new girl. But the adverting took place; Our Lord was acknowledged; and implicitly at least, the statement was made that increased sales was no end in itself and any future wife would, one would hope, be married in the Lord.

The following are some of the ways of "adverting to Our Lord" by the use of posture and gesture...

BOW OF THE HEAD

- ◆ When you pass by a Church, bow your head and make the Sign of the Cross to honor the Real Presence of Christ in the tabernacle.
- ◆ **Any** time you hear the Name "Jesus". Men should remove their hats and bow their heads when passing a church or when His Name is spoken; this practice is for both inside and outside of Mass. (Whenever you pass a Catholic church, whether on the subway, in a car, walking whatever, you actually are supposed to bow your head, removing your hat if you are a man.
- ◆ Cross yourself and bow your head when the priest and the Crucifer walk down the aisle before and after Mass. After Mass, as the priest leaves the Altar, it is also customary to pray for him.
- ◆ Not commonly known and practiced: any time you hear "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (or "Holy Spirit")" mentioned together, any time you hear the name of Mary; and, during Mass, when the name of the Saint in whose honor the Mass is being celebrated bow your head.

STRIKING OF THE BREAST

- ◆ At the Mass, formally: at each "mea culpa" during the Confiteor; at the Nobis Quoque Peccatoribus (priest); three times during the Agnus Dei; and three times during the Domine, Non Sum Dignus
- ◆ informally: at the "forgive us our trespasses" ("dimittite nobis debita nostra") in the "Our Father"; any time to express penitence or remorse inside or outside the Liturgy.

BOW AT THE WAIST (OR "PROFOUND BOW")

- ◆ At the Aspérages at mass when the priest sprinkles the congregation with holy water.
- ◆ When the Altar boy incenses the congregation during the Mass
- ◆ Cross yourself and make a profound bow when the priest and Crucifer walk down the aisle before and after Mass. After Mass, as the priest leaves the Altar, it is also customary to pray for him. (some simply bow the head instead of making a profound bow at these times)
- ◆ When greeting a hierarch who doesn't have jurisdiction over you e.g., the Bishop of a diocese other than one in which you live). As you bow, kiss his ring. This bow and ring-kissing are only done if the Pope is not present.

GENUFLECTION ON LEFT KNEE

- ◆ When greeting or leaving the Pope or other hierarchs with the rank of Bishop or above and who have jurisdiction over you (only when the Pope is not present) - e.g., to the bishop or Archbishop of your diocese, not of a neighboring diocese. During the left-knee genuflection, a kiss is given to the hierarch's ring. Then stand.

GENUFLECTION ON RIGHT KNEE

- ◆ Genuflect toward the Tabernacle where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, and each time you pass in front of it (except when you're in procession, such as standing in line for Communion, or returning to your seat afterward). While this should, on one level, be a matter of habit, it shouldn't be done thoughtlessly. Remind yourself when genuflecting toward the Tabernacle that you are kneeling before God. Praying mentally, **"My Lord and My God"** is a good habit to get into while genuflecting on the right knee. If the Tabernacle is not on the Altar, genuflect toward the Altar and the Altar Crucifix.
- ◆ Before a relic of the True Cross when it is exposed for public adoration.
- ◆ On Good Friday to Holy Saturday, after the ceremony of the Adoration of the Cross, genuflect when passing in front of the exposed Crucifix on the Altar.

KNEELING (DOUBLE GENUFLECTION)]

- ◆ Any time the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, to show adoration and humility
- ◆ Many times during the Mass: during the Prayers at the Foot of the Altar, after the Sanctus, after the Agnus Dei, at the altar rail, and at the Last Blessing
- ◆ During Confession, inside or, outside of the Confessional
- ◆ When receiving a priestly blessing, inside or outside of the Liturgy. If you are unable for some reason to kneel, then bow your head.
- ◆ During private prayer.