



OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

November 2011

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As you know, a revised English-language translation of the Roman Missal has been approved by the Holy See for use in Canada. The Missal is the book that you see the priest use as he presides at Mass. It contains all the prayers and indications that guide the ordained and lay faithful in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. The Roman Missal's official Latin edition, or what is often referred to as the *editio typica*, was revised by the authority of Blessed Pope John Paul II in 2002, with some new material, such as feasts of newly-canonized Saints, some new Prefaces for the Eucharistic Prayer, and clarifications in the way we celebrate the Holy Eucharist. This necessitated the preparation of a revised version in the various languages of the world.

The Bishops of English-speaking Dioceses around the world are using the gift of this revised Missal as an occasion to revise our English translation of the Mass from the original Latin, in conformity with the new norms for translation found in Blessed John Paul II's Instruction *Liturgiam authenticam* of 2003. The use of the newly translated Missal becomes obligatory in the Archdiocese of Edmonton and throughout our country in all English-language liturgical celebrations of the Roman Rite on the First Sunday of Advent, November 27th, 2011. The revised French-language translation of the Missal will be approved and published over the coming months.

As a result of the new English translation, you will notice some changes to the prayers, acclamations and responses that are proper to the lay faithful. To help you, pew cards have been prepared by the Publications Service of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The document that gives overall direction for the proper celebration of the Mass, entitled *The General Instruction on the Roman Missal* (GIRM), and has also received approval from the Holy See for implementation in Canada. The GIRM stipulates the norms to be followed for the correct celebration of Mass, including directives pertaining to posture. Although the official implementation date is the same as that of the Missal, the First Sunday of Advent, I have authorized the priests of the Archdiocese to begin implementing the GIRM immediately in order to assist you in your preparation.

These directives have as their intention to assure consistent practice in the Archdiocese and conformity with the universal law of the Church. This is very important. The oneness of our faith is to be apparent in the unity of our gestures and posture at the Sacred Liturgy.

Your priests will guide you through the various directives. In this letter I wish to bring to your particular attention the posture to be adopted for the Consecration and the appropriate way to receive Holy Communion.

The GIRM makes clear that the posture to be assumed by the faithful at the Consecration is kneeling. Therefore, in the Archdiocese of Edmonton the faithful are to kneel at the conclusion of the *Sanctus* ("Holy, Holy, ...") and to stand when the priest announces "The Mystery of Faith." Those who may not be able to kneel for such reasons as infirmity or lack of space are invited to make a profound bow when the celebrant genuflects at the Consecration of the bread and again at the Consecration of the wine.

As to the reception of Holy Communion, the GIRM directs that the proper posture is standing, although it does make allowance for those who wish to receive kneeling to do so. While standing before the minister of Communion, the recipient first makes a bow of the head before reception to reverence the Blessed Sacrament. Reception of the Host may be either in the hand or on the tongue. When receiving on the hand, one hand is to be placed over the other, so that the Host may be placed by the minister in the hand. It is inappropriate for the recipient to take the sacred Host from the minister. The Host is to be consumed immediately upon receiving it. When receiving on the tongue, the recipient's hands are to be reverently joined.

This moment of change is a wonderful occasion for a renewed appreciation of the mystery of the Most Holy Eucharist. Your parish priests and pastoral team can direct you to many resources that offer excellent liturgical catechesis pertaining to the Mass. May the Lord bless all of us with not only greater understanding of the Eucharist but also, and most importantly, an ever deeper love for and reverence before this most sacred mystery.

Yours sincerely in Christ,



✠Richard W. Smith
Archbishop of Edmonton