

# LITURGY BYTES

## Why Genuflect?

As we arrive for Mass, our first gesture should be to bless ourselves with holy water. This simple gesture reminds us of our baptism, a most important day in our lives! Next, we find a place to sit, sliding ourselves into a pew. However, if the Blessed Sacrament is present in the sanctuary of the church, we GENUFLECT. In recent weeks, you may have noticed that this new posture is happening right here at Holy Cross. The tabernacle was moved a few weeks ago into the sanctuary behind the main altar which calls us to acknowledge the presence of the Blessed Sacrament by genuflecting when entering and leaving the church.



You might have noticed the priest, servers, etc., in the entrance procession also genuflecting at the foot of the altar at the beginning and end of Mass. The priest also genuflects at the altar after the elevation of the consecrated host, after the elevation of the chalice, and before receiving Holy Communion. The priest's genuflection at these points in the Mass helps us to recall the incredible gift of Jesus present in the Eucharist.

You might ask, why genuflect? The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines genuflection as a “reverence made by bending the knee, especially to express adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.” By genuflecting or bowing deeply in a spirit of prayer and as a sign of adoration of the Lord, “we express our faith in the real presence of Christ under the species of bread and wine.” To honor the true presence of Jesus Christ, all who pass before the Blessed Sacrament outside of Mass, as well as when entering or leaving the church should genuflect. If genuflecting is physically difficult, a bow is a reverent substitute.

The next time you come to church, allow your eyes to be drawn to the sanctuary, altar, and tabernacle. Notice the candle that is kept burning over by the tabernacle to indicate and honor the presence of Christ. Seeing the candle, which is called the sanctuary lamp, we can recognize that Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist. We genuflect in honor of the greatness of who is present before us—Our Lord, Jesus Christ! Recall the quote from Philippians (2:6-11) “At the name of Jesus every knee should bend.....” when entering church in the future!

Have a blessed, safe, and healthy week ahead!!~*Michele Hall*