

A Message from Bishop Peter Christensen

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Kneeling at *Agnus Dei* is fitting posture

Catholics have a saying: *Lex orandi, lex credendi*, a Latin phrase that, loosely translated, means “as we pray, so we believe.” Our faith arises from our prayer and is most perfectly expressed there, especially in our communal Eucharistic celebrations, the source and summit of our lives as Christians.

I recently had that saying reaffirmed for me when studying the question of posture during Mass, particularly the posture of the faithful after the *Agnus Dei* (Lamb of God).

Since becoming your bishop, increasingly I have received requests to consider changing that posture from the current one of standing, to kneeling – as is the norm in the United States, and the practice in much of the country.

Before making a decision, I spent many months in inquiry and dialogue, in the process carefully studying the text of the *Roman Missal* itself.

At that place in the Mass, immediately following the Lamb of God, the priest elevates the host and says to the people, “*Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.*” And then together with the priest, the people respond, “*Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.*”

If we believe as we pray, what more fitting posture at this time than kneeling in reverence and adoration as we behold Him who takes away the sins of the world and heals our souls? Kneeling is a beautiful and appropriate response of veneration to what we believe is the real presence of Our Lord among us. It is an intuitive posture to which, in our joy and awe, our bodies are naturally inclined in this moment.

And so, after consultation with my priests, your pastors, and after reading many of your thoughtful and heartfelt letters and emails, and upon my own prayerful reflection, I have decided that, beginning on the Second Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday), April 28th, in accordance with the liturgical norm found in paragraph 43 of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, the faithful will now kneel after the Lamb of God.

This change, I truly believe, will foster and express a greater reverence for the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. It also unites our diocese in practice with other dioceses in our region, as well as with a great many dioceses in the United States. This being said, the encouraged posture in receiving communion is to remain standing.

Please rely on your priests if you require further direction regarding this change.

I am confident that all our communities will receive this change in the spirit in which it is proposed: as a matter of reverence and unity. I am grateful for your trust in me as the chief liturgist of the Diocese of Boise.