



LITURGY LESSON

Bowing - lesson 4

The bow is an act of reverence demonstrating our awe before God. In the Old Testament, bowing is symbolic of a people's recognition of the power of a deity. In the Psalms, it signifies the adoration due to the sovereign God. Psalm 86 states, "There is none like thee among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like thine. All the nations thou hast made shall come and bow down before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy name." Bowing is also the action associated with receiving a blessing as when the priest or deacon says, "Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing."



The altar is a sacred table on which we offer our sacrifice to God in the elements of bread and wine. At the beginning and at the end of Mass, our presider and other Liturgical ministers reverence the altar with a bow while standing at the base of the sanctuary. Upon entering or leaving our row of chairs as an act of reverence, we bow from the waist facing the altar. When passing the sanctuary during a personal visit to the church, a bow is the appropriate gesture of respect.

During the Eucharistic Prayer, the entire Assembly, acting as one, bows along with our Presider after the consecration of the bread and again after the consecration of the wine. This is a solemn bow, bending forward from our waist.

At the reception of communion, the host and the cup are presented to us by the minister of communion. We then reverently bow, more simply than before. We lean forward slightly with our shoulder and our head. As we straighten up, the minister offers the acclamation: "The Body of Christ" or "The Blood of Christ" to which we respond "Amen."

When walking into church or exiting church by an aisle in the south nave, a bow is appropriate when passing our Eucharistic Chapel. Jesus, in the form of the consecrated hosts, is "reserved" in the tabernacle and, therefore, a reverent bow demonstrating our respect is the appropriate gesture.

