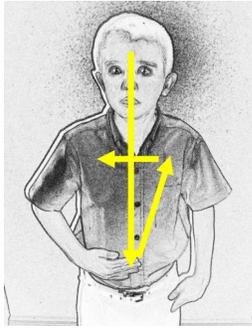


WHEN TO BOW, GENUFLECT AND CROSS YOURSELF



Over the years unnecessary bowing, genuflecting, crossing ourselves, and other gestures have crept into Mass. Besides being incorrect and distracting, only certain gestures are allowed by the liturgical norms of the church. Here are some things to keep in mind:

There are 3 body postures we do during Mass and the sign of The Cross.

<p>When to genuflect?</p> <p>Only genuflect once when you enter your pew at beginning of Mass and once at the end of Mass. That's it!</p>	<p>When to bow at the waist?</p> <p>You only bow at the waist during the Creed when the birth of Jesus is mentioned. Liturgical Ministers bow at the waist in front of the altar at the beginning and end of Mass instead of genuflecting.</p>	<p>When to bow your head?</p> <p>A head bow is made at the mention of the Trinity, Jesus, Mary, or the saint being honored in the liturgy. A head bow is also made as a sign of reverence before receiving communion.</p>	<p>You only cross yourself when:</p> <p>Make the sign of the cross only at the beginning and end of Mass, after receiving communion, and before the Gospel—(forehead, lips, heart). You should not cross yourself during the Gloria or the Penitential Rite.</p>
			
<p><u>Genuflect:</u> Touch the ground with your right knee and you do not cross yourself.</p>	<p><u>Waist Bow:</u> Bow at your waist.</p>	<p><u>Head Bow:</u> Bow your head while the rest of your body stays straight</p>	<p><u>Sign of the Cross:</u> Using your right hand touch your forehead, navel, left side of chest, and then your right side.</p>

Other than what's listed above, you should do no other gestures at Mass. The following are examples of things we shouldn't do:

- Once you have genuflected at the beginning of Mass, you do not bow or genuflect again until the end. You do not need to bow when crossing in front of the tabernacle, altar, or any other reason. You only need to bow in front of the altar outside of a liturgy (Mass) when you pass in front of it.
- You never bow or genuflect at the beginning or end of Mass if you are carrying something. Example: Altar servers who carry the cross and candles never bow or genuflect.
- It has never been a custom or a recommended gesture that you kiss your fingers after making the sign of the cross. Cross yourself immediately after receiving communion; you should not take a few steps, face the tabernacle, and then cross yourself.
- After receiving communion, kneel and offer a prayer of thanksgiving. You do not have to remain kneeling until the Body of Christ is put back in the tabernacle.