



Prostrating, or getting down on one's knees before the majesty of the presence of God in humble adoration, was a habit of reverence that Israel brought constantly to the presence of the Lord.

...The same tradition is also visible in the New Testament where we see Peter get on his knees before Jesus (cf. Lk 5:8), when Jairus asked him to heal her daughter (Lk 8:41), when the Samaritan returned to thank him, and when Mary the sister of Lazarus asked for the life of her brother (Jn 11:32). The same attitude of prostration before the revelation of the divine presence and is generally known in the Book of Revelation (Rev 5:8 and 19:4). ... The Eucharist, bread transubstantiated into the Body of Christ and wine into the Blood of Christ—God among us—is to be greeted with wonder, reverence, and an immense attitude of humble adoration.

This gesture [of receiving in the hand] has contributed to a gradual weakening of the attitude of reverence towards the sacred Eucharistic species whereas the previous practice had better safeguarded that sense of reverence. There instead arose an alarming lack of recollection and a general spirit of carelessness. We see communicants who often return to their seats as if nothing extraordinary has happened... In many cases, one cannot discern that sense of seriousness and inner silence that must signal the presence of God in the soul.

Now I think it is high time to review and re-evaluate such good practices [of the past] and...to abandon the current practice that was not called for by *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nor by the Fathers, but was only accepted after its illegitimate introduction in some countries. Now, more than ever, we must help the faithful to renew a deep faith in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist...to strengthen the life of the Church and defend it in the midst of dangerous distortions of the faith that this situation continues to cause.

✠ *Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith*

According to Abba Apollo, a desert father who lived about 1,700 years ago, the devil has no knees; he cannot kneel; he cannot adore; he cannot pray; he can only look down his nose in contempt. Being unwilling to bend the knee at the name of Jesus is the essence of evil (cf. Is 45:23, Rom 14:11). But when we kneel at Jesus' name, when we bow down in service of others, and when we bend the knee in adoration, we are following in the footsteps of the Magi, we are imitating Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Saint Maximilian Kolbe, and all the saints and angels in heaven.

✠ *Bishop Thomas Olmsted*

One has no need to be told that God's presence is not the place in which to stand on one's dignity. To appear less presumptuous, to be as little and low as we feel, we sink to our knees and thus sacrifice half our height; and to satisfy our hearts still further we bow down our heads, and our diminished stature speaks to God and says, Thou art the great God; I am nothing.



Therefore let not the bending of our knees be a hurried gesture, an empty form. Put meaning into it. To kneel, in the soul's intention, is to bow down before God in deepest reverence. ...It is an act of humility, an act of truth, and every time you kneel it will do your soul good.

*Msgr. Romano Guardini*

There are groups, of no small influence, who are trying to talk us out of kneeling. "It does not suit our culture", they say (which culture?). "Its not right for a grown man to do this—he should face God on his feet." ...

[T]here is the account of how, after the multiplication of the loaves, Jesus stays with the Father on the mountain, while the disciples struggle in vain on the lake with the wind and the waves. Jesus comes to them across the water. Peter hurries toward him and is saved from sinking by the Lord. Then Jesus climbs into the boat, and the

wind lets up. The text continues: "And the ship's crew came and said, falling at his feet, 'Thou art indeed the Son of God'" (Mt. 14:33)....

The Christian liturgy is a cosmic liturgy precisely because it bends the knee before the crucified and exalted Lord. ...



It may well be that kneeling is alien to modern culture—insofar as it *is* a culture, for this culture has turned away from the faith and no longer knows the One before whom kneeling is the right, indeed the intrinsically necessary gesture. The man who learns to believe also learns to kneel, and a faith or a liturgy no longer familiar with kneeling would be sick at the core. Where it has been lost, kneeling must be rediscovered, so that, in our prayer, we remain in fellowship with the apostles and martyrs, in fellowship with the whole cosmos, indeed in union with Jesus Christ Himself.

*Pope Benedict XVI*

In view of the state of the Church as a whole today, this manner of distributing Holy Communion (on the tongue) therefore should be observed, not only because it rests upon the tradition of many centuries, but especially because it is a sign of reverence by the faithful toward the Eucharist. The practice of placing Holy Communion on the tongue of the communicants in no way detracts from their personal dignity. This traditional manner of administering Holy Communion gives more effective assurance that the Holy Communion will be given to the faithful with due reverence, decorum, and dignity.

*Pope Paul VI*



Piety has its own good manners. Learn them. It's a shame to see those "pious" people who don't know how to assist at Mass—even those who hear it daily—nor how to bless themselves (they make weird gestures very hurriedly), nor how to bend their knee before the tabernacle (their ridiculous genuflections seem a mockery), nor how to bow their heads reverently before an image of our Lady. [...]

"This is my Body..." and the immolation of Jesus took place, hidden under the appearance of the bread. He is now there, with his Flesh and Blood, with his Soul and with his Divinity. He is the same as on the day that Thomas placed his fingers in His glorious Wounds. And yet, on so many occasions, you saunter by, giving not even a hint of a greeting out of simple good manners that you would give to any person you knew when you met him. You have much less faith than Thomas!

Have you seen it happening? Any old sergeant or a low-ranking second lieutenant sees coming towards him a fine looking recruit, of an incomparably better quality than the officer; but the salute and its return are still given. Meditate on the contrast. From the tabernacle of that church, Christ, perfect God, perfect Man, who has died for you on the Cross and gives you everything you need, approaches you. And you go by without paying any attention to him.

*St. Josemaria Escriva*

Wouldn't it correspond better to the deepest reality and truth about the consecrated bread if even today the faithful would kneel on the ground to receive it, opening their mouths like the prophet receiving the word of God and allowing themselves to be nourished like a child?

God willing, the pastors of the Church will be able to renew the house of God which is the Church, placing the Eucharistic Jesus in the center, giving Him the first place, making it so that He receive gestures of honor and adoration also at

the moment of Holy Communion. The Church must be reformed, starting from the Eucharist!...

The Sacred Host is not some thing, but some One. "He is there," was the way St. John Mary Vianney synthesized the Eucharistic Mystery. Therefore, we are involved with nothing other than, and no one less great than, the Lord Himself: *Dominus est!* [It is the Lord!]

✠ *Athanasius Schneider*

Auxiliary Bishop of Saint Mary of Astana, Kazakhstan

Where kneeling and genuflection have disappeared from the liturgy, they need to be restored, in particular for our reception of our Blessed Lord in Holy Communion. ... Let us kneel in adoration and love before the Eucharistic Lord once again!

✠ *Cardinal Sarah*

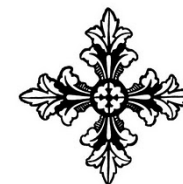
[T]he history of the reintroduction of communion in the hand is nothing other than the triumph of an act of disobedience. The consideration of the details of this history makes evident to us the gravity of this disobedience: in fact, it is very serious above all because of the very matter which it concerns; very serious because it implies the open resistance to a clear, explicit and solidly founded directive of the pope; most serious by its universal extension; most serious because those who did not obey were not only the faithful or priests, but in many cases bishops and entire episcopal conferences; most serious, because not only did they remain unpunished but they obtained a resounding success; most serious, in short, because it has succeeded in having the state of disobedience remain hidden, making it such that one might believe, on the contrary, that they were adopting a proposal that came from Rome.

✠ *Juan Rodolfo Laise,*

Bishop Emeritus of San Luis, Argentina

When He is offered by the priest at the altar and is carried somewhere, then all the people should bend their knees and show the Lord, the living and true God, praise, glory and devotion.

*Saint Thomas Aquinas*



## SAINTS & SHEPHERDS SPEAK

about

# Communion Kneeling and On the Tongue



*Unto me every knee shall bow,  
every tongue shall swear.*

Isaiah 45:23-24