Decorum in Church

In the context of discussing the Liturgy, it is important to reflect upon how we present ourselves in God’s presence at the church.

**Entering the Church**

Upon entering the church, we bless ourselves with the Holy Water as a reminder of our baptism. Then we proceed to the pew, genuflecting to the presence of Jesus in the tabernacle before entering our seat. The genuflection is an expression of reverence and worship to Christ who is our Lord and King.

**Silence**

The church is a sacred space for prayer and the worship of God. As a result, the interior of the church should be a place of silence before and after the celebration of Mass. In this way, people have an opportunity for prayer in preparation for the Mass, as well as prayers of thanksgiving following the Mass. This is not to say that we should not greet and speak with our fellow parishioners: we are a community and we want to deepen that community through our interaction and conversation! However, this should be done after Mass in a location outside the church.

**Dress**

Our clothing manifests outwardly our inward attitudes about the particular activity we are engaging in. Consequently, our clothing should reflect our reverence toward God as well as our respect for the other members of the parish community. Think of the occasions in which we dress our best: the workplace, a wedding, a date. In all these situations, we want to show outwardly that we recognize the importance of what we are doing. There is no greater occasion than the worship of God in the Mass and our clothing should reflect this. We should be sure that our clothing is modest so that it is not a source of distraction or temptation for others in the church. Men should remove hats or other head coverings while in the church.

**Punctuality**

It is important that we arrive at Mass on time. This for two reasons: first, so that we have time to prepare ourselves to celebrate the Mass; second, so that we do not disrupt the celebration of the Mass as we enter. There are definitely unexpected circumstances which are sometimes out of our hands, but in general we should make a habit to timeliness.

**Leaving Mass**

In addition to arriving on time for Mass, it is important to stay for the duration of the Mass, including the closing hymn. Every part of the Mass is designed to worship God and to deepen our holiness.