



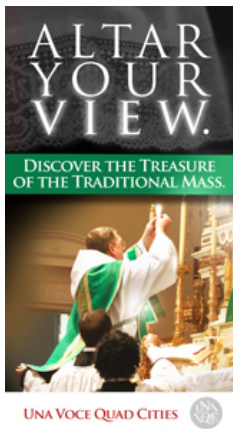
The Catholic Messenger

NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF DAVENPORT

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Jul
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Priests' posture to remain the same during Mass

Posted by Catholic Messenger Staff on July
21, 2016

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(Editor's note: Bishop Martin Amos shares the following letter he sent this month to the priests and deacons of the Diocese of Davenport concerning priest posture during Mass.)

Dear Priests and Deacons of the Diocese:



Anne Marie Amacher
Bishop Martin Amos has written a letter to priests and deacons that posture during Mass will continue to follow the Ordinary Form of the liturgy in the Diocese of Davenport. This file photo was taken at St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Davenport.

As you may have heard by now, Cardinal Robert Sarah, the Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments, when speaking as a private individual, offered his opinions regarding the posture of the priest at Mass and, in the process, encouraged all priests to begin adopting the "ad orientem" posture (facing the same direction as the people, or the so-called "liturgical east") beginning this Advent. The pervasive nature of electronic communication has facilitated the distribution of his opinions. Therefore, in order to prevent confusion and foster unity within the diocese, I am sending you this letter to clarify matters as they stand.

The Cardinal Prefect offered his own, private opinions on this and other matters. His words do not, and indeed cannot, constitute a change in ecclesiastical law or practice. Therefore, the law of the Church stands, as exemplified in paragraph 299 of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM):

The altar should be built separate from the wall, in such a way that it is possible to walk around it easily and that Mass can be celebrated at it facing the people, which is desirable wherever possible. Moreover, the altar should occupy a place where it is truly the center toward which the attention of the whole congregation of the faithful naturally turns. The altar should usually be fixed and dedicated.

There are cases where it is not possible to assume this posture, so the Order of Mass makes some accommodation for it (GIRM 127, 132, 133, 141). However, it is clear that the normative position of the priest when presiding at Mass in the Ordinary Form is facing the people, or, better, of the priest and the assembly facing the Altar together, the Altar that is a symbol of Christ in our midst and of our participation in the feast of the Kingdom. We gather as a community around the Lord's Table, reflecting the dialogical nature of the liturgy and honoring the many ways that Christ is present when we celebrate the liturgy (Sacrosanctum concilium 7).

To be clear, this is the posture that priests are to take when celebrating the liturgy (in the Ordinary Form) in the Diocese of Davenport.

I am confident of your obedience in this matter.



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One Response to "Priests' posture to remain the same during Mass"

1. **Christopher Brown** says:

July 23, 2016 at 9:07 am



10 April 2000, the Congregation for Divine Worship (Protocol No. 564/00/L) about GIRM 299:

This dicastery wishes to state that Holy Mass may be celebrated versus populum or versus apsidem. Both positions are in accord with liturgical law; both are to be considered correct. There is no preference expressed in the liturgical legislation for either position. As both positions enjoy the favor of law, the legislation may not be invoked to say that one position or the other accords more closely with the mind of the Church.

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