

Tenth Sunday Ordinary Time

We ended last week with a quote from Section 42 of the General Instructions of the Roman Missal: “The gestures and postures...of the people ought to contribute to making the entire celebration [of the Mass] resplendent with beauty and noble simplicity, so that the true and full meaning of the different parts of the celebration is evident and the participation of all is fostered. Therefore, attention should be paid to what is determined by this General Instruction and the traditional practice of the Roman Rite and to what serves the common spiritual good of the People of God, rather than private inclination or arbitrary choice.” The two prepositional phrases, 1) “to what is...” and 2) “to what serves...” needs our closer attention. This Section 42 directs us to pay close attention to five separate things:

- i) To the determinations of the General Instructions of the Roman Missal
- ii) To the traditional practice of the Church
- iii) To the common spiritual good
- iv) To private inclination and;
- v) To arbitrary choice

The new rubrics, the tradition, and the common spiritual good are to be observed as positive guidelines. They will provide us with restrictions and freedoms. Our private wishes and our choices that have no regard for guidelines are two things to be avoided. A rather vague conclusion is that the Sign of Peace Ritual is not optional. We need to come to a family decision. Each of our three Sunday Masses have their own distinct family characteristics. Today we will focus further on the determinations, i.e., rubrics, of the General Instructions of the Roman Missal. Section 154 states, “Extending and then joining his hands, the priest gives the greeting of peace while facing the people....Afterwards, when appropriate, the priest adds, *Let us offer each other the sign of peace*. The priest may give the sign of peace to the ministers but always remains in the sanctuary, so as not to disturb the celebration. In the Diocese of the United States of America, for a good reason...the priest may offer the sign of peace to a few of the faithful near the sanctuary. At the same time...all offer one another a sign that expresses peace, communion, and charity.” Section 181 gives the rubric for the Mass in which a deacon is also celebrating: “After the priest has said the prayer at the Rite of Peace and the greeting...the deacon, if it is appropriate, invites all to exchange the sign of peace. Then he himself receives the sign of peace from the priest and may offer the sign of peace to those other ministers who are closer to him.” Now we have some clearer guidelines which include several exception clauses.