

Confidential Memo

To: Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments

From: Head of *Rubrica Clara*

Eminence:

In response to a report surfaced through some segments of the Catholic Press regarding the present state of the text of the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*, I wish to congratulate you and my brothers at *Vox Clara* for their most proper translation of “*inclinat*” as “bends” instead of the novel, “bows,” in keeping with the long-standing tradition of the Church.

As our Holy Mother, the Church, has always taught, flexibility is a pastoral virtue. Such a rendering of *inclinat* is, indeed, spiritually fruitful, as it better reflects the internal disposition of the Priest. In other words, the rendering of “bends” is more accurate theologically and expresses a continuity (rather than a rupture, reflected by the post-Conciliar “bow”) with the liturgical tradition.

In addition, I would add that the “bend” represents the best in *varietates legitimae*. As is clearly evident, the rubric does not specify if the Priest is to bend to the left or the right. As opposed to the monolithic “bow,” which is unidirectional, the rubric here allows for individual Bishops in their Dioceses (*not* national conferences) to set the direction of the liturgical bend for their Priests. Such is not to be taken as a diminution of flexibility, as if the Priest should be free to determine the direction of his bend, but as a flexible exercise of Episcopal Authority, since, after all, the Bishop is the Chief Liturgist of His Diocese.

Of course careful formation of the Clergy is called for in this matter, as is deliberate catechesis of the faithful, since such a gesture may not be readily accessible to the uneducated.

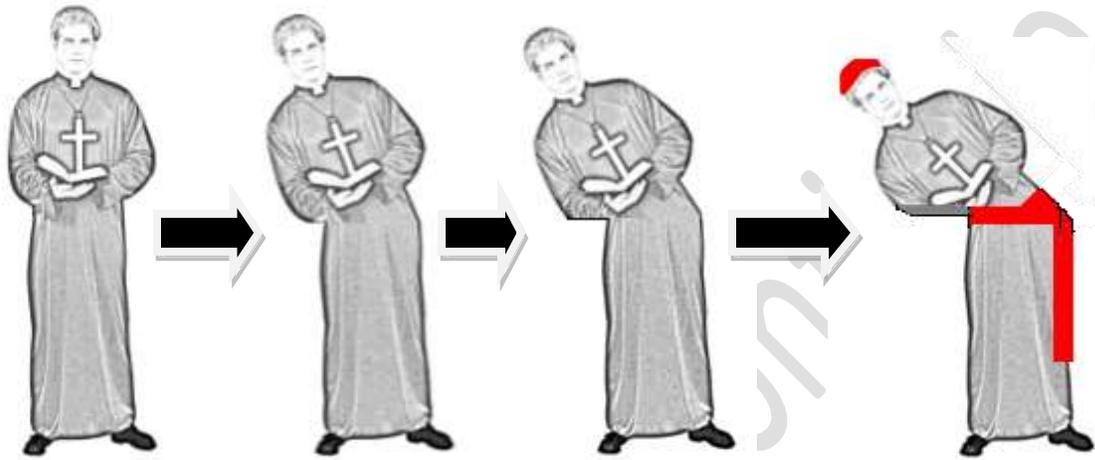
To that end, I have taken the liberty of producing (for your Eminence’s approval) the following catechetical resources for use in the English-speaking Church (second page). A publishing house well known to your Eminence and to all who do the “work of God” is willing to produce these aids at a nominal cost (the gold-leaf and hand-lettered versions will, of necessity, require a greater expenditure... but all for the greater glory, no?).

One can clearly see that this is a much more beautiful and graceful gesture than the “bow.” In addition, both this return to the tragically forgotten Tradition of the Church and the catechetical explanations offered in its favor have been greeted with much enthusiasm and wide acceptance by both clergy and laity.

With every good wish for the serene implementation of the Missal.

The Liturgical Bend

*In enacting the liturgical bend (as opposed to the mis-translated “bow”), the Priest (as this gesture is reserved to the Priest alone), at the waist, flexes to one side or the other, so as to bring the head lateral to the midline axis at a measure of (at least) twenty degrees, as shown below.*



“Simple” Bend (20°)

“Profound” Bend (30°)

*Inclina Magna* (45°)  
(reserved to Bishops)