

The Lord's Supper, Holy Communion, also called Holy Eucharist
with additional resources for the restoration of
An Exhortation, the Decalogue, and A Summary of the Law
and including
A Defense of the Rubrics

(For those who desire a less formalized liturgy, see the outline found in *Our Great Redeemer's Praise*, Seedbed Publishing, 2022)

Others, more qualified than I, are employed in developing liturgical rites for the Global Methodist Church. We are eager to taste that fruit which takes time to ripen and cannot be rushed. Meanwhile, many of us are developing rites for the Eucharist independently or adapting such rites as are familiar to us. This is one such effort and is intended as a temporary resource.

The goal of this project is to develop a service for The Lord's Supper that is in the American English vernacular, is catechetical, respects historic practice, incorporates the most ancient texts, and is a corrective for the harm done by modern revisionists. Further, it is important to accomplish this task while preserving the historic form and content so that a Christian coming from any of our sacramental traditions will recognize its parts and feel comfortable with its use. If the work is successful on this last point, then the typical communicant will have difficulty detecting the variations between this Rite and the one to which they are accustomed without comparing them side by side. Endnotes and section headings are added to the document to facilitate comparison of the eight points of substantial difference.

Additional resources in this work allow the Minister to restore an Exhortation for occasional use and the restoration of The Decalogue and A Summary of the Law for common use. The resulting liturgy follows closely the sequence in the Book of Common Prayer 1662.

Rubrics represent the author's preference for early tradition and a devotion to worshipping with the body as well as the mind and heart. They are presented in such a way that they can be employed whether one celebrates ad orientem, northside, or versus populum. The document concludes with a defense of the use of the rubrics. They are obviously optional.

Selected Bibliography—This effort is accomplished entirely with the labor of others. Those who most frequently were employed are:

Holy Scripture ESV

The Didache c. 100, Lightfoot Translation

Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus, c. 250; Easton translation, 1934

Apostolic Constitution, c. 375; Whiston translation, 1848

Book of Common Prayer 1662

Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America, 1784

Theological Institutes Vol, II, Watson, 1843

The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1892

The Methodist Hymnal, Methodist Protestant Church, 1932

The Book of Worship for Church and Home, the Methodist Church, 1964

John Wesley and the Church of England, Baker, 1970

Book of Common Prayer 2019

The Cross and the Eucharist in Early Christianity: A Theological and Liturgical Investigation, Cardo, 2019

Transitional Doctrine and Discipline of the Global Methodist Church, 2023

John Wesley's sermons, especially: *The Means of Grace*, and *The Duty of Constant Communion*

AN EXHORTATION

The Exhortation is the first act of worship. It is not preceded by any hymn, prayer, processional, words of welcome, trivial talk, or humorous stories.

This version is a blending, editing, and revision of the two Exhortations in the Book of Common Prayer 1662: One for those who are negligent in communing, the other for the unconverted or unrepentant.

By prevailing custom, the Exhortation is delivered on the first Sundays of Advent and Lent (historically, the two penitential seasons) and on Trinity Sunday.

Where it has been neglected and is being restored, it may be wise to deliver it more frequently: The first Sundays of Advent, Lent, Easter, and depending on local custom, either the first Sundays of Pentecost and Kingdomtide or the first and fifteenth Sundays of Ordinary time. At the discretion of the pastor, the Exhortation is appropriate on special days when there is reason to expect the presence of a large number in the congregation who are only occasional worshippers or who are only passingly familiar with the Christian faith.

An Exhortation is delivered by the Minister standing and facing the people.

Christ our Paschal Lamb has prepared the Paschal banquet. He calls his disciples to the table, whereby those disciples who come in faith, reverently, penitently, and according to Christ's holy institution, may obtain remission of sins, newness of life, and all other benefits of his Passion. Therefore, it is our duty to offer sincere thanks to Almighty God our heavenly Father for the gift of his only begotten Son our Savior Jesus Christ, not only to die for us, but to be our spiritual food and our sustenance for a holy life through this Holy Sacrament.

To make a right beginning:

First, examine your lives and conversations by the rule of God's commandments, and wherever you have failed and offended, either by thought, word, or deed; lament your own sinfulness and confess to Almighty God with full intention to amend your life. And if you perceive your offences to be such as are not only against God but also against your neighbors, then you must reconcile yourself to your neighbor, being ready to make restitution and satisfaction, according to the best of your ability; also stand ready to forgive others who have offended you, as you would have forgiveness of your offences to God:

Otherwise, receiving this Holy Communion does nothing but add to your offenses and leave you in damnation. Therefore, if any of you approach this table in mockery, without faith in Christ, a slanderer of his Word, an adulterer, or in malice, or envy, or in any other notorious offense; expect no benefit of this Sacrament nor any part in his Kingdom unless you repent of your sins.

If anyone says, I am a grievous sinner, and therefore I am afraid to come: why then do you not repent and allow him to change your life? When God calls you, are you not ashamed to say I will not come? Do you believe you lack the strength of character to reconcile with your neighbor? Do suspect you lack the will to turn from your sin? It is most likely that you do lack sufficient strength and will. So come to this table earnestly expecting to receive that character and find that will. Open your heart that the life that is in Christ might live also in you. Ask and you will receive, seek and you will find, knock, and it will be opened for you.

Consider the dignity of this Holy Mystery. On God's behalf, I ask you all that are present; for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, that you will not refuse to come, being so lovingly called, and commanded by God himself. Take comfort, for anyone who comes to Christ's table truly seeking him, he will by no means turn away.

Every service of Holy Communion includes either the Decalogue or a Summary of the Law or both. If the people are to “examine your lives and conversations by the rule of God’s commandments,” then the people should hear them. One or both acts are customarily included as one of the first acts of worship.

THE DECALOGUE

Minister God spoke these words and said:

I am the LORD your God.
You shall have no other gods but me.

People **Lord, have mercy upon us,
and incline our hearts to keep this law.**

Minister You shall not make for yourself any idol.

People **Lord, have mercy upon us,
and incline our hearts to keep this law.**

Minister You shall not take the Name of the LORD your God in vain.

People **Lord, have mercy upon us,
and incline our hearts to keep this law.**

Minister Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.

People **Lord, have mercy upon us,
and incline our hearts to keep this law.**

Minister Honor your father and your mother.

People **Lord, have mercy upon us,
and incline our hearts to keep this law.**

Minister You shall not murder.

People **Lord, have mercy upon us,
and incline our hearts to keep this law.**

Minister You shall not commit adultery.

People **Lord, have mercy upon us,
and incline our hearts to keep this law.**

Minister You shall not steal.

People **Lord, have mercy upon us,
and incline our hearts to keep this law.**

Minister You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

People **Lord, have mercy upon us,
and incline our hearts to keep this law.**

Minister You shall not covet.

People **Lord, have mercy upon us,
and write all these, your laws, in our hearts, we beseech you.**

A SUMMARY OF THE LAW

The lawgiver Moses said to the Israelites, Behold, I have set before your face the way of life and the way of death; and added, choose life, that you may live. Elijah the prophet also said to the people, how long will you halt with both your legs? If the Lord be God, follow him. The Lord Jesus also said justly, No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. We also, following our Master Christ, who is the Savior of all that believe, are obliged to say that there are two ways, the one of life, the other of death: which have no comparison one with another; for they are very different, or rather entirely separate.¹

The way of life is this: First, you shall love God who made you; second, love your neighbor as yourself, and do not do to another what you would not want done to you.²

Hear what our Lord Jesus Christ says:

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.³

Then the Minister leads the assembly in one of the following:

THE TRISAGION
 Holy God,
 Holy and Mighty,
 Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.

THE KYRIE
 Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
 Lord, have mercy upon us.

1 *Apostolic Constitution, Book VII, Concerning Department, And The Eucharist, And Initiation Into Christ*

2 *The Didache*

3 Holy Bible ESV

The Sacrament of
THE LORD'S SUPPER
or
HOLY COMMUNION
also called
THE HOLY EUCHARIST

Hymns and anthems may be interspersed at the discretion of the Minister. Musical settings are available for many of the elements. Remember, you are Methodists. There is no wrong time to sing.

The celebration of the Lord's Supper presumes that it is preceded by this or a similar order. It may be adapted at the discretion of the Minister. At least one lesson, the sermon, and the prayers are essential. The creed and either the Decalogue or the Summary of the Law are most helpful and ought not be neglected without some other provision in their stead.

Collect for Purity
 Decalogue
 Summary of the Law
 Collect of the Day
 Pastoral prayer and Lord's Prayer
 The Lessons
 The Nicene Creed (used when celebrating the Lord's Supper)
 The Sermon
 The Offertory
 Prayers of the people

The Minister standing and facing the people

CALL TO THE TABLE¹

And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

Christ our Lord has prepared the table. He offers forgiveness of sins, a new life, and all other benefits of his Passion. He desires his disciples to join him. He has promised to meet us here. It is our duty and our joy to attend.

**Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.
 His mercy endures forever.**

CALL TO CONFESSION²

All who truly and earnestly repent of your sins and desire to live in love and charity with your neighbors, and intend to lead the new life, following the commandments of God, and walking in his holy ways: draw near with faith, and take this Holy Sacrament to your present and everlasting comfort; and make your humble confession to Almighty God.

Then follows a substantial silence.

The Minister kneeling and facing the table.

**Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 Maker of all that is and judge of us all:
 We acknowledge and lament our many sins and offenses,
 which we have committed by thought, word, and deed
 against your divine majesty,
 provoking most justly your righteous anger against us³.
 We are deeply sorry for these our transgressions;
 the burden of them is more than we can bear.
 Have mercy upon us,
 Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father.
 for your Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake,
 forgive us all that is past;
 and grant that we may evermore serve and please you in newness of life,
 to the honor and glory of your Name;
 through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who in your great mercy has promised forgiveness of sins to all those who sincerely repent and with true faith turn to him, have mercy upon us, pardon and deliver us from all our sins, confirm and strengthen us in all goodness, and bring us to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Minister standing and facing the people

COMFORTABLE WORDS

Hear what comfortable words the Scriptures say to all who truly turn to him.

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

If anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

SURSUM CORDA

The Lord be with you.

People **And with your spirit.**

Minister Lift up your hearts.

People **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Minister Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

The Minister standing and facing the Lord's table

It is right, our duty and our joy, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Words appropriate to the day.

Therefore, with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, we honor you and glorify your holy name, forever praising you and saying:

SANCTUS

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the Name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION/INSTITUTION NARRATIVE

All praise and glory is yours, O God our heavenly Father. We give you thanks, through your beloved Son Jesus Christ, whom at the end of time you sent to us as Savior and Redeemer and the Messenger of your counsel. Who is your Word made flesh, inseparable from you; through whom you made all things and in whom you are well pleased. Who, fulfilling your will and winning for himself a holy people, spread out his hands when he came to suffer, that by his death he might set free all who believe⁴. For in your tender mercy, you gave your only begotten Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the Cross for our redemption. He made there, by the one offering of himself, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, in satisfaction for the sins of the whole world; and he instituted, and in his Holy Gospel commanded us to continue, a perpetual memory of his precious death and sacrifice, until his coming again.

On the night that he was betrayed to a willing death⁵, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take, eat; this is my Body, which is given for you: Do this in remembrance of me."

Likewise, after supper, he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink this, all of you; for this is my Blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for you, and for many, for the forgiveness of sins: Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me."

The Minister standing and facing the people and showing the bread and the cup

MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION⁶

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup; we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes again.

Therefore, we declare the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

The Minister kneeling and facing the Lord's table

EPICLESIS⁷

Hear us, O merciful Father, in your great goodness; pour out your Holy Spirit upon this place. Bless and sanctify us and these your gifts of bread and wine, that we, receiving them according to your Son our Savior Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed Body and Blood.

PRAYER OF HUMBLE ACCESS⁸

**We do not presume to come to this your table, O merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your numerous and great mercies.
We are not worthy so much as to gather up
the crumbs under your table;
but you are the same Lord
whose character is always to have mercy.
Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ,
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body,
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
that we may walk in newness of life
and grow into his likeness,
and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.**

AGNUS DEI

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;

have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;

have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;

grant us your peace.

Hymns and anthems are customary.

The Ministers receive the Sacrament in both kinds, and then immediately deliver it to the People.

The Bread and Cup are distributed with these words:

The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, [which was given for you, preserve your body and soul to everlasting life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your heart by faith, with thanksgiving.]

The Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, [which was shed for you, preserve your body and soul to everlasting life. Drink this in remembrance that Christ's Blood was shed for you and be thankful.]

The Minister and the people standing and facing the Lord's table

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

O Lord and heavenly Father,
 we earnestly desire your fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; asking you to grant that, by the merits and death of your Son Jesus Christ, and through faith in his Blood, we and your whole Church may obtain forgiveness of our sins, and all other benefits of his passion.

And here we offer and present to you, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice. We humbly pray that all who partake of this Holy Communion may be filled with your grace and heavenly benediction that he may dwell in us, and we in him.

And although we are unworthy, because of our many sins, to offer you any sacrifice, yet we ask you to accept this duty and service we owe, not weighing our merits, but pardoning our offenses, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and forever. **Amen.**

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

**Glory to God in the highest,
 and peace to his people on earth.**

**We praise you, we bless you, we worship you, we give thanks to you for your great glory,
 Lord God, heavenly King,
 almighty God and Father.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only begotten Son of the Father,
 Lord God, Lamb of God,
 that takes away the sin of the world:
 have mercy on us; you who takes away the sins of the world,
 receive our prayer.
 you who are seated at the right hand of the Father,
 have mercy on us.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,
 you alone are the Lord,
 you alone, Jesus Christ,
 with the Holy Spirit are the Most High,
 in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

The Minister and people standing and facing each other

BENEDICTION

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**

ENDNOTES

- 1 *And when the hour came... his mercy endures forever.* This is a Call to the Table. It replaces the 1989 UMC invention known as the Invitation to Holy Communion. It is a dialogue more representative of the Biblical narrative and the character of God. This Communion Rite begins with the first words Christ speaks at the table and concludes with adoration and celebration of his victory, “You alone, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit are the Most High, in the glory of God the Father.”
- 2 The words are traditional. This, also, is not an invitation. It is a Call to Confession.
- 3 *provoking most justly...* restores the language in use until the mid-20th century.
- 4 *We give you thanks... set free all who believe.* The passage is taken directly from the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus c. 250
- 5 *betrayed to a willing death...* Betrayed, yet willingly. Some rites omit one or the other. By restoring both, we acknowledge the reality of the evil which necessitates the purity of the oblation.
- 6 *Whenever we eat this bread... Christ will come again.* We keep this Memorial Acclamation among many possible choices because it has received wide acceptance, and ecumenical consensus expects it. We precede it with the words of Scripture that relate it to the Biblical narrative and connect it to what comes before and after.
- 7 *Bless and sanctify us and these your gifts of bread and wine...* The epiclesis is revised to make clear that the consecration is of the elements *and* the people.
- 8 The Prayer of Humble Access comes to us from the Book of Common Prayer through John Wesley’s *Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America*. From the mid-19th century through the mid-20th century, Methodists gradually modified the prayer to soften the hard sounding phrases on atonement and human sinfulness while adding phrases emphasizing the Lord’s Supper as a means of grace to help us toward entire sanctification. In 1989 the United Methodist Church abandoned the Prayer of Humble access altogether in its principal rites for Holy Communion. This adaptation of the prayer restores the original language and retains the language on sanctification.

ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS THAT WILL NATURALLY ARISE FROM THE RUBRICS

Why the Minister is the First to Receive the Sacrament and Should Not Delay

Because the Minister is nearest to the table and has the first opportunity.

Here before you are the precious body and blood of Christ. Why should you delay in receiving them? At this moment he offers you forgiveness for sins. Are you so holy that you can delay that gift? At this moment he offers you abundant life and life eternal. Will you delay these gifts because you have other work to do? Will you delay because you must busy yourself serving tables? Did you learn anything from Mary and Martha? All the benefits of Christ's Passion that you have been promising others that they will receive are now set before you. Would you advise others to delay? It is only the circumstances of your office that place you nearest the table and not any claim of your own. If you believe what you preach, and the benefit is so great, then you will receive it at every opportunity. Now is your opportunity.

Forget everything you have heard about the Eucharist being a dinner party with you acting as the host. This is no dinner party, and you are not the host. This is about life and death, blessing and cursing, heaven and hell. The true host offers you life, blessing, and heaven. How can you set that aside for later?

How do you presume you have even another ten minutes to delay? At this moment a tortured soul may be loading a rifle in the parking lot. A previously undetected genetic time bomb may stop your heart. Many have delayed receiving Christ at the moment he offered himself only to discover there was no other moment. Will you be one of them? Is this what you recommend to others?

If you still delay, then who should be first to receive? Look at the assembly. Can you discern which of them is in most need of the body and blood? Which of them is in most need of salvation? Who is most worthy to receive first? If you delay, then who receives first? I will tell you who. It will be that person whose circumstances place them next nearest the table, but since you have rejected that very reason for yourself will you advise them to delay also? Receive Christ's favor whenever and however he presents himself to you—in that very moment and without delay—and encourage others to do likewise.

Concerning The Posture of The Minister In Worship

An effective preacher communicates with more than just their voice. An effective preacher is at least somewhat aware of how they use their body to communicate. It is poor practice to deliver a sermon while continually looking down at the text. The preacher takes care to look out at the assembly when addressing them. If a preacher breaks from the theme of the sermon momentarily to address a tangential point, they take a few steps to the side thereby communicating the temporary shift in focus. When they return to the original point, they also return to the original place from which they were speaking. If a preacher references "the world beyond these doors," they may look to one side and make a gesture toward a window. A pastor may begin a sermon sitting on a stool to establish a sense of comfort and openness, then move about to indicate urgency, take a knee, and lean forward to communicate an earnest plea, and return to sitting to demonstrate calm and assurance. Where we look, where we stand, how we use gestures are some of the many ways that an effective preacher uses the body to communicate. For some, it comes naturally. For others, it becomes second nature.

We worship with heart, soul, mind, and body. We surrender all of these in worship. How the Minister uses the body does much to communicate or miscommunicate the Biblical narrative.

We will look at two ways that the Minister's use of the body is an effective communication tool for liturgical acts other than the sermon. They have to do with who the Minister is addressing and the content of the message.

Look at Me When You Talk to Me

I visited a doctor's office during the Pandemic. The receptionist was asking me questions while keyboarding on a computer, talking on the phone, and answering questions from co-workers behind her. She rarely looked up at me. It was maddening trying to determine whether she was addressing me or someone else. She barely acknowledged my presence.

Face the person you are talking to. It's a good rule for worship as well as life. Our voice alone cannot bear the weight of the message. We communicate with our bodies too. That is why employers do not want to interview people over the phone, and why detectives want to question people in person. When the Minister is addressing the congregation, they should face the congregation. When the Minister is talking to God, they should face God. Acknowledge God's presence with their body as well as their voice, and surrender both to worship.

Since God is everywhere not confined to a bodily presence in the room, how do we turn to face him? In keeping with ancient custom, we have liturgically located the presence at the altar table. When addressing God in the liturgy, the Minister acknowledges God's presence by facing the altar table. When addressing the congregation, it is important to face them. When joining with them in an address to God it is appropriate to communicate that with the body by joining with them in facing the liturgical representation of his presence.

This is the normative practice of Christians from all time and especially among Methodists prior to 1989. Most congregations still have a remnant of a collective memory of this. Almost every Methodist church I attend still has one place where everyone faces the altar table. The Minister, the choir, and all the altar servers join with the congregation in facing their God. Unfortunately, it happens when the Minister is holding a plate of money high and lifted up. If this is the only place in the service where the Minister turns to face their God, then it miscommunicates the Biblical narrative.

Yet, it comes from a good place in our collective memory. The people intuitively understand that there are times in worship when we ought to face the God we are talking to, recognize his presence in the assembly, and fully expect that he is listening.

There are three common postures the minister can use to face the presence of God in the sanctuary. The reader can pursue their history and deeper theological implications elsewhere. We address them only for the purpose of application. The three are: Ad Orientem, Northside, and Versus Populum.

Ad Orientem means to face "toward the east." Historically, it is the most common practice. Churches built with this practice in mind have an altar table against the east wall. The pastor stands in front of the table and faces the table from the same perspective as the people.

Northside worship had a relatively short life in liturgical practice and few practice it today, but it is still sometimes useful. The pastor faces the table from the left side as seen by the people. In my part of the United States there are many two-hundred-year-old Methodist churches and many more built on that model. There is not enough room between the altar rail and table for the Minister to conduct the Eucharist, and there is no way to stand behind the table. These churches were built during the brief practice among the Methodists of Northside worship.

Versus Populum (towards the people) also permits the pastor to bodily distinguish between an address to God and an address to the people if done carefully. The pastor stands behind the table and addresses the people across the table. For a liturgical act such as the epiclesis, the Minister may raise the head slightly looking toward the heavens with arms outstretched and palms open. Versus populum does not allow a Minister to kneel without disappearing. This is mitigated when the Minister genuflects at the point where they would otherwise kneel.

The Devil Has No Knees

That brings us to the issue of standing or kneeling to effectively communicate through our bodies what we are saying with our voice. A popular Eucharistic hymn has the lyrics, *“When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun, O Lord, have mercy if you please.”*

The irony of this wonderfully composed Eucharistic hymn is that the pastor leading it often has no intention of doing either (falling on their knees or facing liturgical east). Thus, church becomes a place where we practice saying things that we have no intention of doing. In 1989 my former denomination removed the rubrics for kneeling by their Ministers from every liturgy—except one. At ordination the Minister is expected to kneel before the bishop. What this communicates is that their clergy are to kneel before a bishop but never before God. In 1989 that denomination’s clergy lost their knees.

As with the previous section, there is not room here to discuss the history and theological implications of kneeling in worship. It is sufficient to say that even Jesus knelt to pray. According to the desert father Abba Apollo, 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 communicates rebellion and pride.

If our voice proclaims praise and thanksgiving, then our bodies ought not declare us a liar. We stand, boldly, arms outstretched, and palms lifted up. If our words are humble and penitent, then our bodies ought to testify to the truth. We kneel in adoration and contrition.

If this seems to you like so much trivia that complicates religion beyond all usefulness, then you are not far from being right. For my part, things would be much simpler if we had just left the table against the wall and continued with *ad orientem*; but people tend to overthink things. The rules are simple. What we proclaim with our words should be lived out with our whole self: heart, mind, soul, and body. Face the person you are talking to. If it is the people, face them. If it is God, then face Him. If you speak boldly, then stand. If you teach humility, then kneel. For some of us it comes naturally. For others of us, it will become second nature.