

DEAR DEACON BULLETIN INSERT

❖ Dear Deacon Jim,

Why do some people raise their hands when praying the Lord's Prayer while others do not? Which is correct?

❖ Response

This is an interesting question and a discussion that is becoming common in Catholic parishes whether the faithful should also raise their hands when praying the Lord's Prayer. This gesture of extending hands to the sides and being slightly elevated is known as the **ORANS** (meaning "praying") posture. The priest celebrant uses this ancient prayer posture surrendering themselves, with hands uplifted to the Lord, in a gesture that echoes Christ's outstretched arms as he offered himself on the Cross.

Typically, when such a question arises, we can refer to the rubrics (the red color instructions) in the Roman Missal which is the large book that guides our liturgical worship. Unfortunately, in this case, the *General Instruction on the Roman Missal (GIRM)* does not provide any specific information on this question. However, in a document published by the Vatican, *Instruction On Collaboration of the Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests*, it mandates: **"Neither may... non-ordained members of the faithful use gestures or actions which are proper to the... priest celebrant. It is a grave abuse for any member of the non-ordained faithful to "quasi preside" at the Mass while leaving only that minimal participation to the priest which is necessary to secure validity"** (ICP, [Practical Provisions 6 §2](#)).

What the above statement means is that the laity should not say the Eucharistic prayers along with the priest and that the faithful may not use the same gestures that are reserved for the priest celebrant.

The Our Father is a community prayer by the faithful prayed together as the Body of Christ and takes place during the Liturgy of the Eucharist and as such is directed to God by the priest celebrant on behalf of all the faithful participating in the Liturgy. This prayer offering by the celebrant provides the vertical emphasis that it demands.

Regarding the question is Orans' posture by the faithful is correct, I can only say as stated above based on the ICP issued by the Vatican (Nov. 13, 1997) this gesture is reserved for the celebrant of the Mass. This gesture on the part of the faithful is frowned upon by the Vatican, to say the least. I believe prayerful consideration, discussion with your Pastor, and deeper catechesis on the practice of this topic are required.

Deacon Jim