

This question is taken from the QUESTION BOX in the back of the Church...Please drop your questions in the box...

QUESTION: Why do people stay kneeling after the Body of Christ has been placed back in the Tabernacle after Communion?

The Catholic Church we went to in Japan taught that we worship the Body of Christ, not the priest.

ANSWER: Good question. In regards to your second point, be assured ALL Catholic churches whether they're in Japan or anywhere in the world are only taught to worship Christ, especially in the Eucharist. The priest is never to be worshipped nor is anyone else. Catholics do not worship any of the saints, (including Mary, but we give Mary a special reverence as she is the Mother of God – that could be a whole other Deacon Corner), or anything or anyone else. Worship is to go to God alone. Period.

If there is some confusion regarding why we kneel after Communion, it has NOTHING to do with the priest. The priest does act in what is called "Persona Christi" (the Person of Christ) during that Mass. Notice at the consecration the priest uses the words "This is MY Body" and "This is MY Blood". The priest is only repeating the words Christ Himself said, he is not Christ, and he is not intending to place himself in a position in which anyone would think he should be worshipped. He is re-presenting what Christ Himself said at the Last Supper when He instituted the Eucharist.

As to the first part of your question, why do we stay kneeling...again, it has nothing to do with the priest. After we receive the body of Christ and his precious blood we return to our pew and kneel for a period of time. We kneel for one primary reason: it is a sign of respect for the real presence of Jesus Christ. We are to kneel until the Eucharist is stored safely in the tabernacle.

The guidelines for Catholic Churches Masses are in what is called a "GIRM" (General Instructions of the Roman Missal"). This is a book deacons and priests study to make sure the proper format for Mass is followed so that, all across the world, the Mass is uniform. If you go to Mass in another country with a language you don't understand, you should still get the "same" Mass and you will understand what's happening.