



ELEVATION OF THE HOST

A SERVICE OF CATHOLICS UNITED FOR THE FAITH

ISSUE

Is During the liturgy of the Eucharist, when is the host to be elevated? What are the associated rubrics or rules?

RESPONSE

We The consecrated host is elevated at two distinct times during the Eucharistic Prayer: after the words of consecration and during the final doxology (“Through Him, with Him, in Him...”) and Great Amen. The host (or the paten containing the host) is raised at other times, but these are not elevations. Both the *Sacramentary* and the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM) provide the rubrics for the priest’s actions.

DISCUSSION

There are two instances during the Eucharistic Prayer properly known as elevations:

1) At the words of consecration, the priest takes the bread and raises it “a little above the altar.” After the words of consecration (“Take this, all of you, and eat it: this is my body which will be given up for you”), the priest “shows the consecrated host to the people, places it on the paten, and genuflects in adoration” (*Sacramentary*). The chalice is similarly elevated after consecration.

The Church does not specify a height for showing the consecrated host to the people. Circumstances such as the architecture of a church building might make it impossible for all to see the elevation. (The use of bells can be helpful in these circumstances.)

2) At the end of the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest elevates both the chalice and the paten with the

consecrated host (if a deacon is present, he may hold the chalice elevated, cf. GIRM, no. 180). He holds them elevated while singing or saying the doxology, “Through Him, with Him, in Him. . .” He continues to elevate the consecrated species through the acclamation, “Amen” (cf. GIRM, no. 151).

In the Tridentine Rite, these elevations are known as the Major and Minor elevations. Except where specified (as at the second elevation), the priest is the only person permitted to elevate the sacred species.

There are other instances when the host (or the host and paten) is raised, but these are not termed elevations:

- At the beginning of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the priest prepares the gifts. He takes the paten containing the bread and, holding it slightly raised above the altar, says, “Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. . .” (cf. *Sacramentary*). The chalice is similarly raised.

- Immediately following the *Agnus Dei* (“Lamb of God”), the priest genuflects. He takes and holds the host slightly raised above the paten or above the chalice. Facing the people, he says, “This is the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are those who are called to His supper” (cf. *Sacramentary*; GIRM, nos. 157-158).

- When distributing Holy Communion, the priest, deacon, or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion is to take a host, raise it slightly, and show it to the communicant, saying, “The body of Christ.” (cf. *Sacramentary*; GIRM, nos. 161-162).

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CATHOLICS UNITED FOR THE FAITH

85882 Water Works Road
Hopedale, OH 43976-8600
(740) 283-2484
www.cuf.org

