



# Boston Catholic Journal

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## "At the Name of Jesus every knee should bend"



*"Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that **at the name of Jesus every knee should bend**, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth"*

*Saint Paul to the Philippians 2.9-10*

**B**ut we no longer so much as *bow our heads* upon hearing His Name ... let alone *bend our knee* as we pass before Him in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar.

There was a time when, in a mix of many people, one could always distinguish the Catholics among them. We see vestiges of this at Mass --- and almost exclusively among the elderly. They bow their heads, however slightly, even imperceptibly, upon hearing the name, "Jesus".

Every time.

No matter how often and carelessly the Name is uttered by the priest or deacon --- as any other name upon Earth --- still the heads bow, reflexively, instinctively, from a life past, an age past, when "the Name" was sacred ... and understood as "the Sacred Name". It derived not from a generation past, but from centuries past, millennia past, where it was recognized that one could not always kneel upon hearing the Sacred Name, but the head ... and the neck ... could always bow before it.

## The Prologue in Heaven

"They were former days", you say. Yes ... but from days more ancient still, the days from which the source and substance of our very Faith derives, days where a continuity existed --- and still exists --- between Heaven above and Earth below, ancient days in which we hear the words of Saint Paul echoed through the ages:

### In the Old Testament:

Be converted to me, and you shall be saved, all ye ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is no other. I have sworn by myself, the word of justice shall go out of my mouth, and shall not return: *For every knee shall be bowed to me.*

Isaiah 45.22-24

### ... and in the New:

"Every creature, which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them: I heard all saying: To him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, benediction, and honour, and glory, and power, for ever and ever. And the four living creatures said: Amen. And the four and twenty ancients *fell down on their faces, and adored him* that liveth for ever and ever.

Apocalypse 5.13-14

"Dost thou believe in the Son of God? He answered, and said: Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him? And Jesus said to him: Thou hast both seen him; and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said: I believe, Lord. *And falling down, he adored him.*"

Saint John 9.35-38

"Peter saw, he *fell down at Jesus' knees*, saying: Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

Saint Luke 5.8

**And for every subsequent generation ...** but ours.

We are, after all, too wise ... too sophisticated. We are not blind beggars and we are not simple fishermen. We are not children.

Indeed. Each of them entered the Kingdom of Heaven.

So tell me ... since you are neither blind, nor simple fishermen, nor children, how do *you* propose to enter into the Kingdom of God?

They fell to their knees before God, and you ... you will do what? Is your pride so overweening that you will bring your full height to the face of God? Will you stride proudly through the Gates of Heaven?

You are a fool!

The arrogant have ever been an affront to God. Mary herself tells us that, "He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble."<sup>1</sup>

Are you greater than Mary, Mother of God? Greater than Saint Peter?

Will you make yourself to be even greater than Christ Himself Who, "fell upon his face, praying"<sup>2</sup> to His Heavenly Father in the Garden of Gethsemane?

And *still*, when next you pass Him by – *Jesus Christ really and truly present* in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar – *and every single day thereafter*, you will not so much as *acknowledge* Him with *the bend of your knee ... nor His Sacred Name with a nod of your head.*

Instead of *repenting* of this arrogance, and learning from Christ Who tells us that He Himself is humble<sup>3</sup> --- you *celebrate!* ... most often yourselves – proclaiming in song, in smug assurance, that *you* "are God's people" --- "and the light of the world" --- even as you fail to recognize *Him* Who stands before you ... Whom on Good Friday we had crucified with our sins.

Why do you find this so difficult?

Because to bend your knee you must first bend your will ...

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<sup>1</sup> Saint Luke, 1.51-52

<sup>2</sup> Saint Matthew, 26.39

<sup>3</sup> Saint Matthew, 11.29

