

Liturgy We Live *by Dr. Gil Haas*

Reverences are neither mentioned nor required by our Birth of Common Prayer. However, one common reverence is derived from today's Epistle lesson from Paul's letter to the Philippians, "At the name of Jesus, every knee should bend..." which has become associated with a simple bow (nodding of the head without bending at the waist) at the mention of Jesus' name at any time during our liturgy. In some Anglo-Catholic traditions, the Epistle reader genuflects at this phrase, and this is the sole Epistle lesson which is associated with such a reverence. However, there are points in three Gospel lessons that have traditionally been associated with a reference (a genuflection by the reader and the congregants): 1) the Gospel assigned to Christmas Eve and Christmas Day (John 1:14) - "and the Word became flesh and lived among us"; 2) the Gospel for Epiphany (Matthew 2:11) "and they (the Magi) knelt down and paid him (the infant, Jesus) homage"; and 3) the Passion narrative for Good Friday (John 19:30) - "then he (Jesus) bowed his head and gave up his spirit." Reverences should never be inferred to be rules, but they are simply individualized signs of worship.

If you have a liturgical question or an inquiry about anything that transpires during or around our worship service, please forward the question you would like researched to: gghaas@aol.com, or drop the question in the offering basin. Please note whether we can credit you as the source of the question.