

KNEELING OR STANDING ARE NOT ‘MORTAL SINS’ Father Martin Tran’s Retraction

The LA TIMES, Sunday, May 28, 2006, story about the liturgical practices at St. Mary’s by the Sea stated that the determination of some parishioners to kneel during the Agnus Dei at Mass was a ‘mortal sin’ because it violated the liturgical norm (to stand) of the province of the USCCB Region XI (CA, Hawaii and Nevada)

The LA TIMES article quoted from Fr. Martin Tran’s weekly bulletin column in which he addressed the issue of respect for the general liturgical norms and practices of the Roman Catholic Church approved by the Vatican, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops and Bishop Tod Brown.

His article resulted from ongoing local differences and rejection of various liturgical practices by a small group of parishioners. Here is the quote in question from Fr. Tran’s column:

“As I said before, Liturgy is the ‘public worship of the Church whose authority belongs only to Rome, the national Conference of Catholic Bishops and the local bishop, and not a private worship or business which belongs to any person(s) or group that can take it into their own hands by intentionally setting their own norms, disregarding the permission from the local Bishop or despising the authority of the local Bishop, and the National Conference of one’s country. That is clearly rebellion, grave disobedience and mortal sin, separating oneself from the Church. The reason for this is that all the current liturgical norms of the Diocese and of the U.S. are officially recognized and allowed by Rome.”

Fr. Tran regrets any concern or hurt caused by the misuse of the term “mortal sin” in this context. The Diocese concurs with Fr. Tran’s retraction.

The bulletin article by Fr. Tran was never about “kneeling” or “standing” during Mass, it was about respect for the liturgical practices of the Church as approved by the Pope.