

LITURGY BYTES

Praying with Body, Mind & Voice

In the celebration of Mass, we raise our hearts and minds to God. We are creatures of body as well as spirit, so our prayer is not confined to our minds and hearts. It is also expressed by our bodies. When our bodies are engaged in prayer, we pray with our whole person. Believe it or not, using our entire being in prayer helps us to pray with greater attentiveness.



Both postures and gestures have meaning and will enhance our participation in the Mass. Let us take a moment to look more closely at a few of the gestures and postures we engage in at Mass.

Standing – a definite sign of respect and honor. We do this at the beginning and end of Mass, as well as for the Gospel reading. The Bishops in our country also chose the posture of standing for the reception of Holy Communion.

Kneeling – in the early Church, kneeling signified penance. In the Middle Ages, kneeling signified homage and adoration. We certainly know this as we kneel before the presence of Christ in the Tabernacle. Again, our Bishops chose kneeling for the entire Eucharistic Prayer.

Sitting – is the posture for listening and meditation. We sit for the Readings prior to the Gospel and after Communion, as well as the homily. This posture should be attentive rather than one of rest.

Genuflecting – is done as a sign of adoration. Some people make the sign of the Cross as they bend their knees. Traditionally, as Catholics we should genuflect on entering and leaving the Church when the Tabernacle, with the Blessed Sacrament, is present in the Sanctuary. You will notice the priest genuflecting during the Consecration and right before Communion.

Singing – has both an individual and communal dimension. As we lend our voices to sing prayer responses and hymns, we all are lending our voices in praise and thanksgiving to our God.

The next time at Mass, think about some of the above “things” we do and how important they are to our full and active participation at Mass.

Have a blessed, safe, and healthy week ahead! ~~~*Michele Hall*