



STANDING, SITTING, KNEELING...

LITURGY BYTES *by Michele Hall*



Has anyone ever said that attending Mass is like a workout at the gym? I can tell you my kids, in their younger years, have said something like that. Today, let us look at the reason behind our various postures at Mass. In the Mass there are three postures: standing, kneeling, and sitting. Each of these is to help us fully participate in the Mass. How do these postures assist us?

At Mass there is a good deal of kneeling and bending the knee. When we enter the pew, we should genuflect before we move into our seat. Some people kneel in prayer when they first enter Church before Mass actually begins. During the Eucharistic prayer, we kneel in adoration as Jesus is made present before us. After receiving Communion, we kneel in prayer to give thanks. Another way to look at kneeling is to realize as we kneel we are emptying ourselves. Therefore, you could say that kneeling is an act of humility, an act of honest love with a desire to be with the person before us.

On the opposite end, we have the posture of standing. It is interesting to know that in the early days of the Church, kneeling was not allowed during the season of Easter. This was not because Christians imagined that they were equal to God. Rather, to stand was to recognize how our Baptism changed who we are. We are creatures who can stand upright before God because of what Jesus had done for us. We can stand with hope because of Jesus. So, when we stand, we let our bodies announce to the world that we are redeemed.

You might think sitting is similar to a "time out." After all, we are very familiar with it! We sit as spectators for so many activities in our lives. So, at Mass we could be tempted to think that my part is done and so I sit. Let others do their thing. However, we need to sit realizing we need to be active during these moments as we listen to God's Word in Scripture and when the gifts are presented. Our eyes may be closed or not as we contemplate receiving and delighting in what we hear and see. Together, let us kneel in humble wonder, stand with confident hope, and sit in expectant desire for union with God.

Have a peaceful and prayerful week ahead!