

PROCESSIONS have been a part of liturgy since the early centuries of the Church. This movement demands involvement of one's total being, particularly as the assembly approaches the altar to receive Communion. Possibilities for processions in the liturgy include: Entrance (47), Moving the Book of the Gospels from the altar to ambo (133, 175), Presentation of Gifts (73, 74), Communion (86), and Going Forth (186).

“The reform of the Liturgy is for the reform of the Church which is for the reform of the world.”



What are the postures for the Mass?

- Beginning of Mass until 1st reading: **STAND**
- 1st reading until Gospel Reading: **SIT**
- Gospel Acclamation to end of Gospel: **STAND**
- During Homily: **SIT**
- Creed until the end of the General Intercessions: **STAND**
- Preparation of Gifts until completion of “Pray brothers and sisters...”: **SIT**
- Beginning of “May the Lord...” until end of “Holy, holy...”: **STAND**
- After Holy Holy until after Great Amen: **KNEEL**
- After “Great Amen” through “Lamb of God”: **STAND**
- End of “Lamb of God” until distribution of Communion: **STAND OR KNEEL**
- When receiving Communion: **STAND**
- Silence after Communion: **SIT or KNEEL**
- Prayer after Communion until the end of Mass: **STAND**



Liturgical
Renewal
Series

Postures And Gestures At Mass



Worship Office
Diocese of Green Bay
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Background Information

The unity and participation of the assembly are among the primary concerns of the General Instruction of the Roman



Missal (GIRM).
“This unity is beautifully apparent from the

gestures and postures observed in common by the faithful” (96). “The gestures and posture of the priest, the deacon, and the ministers, as well as those of the people, ought to contribute to making the entire celebration resplendent with beauty and noble simplicity, so that the true and full meaning of the different parts of the celebration is evident and that the participation of all is fostered” (42).



Postures and Gestures At Mass

STANDING is an active, engaged posture that manifests respect and shows great attention to what is taking place. It also denotes readiness for praise and thanksgiving and for service.

We stand from beginning of the Entrance song until the end of the Collect, for the Alleluia chant and the Gospel, during Profession of Faith and Prayer of the Faithful, from “Pray Brethren” until after the Holy Holy, from the Our Father until communion, including the reception of Communion, for the Prayer after Communion until the end of Mass (43).

KNEELING signified penance in the early Church. In the Middle Ages kneeling came to signify the homage of a slave to his lord. More recently the posture signifies adoration and humility. We kneel after the Holy Holy until the Amen of the Eucharistic Prayer. In the Diocese of Green Bay the people may stand or kneel after the Lamb of God (43).

SITTING is a posture of repose, of listening and of meditation. The assembly sits for the first and second readings, the Psalm, and the homily. They may sit or kneel after Communion (43).

BOWING signifies reverence and honor shown to the persons themselves or to the signs that represent them. There are two kinds of bows.

The bow of the head (simple bow) is used when the three Divine Persons are named together, and at the name of Jesus. It is the chosen sign of reverence before receiving the Body and Blood.

The bow of the body (profound bow- bending from the waist) is made to the altar during the opening and closing processions, during the Creed, and by those standing during the Eucharistic prayer when the priest genuflects (275). Outside of Mass when entering or leaving a church where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved in a separate chapel, it is appropriate to make a profound bow to the altar which represents Christ in our midst.

GENUFLECTING signifies adoration and is reserved for the Most Blessed Sacrament, as well as for the Holy Cross on Good Friday. If there is a tabernacle in the sanctuary, the priest and others in the procession genuflect when they approach the altar and when they leave the sanctuary. They do not genuflect before the tabernacle during mass. The priest genuflects three times during Mass: after showing the host, after showing the chalice, and before Communion (274).