

## Postures

In Mass every single thing has significance. Every single movement, posture, word spoken, and thing done means something. The more you understand about what is going on in a Mass, the more you are able to appreciate its beauty

### The Sitting

**Sitting is a posture of listening.** Catholics sit for the first reading (often from the Old Testament), the Psalm (often actually sung), and the second reading (New Testament, not from the Gospel). **We also sit for the offering, and the homily** (sermon). We sit, ready to hear and receive. We sit to listen.

### The Standing

**For Prayer: Standing has been a posture of prayer for Jewish people since before the time of Jesus.** Standing during prayer is also seen throughout different parts of the Bible. So, as Catholics, we continue to utilize this posture for prayer today.

Some examples of when we stand during Mass for prayer: When we pray the opening prayer (led by the Priest) say The Lord's Prayer (as a congregation), and the Prayers of the Faithful (the prayer requests for the congregation).

For the Creed: We stand as we say in unison what Christians have believed from the earliest times, in the form of the Nicene or Apostles Creed. We stand to affirm our unity and our beliefs together as Christians.

For the Gospel: Standing is also a sign of respect. We have many readings from the Bible during Mass, but **we stand for the Gospel out of particular respect, since these are the words and deeds of Jesus himself.**

**For the Procession: We stand at the beginning and end of Mass,** also as a sign of respect as the celebrant (Priest or Bishop who is celebrating the Mass) processes in to begin the Mass, and processes out once the Mass has ended.

### The Kneeling

**When we enter Mass, we genuflect, where we bend and touch one of our knees to the floor.** We are humbly acknowledging Jesus in the tabernacle, in the Eucharist.

Catholics believe that Jesus is fully present, body, blood, soul and divinity in the Eucharist, which is Holy Communion. We believe when Jesus said "This is my body," that he meant it literally. Jesus is veiled behind the appearance of bread and wine, but His presence is fully and truly there. This is something that the very earliest Christians believed, and continue to believe right through to the present day in Catholicism. So we acknowledge that by genuflection.

**Kneeling is a posture of respect and adoration.** Another time when we kneel is during the preparation for and before/after reception of the Eucharist (the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion). We kneel, again, because we believe Jesus is fully and truly present in Communion. If you believed you were literally in the presence of Christ himself, falling to your knees would be a natural thing to do- probably even falling flat on your face.

So, we always kneel during this part of Mass, and we remain kneeling until the elements are put back away in the tabernacle, and the tabernacle is closed.



*\*These may vary in some countries and/or dioceses.*