

# Ritual Actions: Gestures and Postures of Prayer

The Mass draws our senses and body into the act of worship, lending to a participation of our whole self in union with the Church. The actions used at Mass unify the assembly in a reverent expression of the prayers being offered. Below are some the basic postures and gestures.

Posture/Gesture	Meaning	During...partial listing of basics
Standing	A sign of respect and honor; stance of those who are risen with Christ and seek the things that are above. We stand in humble gratitude, with a readiness to do God's will.	Introductory Rites Gospel Acclamation & Gospel Creed / Our Father / Dismissal Rite
Sitting	A posture of listening and meditation.	Readings (before the Gospel) Homily Preparation of Gifts
Kneeling	This signifies penance (sorrow) and/or adoration.	From the end of the Sanctus (Holy, Holy) until after the Great Amen. After the Lamb of God until processing for reception of Holy Communion. During our prayer of thanksgiving after reception of Communion.
Genuflecting	Bending of the right knee, as an act of reverence.	When passing before the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle, and entering the pew for divine worship.
Bowing	This gesture is sign of reverence and worship. Usually, it is a modest bow of the head or upper body.	Bow during the Creed at the words commemorating the Incarnation: <i>"By the power of the Holy Spirit, he was born of the Virgin Mary and became man."</i> Before receiving Holy Communion. When passing before the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle.
Extending of Hands	Also called the Orans gesture, when both hands are extended in the ancient form of prayer signifying our openness to the Holy Spirit.	Optional gesture at the Our Father.
Folded Hands	A traditional prayer posture which is a sign of prayerfulness, humility, and attentiveness to the presence of God.	Times of prayer; while waiting on line to receive Communion.

NOTE: Keep in mind that persons with physical difficulties/challenges are exempt from the common observance.

# Glossary: Basic vocabulary relating to the Mass.

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We will use the common terms in reference to the Mass as found in the Loyola “Finding God” series. Consistency and repetition are important components for learning. This will avoid confusion from one grade level to the next.

<b>Word</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Altar</b>	The sacred table where the Eucharist is celebrated.
<b>Acolyte/Altar Server</b>	A person trained to serve the priest during Mass and other liturgical functions.
<b>Assembly</b>	The people gathered together for worship.
<b>Blessed Sacrament</b>	Another term for the Eucharist and commonly used to refer to Jesus present in the tabernacle.
<b>Church</b>	The community of all baptized people who believe in God and follow Jesus. The word is often used for the Catholic Church.
<b>Consecration</b>	Through the power of the Holy Spirit and the words and actions of the priest, the gifts of bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus.
<b>Creed</b>	The prayer which is a statement summarizing our basic Catholic beliefs.
<b>Deacon</b>	A man specially ordained in service of the Church to assist the priest in preaching, baptisms, marriage, and the administration of parishes and other similar duties.
<b>Eucharist</b>	The sacrament in which Jesus gives himself in sacrifice and the bread and wine become his Body and Blood. It is called Eucharist, or “thanksgiving,” because Christ “gave thanks”, and so it is the supreme act of Christian gratitude to God.
<b>Eucharistic Prayer</b>	The great prayers of thanksgiving prayed by the priest in your name and that of the Church.
<b>Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion</b>	A person trained and commissioned to assist the priest in distributing Holy Communion at Mass or to the sick and homebound.
<b>General Intercessions</b>	Prayers at Mass for the needs of the Church and the world.
<b>Genuflect</b>	A gesture of reverence to the tabernacle by bending the right knee to the floor.
<b>Holy</b>	Something that is holy is from God or shows what God is like.
<b>Holy Communion</b>	The consecrated bread and wine which are the Body and Blood of Jesus that you receive at Mass. It is the Jesus, the Bread of Life who nourishes us for eternal life.
<b>Homily</b>	A teaching by a priest or deacon based on the Scripture readings proclaimed at Mass.
<b>Last Supper</b>	The Passover and last meal taken by Christ with his apostles, the night before he died (Holy Thursday). On this occasion he instituted the Holy Eucharist and the priesthood.
<b>Liturgical Year</b>	The Church’s year of seasons and feasts that makes up the Church’s year of worship, and that celebrate God’s plan of salvation.
<b>Liturgy</b>	The public worship of the Church. It includes the Sacraments and forms of daily prayer.
<b>Liturgy of the Hours</b>	Also, called Christian Prayer or the Divine Office is the Church’s public prayer to make each day holy.
<b>Liturgy of the Eucharist</b>	The second main part of the Mass in which the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus and we share in this meal by receiving Holy Communion.
<b>Liturgy of the Word</b>	The first main part of the Mass, during which the assembly is instructed in the Sacred Scriptures. The homily, profession of faith, and the general intercessions develop and conclude the Liturgy of the Word.
<b>Mass</b>	The celebration of the sacrament of the Eucharist; also called Divine Liturgy.
<b>Preparation of the Gifts</b>	The offertory of the Mass. It is recommended that the faithful bring up the bread and wine, which the priest or deacon receives and places on the altar.
<b>Priest</b>	Men who are specially ordained to serve God and lead the Church by offering the body and blood of Christ in the Mass, to give absolution for the forgiveness of sin, preach and perform other spiritual works.
<b>Procession</b>	There are generally four processions in the Sunday liturgy. Two of these, the Entrance and Communion Processions, are normally accompanied by congregational singing. The other two, the Procession with the Gifts and the Recessional, may be accompanied by song or instrumental music.
<b>Lector</b>	A person trained and prepared to proclaim the readings at Mass.
<b>Real Presence</b>	The true and real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist: body, blood, soul and divinity; in the Word; in the assembly.
<b>Reverence</b>	Is the care and respect you show to God and holy persons and things.
<b>Sacrifice</b>	Giving up something out of love for someone else or for the common good. Jesus sacrificed his life for all people. This sacrifice is re-presented at every Mass.
<b>Tabernacle</b>	The special boxlike container where the Blessed Sacrament is kept for prayer and for communion to the sick or dying.
<b>Transubstantiation</b>	The complete change of the bread and wine into the substance of Christ’s body and blood by a validly ordained priest at the consecration of the Mass.

