

# Participation in Mass with Postures: Home Edition

Without the benefit of gathering together to celebrate Mass, it may be difficult to remember all the cues for participation in Mass. Exactly when do we stand sit and kneel? Why are these postures and gestures important? The Ascension Family Life Ministry offers you this quick refresher course!

**Standing** – We stand as our priests process into the church. Standing is a sign of respect; our priests represent Christ in the celebration of Mass. Standing is also a posture meant to represent the resurrection; we have risen with Christ and seek things from above. The posture of standing also signifies are readiness to respond to God *subito, sempre, e con gioia* – right away, always, and with joy.

**Signing the cross** – We begin and end Mass with the sign of the cross, marking the cross of Christ on our own bodies. In doing this, we acknowledge that by Christ’s death and resurrection we are redeemed. When we mark ourselves with the cross of Christ under the names of the Holy Trinity, we place ourselves in the blessing of the resurrection and participate in the call to die to ourselves.

**Beating chest three times** -- During the penitential rite, we beat our chest 3 times during the phrase, “through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault.” This is a sign of repentance and humility, repeated from the account in Luke 18:13.

**Sitting** -- At the conclusion of the Penitential rite, we sit down. This posture demonstrates receptivity and attentive listening. By sitting, we avail ourselves to receive the Word of God in the first two readings and responsorial psalm.

**Standing** – we stand when our priest or deacon stands to pick up the book of the Gospel from the alter. As stated before, we stand as a sign of respect, as a symbol of our resurrection, and because we are ready to respond.

**Tracing Three Crosses** – Just before the Gospel is read, we trace 3 small crosses on our foreheads, lips, and hearts. Silently we pray that the Word of God always be in our minds, on our lips, and in our hearts. In this gesture we communicate the death to self and resurrection with Christ implicit in following him with our whole selves.

**Folding Hands** – We fold our hands while the Gospel is read as a sign of our intimate communion with Christ, experienced most fully through His incarnation, life, death, and resurrection.

**Sitting** – we sit after the book of the Gospel is placed, open on the front of the Ambo. We sit as a sign of receptivity, as our priest or deacon teaches and applies the Word of God to our lives.

**Standing** – we stand again for the Creed and for the Prayer of the Faithful. In this posture of resurrection, we lift our prayers to God.

**Bowing** – during the Nicene Creed, we bow during the phrase, “and by the Holy Spirit, was incarnate of the Virgin Mary.”

**Sitting** -- Typically, there would be an offertory at this time, during which we would sit. This component of the Mass is skipped while we are unable to gather in person.

**Standing** – In absence of the offertory, we continue standing until after the Sanctus (what you probably think of as the “Holy, Holy, Holy” prayer). At the words, “Hosanna in the highest,” we kneel.

**Kneeling** – We kneel for the entire Eucharistic Prayer until after the “Amen.” Kneeling signifies our adoration of Jesus, truly made present in the Blessed Sacrament. Kneeling also demonstrates our submission to Christ, our deepest reverence in prayer, our humility before Christ, and a spirit of penance and repentance.

**Standing** – We stand after the Amen and through the Agnus Dei (What you probably know as the “Lamb of God” Prayer). At the words, “grant us peace,” we kneel.

**Signing Peace** – Because we are currently unable to gather for Mass, there is not a pause for sharing the Sign of Peace. For some families with younger children, the Sign of Peace is a much-loved aspect of Mass! You can insert your own time for sharing the Sign of Peace after the response, “and with your spirit.”

**Kneeling** -- we kneel again after the Agnus Dei, through the communion rite, and through the Spiritual Act of Communion prayer offered by our priests on our behalf. During the Spiritual Act of Communion, we seek to unite ourselves spiritually with Christ. We express our sorrow with being separated from Him sacramentally, unite ourselves to Him spiritually, and look forward -- with hope – to the day when we will be fully reunited.

**Standing** – We stand again as our priests process out of the Church. Having been filled with the life and love of the Trinity and of the entire Church gathered spiritually, we are now sent into the world to live what we celebrate.

ASCENSION *Families*

JOYFULLY PROCLAIMING, CELEBRATING,  
WITNESSING, AND SERVING CHRIST *Together*