



LITURGY LESSON

Standing & Sitting - lesson 8

We stand and we sit at various times throughout the Mass. Visitors to a Catholic Parish often find it confusing trying to figure out when to stand and when to sit.



A basic principle to remember is that as Catholics we stand at Mass for prayer. Our liturgy is a prayer filled with many and varied actions. We listen; we dialogue; we silently reflect; we process. Sometimes we pray together out loud. At other times, the priest prays on our behalf. In most of these circumstances, the general rule is followed: when we pray, we stand.

The longest single prayer at Mass is the Eucharistic prayer. For the vast majority of the church's history, the faithful stood throughout the entire Eucharistic prayer because they felt reverent standing (as Americans do when we pledge allegiance to the flag or sing the National Anthem.) Fairly recently in our history, kneeling became the norm. In keeping with the ancient practice however, some Catholic communities around the world maintain the custom of standing for the entire Eucharistic prayer. Traditionally here at St. Ladislav, we have stood throughout the Eucharistic prayer. This continues to be our practice.

Once in a while at Mass, we sit. We sit for the readings, the responsorial psalm, the homily, the preparation of the altar and the gifts, and during the thanksgiving after communion. Obviously these are not moments of complete rest nor absence of prayer. Even when we sit at Mass, we are doing something. We listen. We sing. We reflect. We open our hearts to God's Spirit. Here at St. Lad's, a pastoral choice has been made to sit during the communion procession because we have stood throughout the entire Eucharistic prayer.

At Mass we stand and we sit. Both actions engage us to fully participate in our communal worship and prayer at Mass.

