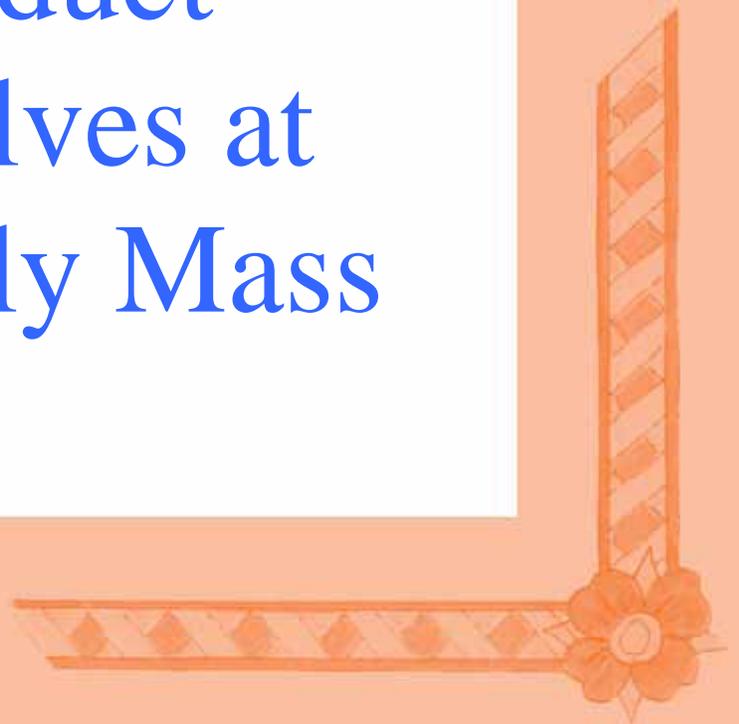






Chapter V

How we should
conduct
ourselves at
the Holy Mass



64 In what way should we conduct ourselves at the Holy Mass?

The Holy Mass, because of what it is, requires that we have:

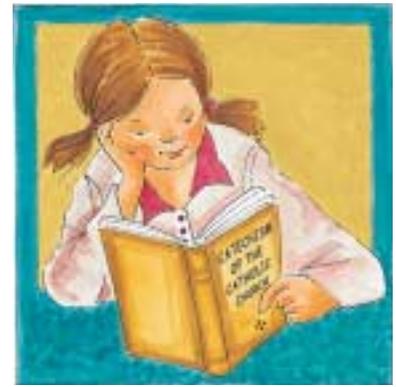


A great **Faith** (*Mystery of Faith*), that leads us to welcome and deepen more and more the riches of the Mystery. When the Holy Mass is celebrated we proclaim with astonishment the faith of the Church in the Risen Lord, and that he is really present under the forms of bread and wine, transformed by the grace of the Holy Spirit into the Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus.

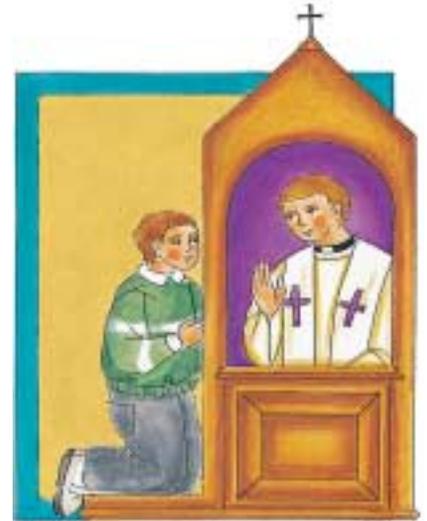




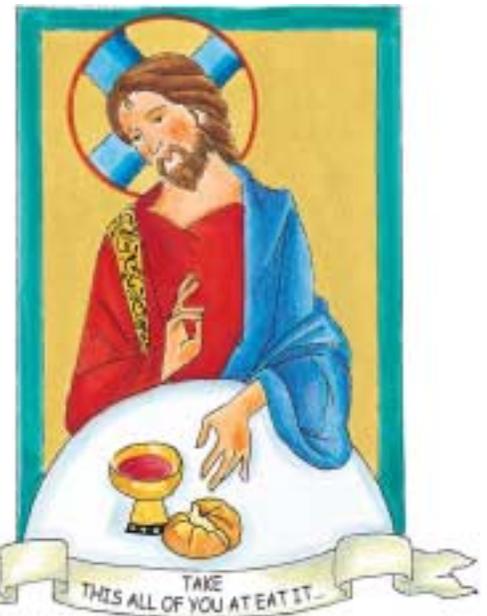
We should always have an attitude of **openness** so that we might strive to deepen, by means of catechesis, our understanding of what we have celebrated and so that it might become something *Alive* in our lives. We should do this so that we might be adequately **informed** in order to be able to have a full, conscious and active participation in the Eucharistic Celebration.



We should have a **purity** of conscience: only the person who is at peace with God and with his brothers and sisters is able to live the Holy Mass fully. The Eucharist is the Sacrament of those who are reconciled, in that it is the high point of the journey to reconciliation with God and with the Church through the Sacrament of Penance. Jesus himself, after he rose from the dead, appeared to the Apostles and told them: **“Those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven. Those whose sins you retain, they are retained”** (*Jn 20, 22*). Only the priest can absolve a person who is contrite from their sins if they approach him in the Sacrament of Penance.



A complete, conscious, pious, active, joyful and communal **participation**.



This means:



That we should be punctual so that we arrive in Church in time for the beginning of the Mass.



We should participate and listen attentively to the Word of God.



Share in the Body of Christ with our brothers and sisters: **“Take this all of you...”**.

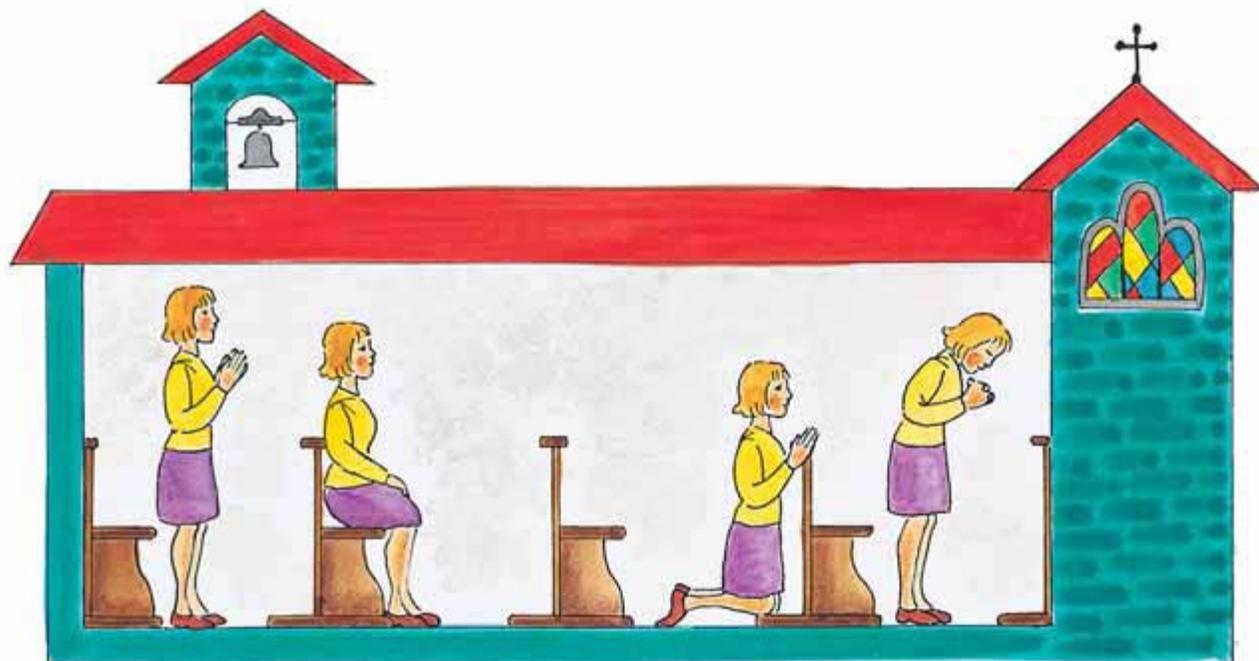
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What do our gestures during the Eucharistic Celebration mean?

The **exterior gestures** we adopt during the Holy Mass (such as standing up, sitting down, kneeling, showing a sense of joy and celebration, singing...) should really say something to us about the supernatural and divine character of the Sacrament that we are celebrating.

This external way of acting, which all those who participate in the Holy Mass likewise do, is also a sign of unity and communion among the faithful, a unity that is nourished by the Eucharist.

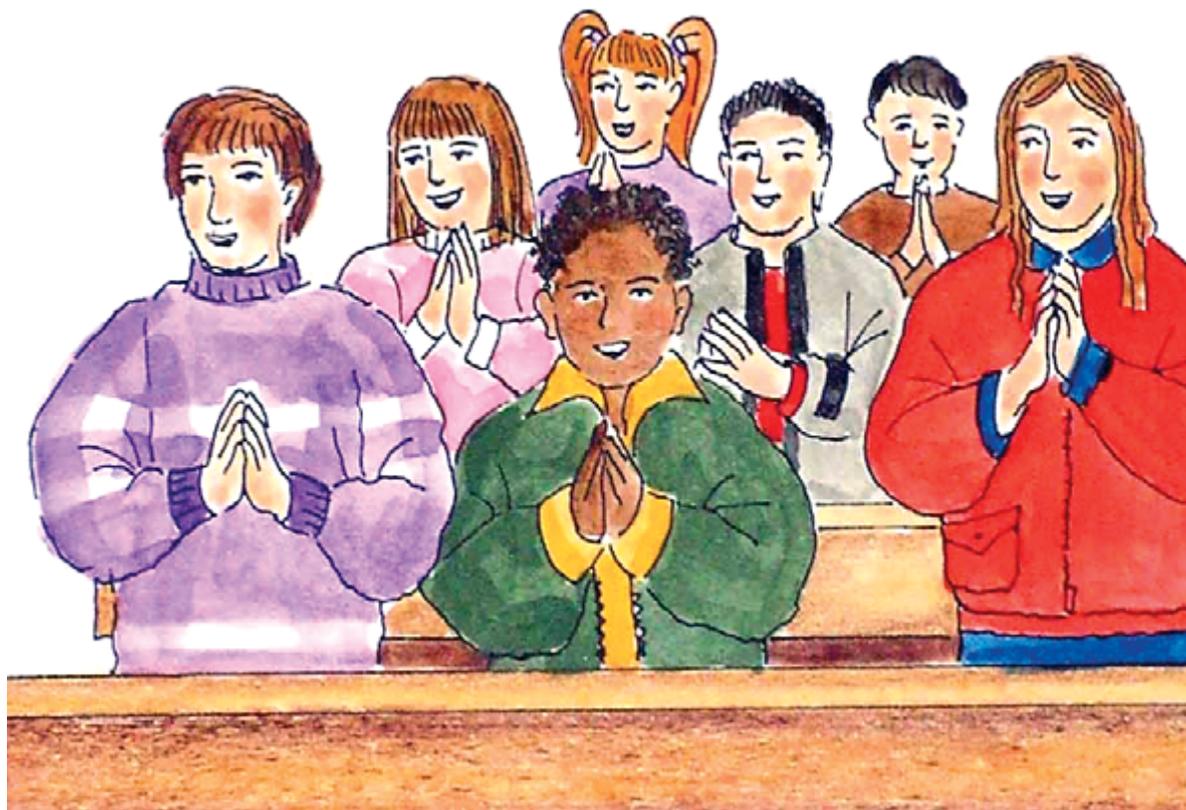




IN PARTICULAR:



Standing up indicates the freedom that Christ gives us. Because Christ is risen, he has lifted us up and freed us from the slavery of sin.





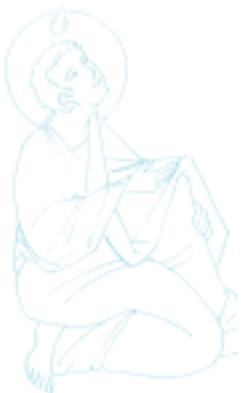
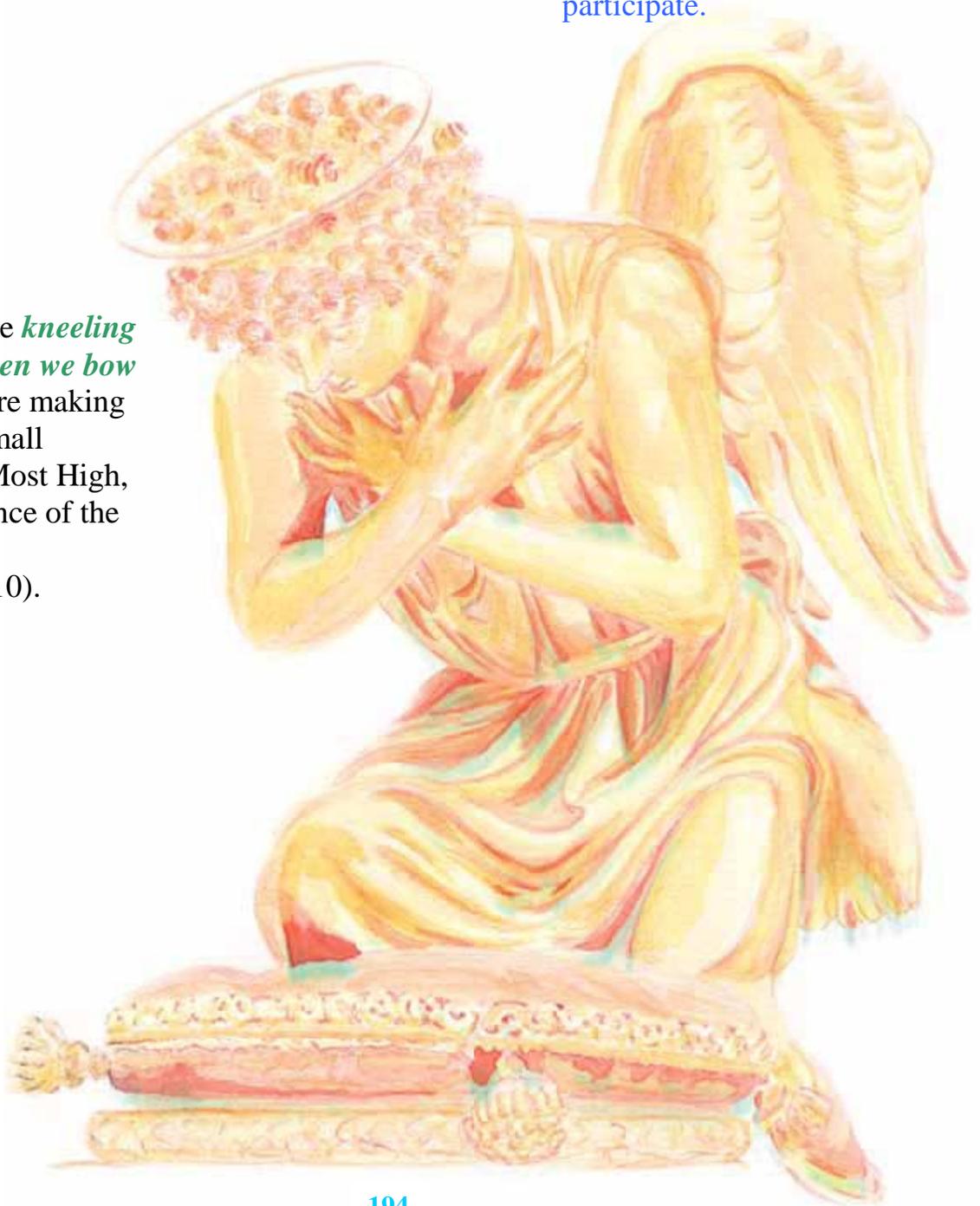
When we are *sitting down* we are reminded of the warm welcome Mary (the sister of Lazarus) gave as she sat at the foot of Jesus and listened to his Word.



The way we conduct ourselves, our external gestures, show others the love that we have for the Mystery in which we participate.



When we are *kneeling down or when we bow deeply* we are making ourselves small before the Most High, in the presence of the Lord (see *Phil 2,10*).





When *the priest lifts up his hands*, this expresses the meaning of the words, “We pray to you humbly” that are said during the Eucharistic prayer. This is the humble gesture of a person who is aware of being nothing more than a mere creature and of the immense gift that God has bestowed upon him by making Himself present in the Eucharist.



The *priest's humble attitude* reminds us of Christ's meekness and humility: “**Learn from me, for I am meek and humble in heart.**” (Mt 11, 29).



Silence helps us to be more aware that we are in the presence of the Lord who speaks to our hearts and helps us to respond to him.



The *festive* character of the celebration of the Sunday Eucharist expresses that joy Christ gives the Church by the gift of the Holy Spirit, and expresses our own joy when we participate in this Communion with God and with others. The words of welcome we hear at the beginning, the liturgical vestments worn by the celebrant and the tasteful clothing worn by the members of the lay faithful, the floral decorations and the choice of appropriate music (according to what is established for the specific liturgical season) all contribute to our experience that the Lord Jesus is in our midst and is in communion with us since, as Jesus said, “**that my joy may be in you and your joy be complete**” (Jn 15,11).



The festive welcome that the inhabitants of Jerusalem gave to Jesus when he arrived in the Holy City is a model for how we should be when we are present at the Holy Mass.



The hymn is an expression of that joy that is in our heart and not merely something that makes the Eucharistic Celebration more beautiful in an exterior way. Saint Augustine said: **“Whoever sings prays twice”**. Singing is a way of showing our joy for the Eucharistic Celebration. It unites us to the Heavenly Assembly, and to the Angels and Saints in Heaven who sing joyfully the praises of the Lamb who was slain, Jesus Christ, who lives forever in Heaven. When we are with Him *there will be no more sorrow, sadness or tears.*

