

# Posture

*A common posture, to be observed by all participants, both expresses and fosters the intention and spiritual attitude of the participants.*

The gestures and posture of the priest, the deacon, and the ministers, as well as those of the people, ought to contribute to making the entire celebration resplendent with beauty and noble simplicity, so that the true and full meaning of the different parts of the celebration is evident and that the participation of all is fostered. Therefore, attention should be paid to what is determined by this General Instruction and the traditional practice of the Roman Rite and to what serves the common spiritual good of the People of God, rather than private inclination or arbitrary choice.

A common posture, to be observed by all participants, is a sign of the unity of the members of the Christian community gathered for the sacred Liturgy: it both expresses and fosters the intention and spiritual attitude of the participants.

Thus, they are to shun any appearance of individualism or division, keeping before their eyes that they have only one Father in heaven and accordingly are all brothers and sisters to each other.

Indeed, they form one body, whether by hearing the word of God, or by joining in the prayers and the singing, or above all by the common offering of Sacrifice and by a common partaking at the Lord's table. This unity is beautifully apparent from the gestures and postures observed in common by the faithful.

GIRM 42, 95–6

## Some Questions

- How does present practice signify and foster the unity of the assembly?
- Are there times when particular postures might be used as a focus for prayer - e.g. kneeling for the Penitential rite during Lent?

## Practical Points

- The quality of the gestures and posture of the priest and other ministers can have a great effect on the faithful's understanding of the importance of gesture and posture in our common prayer.
- Invite someone from the Diocesan Service for Deaf people to come and introduce the parish to issues around signing the liturgy for the deaf.
- Make the most of opportunities for preaching about the way that gesture and posture express attitudes in our relationship with God. (Guidance is provided in the Introduction to *In Communion With Christ*, downloadable from website below).

## Further References

*General Instruction of the Roman Missal:*  
42–44 274–276

*Celebrating the Mass:* 52–67, 210

*Ecclesia de Eucharistia:* 11–20

*Redemptionis Sacramentum:* 90

*One Bread One Body:* 44



## Questions for Groups

1. What is good about current practice?  
What concerns do you have?

4. Who is most directly involved in these matters, e.g. liturgical ministers?  
What formation/information is necessary to engage them in the renewal of current practice?

2. In what ways does the documentation affirm or challenge your current practice?

5. How will the assembly be engaged in the process?  
What, in particular, needs addressing at Sunday and/or weekday celebrations?

3. Prioritise the issues you have identified.

6. How will you know whether the formation has worked?