

We continue again with the liturgical participation of God's people.

In order to make sure that people could better participate in the liturgy, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, or CSL, called for an updating of the church's liturgical celebrations. "In this reform both texts and rites should be so drawn up that they express more clearly the holy things they signify and that the Christian people, as far as possible, are able to understand them with ease and to take part in the rites fully, actively, and as benefits a community."

But how did the CSL envision the people's active participation? "To promote active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalms, antiphons and songs, as well as by actions, gestures and bearing. And at proper times all should observe a reverent silence." Appropriate moments of silence for prayer during the liturgy were also mentioned as a form of active participation.

Each Sunday, millions of people around the world participate in the Mass. They listen to God's word, sing psalms and acclamations, take part in the offering, and process forward to receive Communion. All of these actions and rites were reformed in the days after the promulgation of the CSL so that all present can better participate in the liturgies of the church.

Paths to Participation

Language is very important to the liturgy, but it must be remembered that we come into the presence of God with our bodies as well as our minds. Participation involves *body* language as well as *spoken* language.

All celebrations of the church involve spoken words, but sometimes unnecessary words are added to the liturgy. The prayers of the Roman Rite are meant to be noble, simple and succinct. Therefore, the words of the liturgy should be used to enhance, not obscure, the Divine Presence.

Signs and the Senses: The CSL affirms that, "In the liturgy, by means of signs perceptible to the senses, human sanctification is signified and brought about in ways proper to each of these signs" In liturgy, tasting, touching, smelling, listening, walking and standing are just some of the examples of liturgical body language that are required to insure full participation.