

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

The entire body needs to be engaged at the liturgy. Whether we are kneeling in a penitential mode, sitting up attentively to listen to the readings, or standing in honor of the proclamation of the Gospel, our body posture should reflect that we are engaged members of the worshipping community and not mere spectators. When we process up the aisle preparing to "taste and see" the risen Lord of the Eucharist, our senses become profoundly aware that we are taking to ourselves that which is our great Mystery of Faith.

Symbols and Sacraments: Symbolic language is used at liturgy, too. Symbols have a language all their own which does not involve words. The same symbol can mean different things simultaneously to different members of the same community. When we enter into the language of symbols, we enter into communion with Christ himself and the entire church.

Through signs and symbols and especially the Sacraments, we meet Jesus whenever we celebrate a Sacrament or a liturgy of the church. It is important to reflect on that meeting with Christ afterwards. This process of reflecting on what we experience in the liturgy, which we call mystagogy, has been practiced by the church since its beginning. It is most effective when we reflect with others because then we can learn from others and discern God's will in our lives.

Culture: An important aspect of the active participation of God's people in the liturgy is attending to the cultural context in which the celebration takes place. As Pope Benedict XVI noted in his 2007 Exhortation on the Eucharist, the participants at the 2005 Bishops Synod on the Eucharist "frequently stressed the importance of the active participation of the faithful in the Eucharistic sacrifice. In order to foster this participation, provisions may be made for a number of adaptations appropriate to different contexts and cultures." Whether those adaptations are made in preaching, in catechesis, or in liturgy preparation, awareness of the cultural, economic and social diversity of the assembly is a crucial factor in fostering participation of all in both the liturgy and the life of the local community.