

*And I Turned to See a Voice*  
*Posture and Orientation in Encountering the Lord in the Liturgy*

**Rite of Acceptance** – This is the first time that they are brought into the church, officially. This signifies a change in their identity! They now belong to the *Order* of Catechumens.

**They are *Ordered* toward entering into the New Covenant in a liturgical act in which they are washed, anointed, and united to Jesus in His offering of Himself to the Father!**

God is Love – Man is *Homo Liturgicus*

**CCC 221** But St. John goes even further when he affirms that “God is love”: God’s very being is love. By sending his only Son and the Spirit of Love in the fullness of time, God has revealed **his innermost secret: God himself is an eternal exchange of love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and he has destined us to share in that exchange.**

**CCC 52** God, who “dwells in unapproachable light,” wants to communicate his own divine life to the men he freely created, in order to adopt them as his sons in his only-begotten Son. By revealing himself God wishes to make them capable of responding to him, and of knowing him, and of loving him far **beyond their own natural capacity.**

At his core, man is a desiring, worshipping, liturgical being.

Formed for Worship

**Formation for Worship – Kneeling / Prostration**

SC 24. **Sacred scripture** is of the greatest importance in the celebration of the liturgy...**it is from the scriptures that actions and signs derive their meaning.**

What is Worship? Worship is “a giving back, a handing over of ourselves and our possessions to God in an act of thanksgiving and love,”<sup>1</sup> which draws “the whole of reality into communion with God.”<sup>2</sup>

**hishtach<sup>a</sup>vāh**

Throughout the Old Testament, worship is embodied in postures, such as prostration (הִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה, *hishtachawah*, which literally means “to bow down” but is usually translated “worship”). –Broyles, *Lexham Bible Dictionary*

It is in itself a significant and concrete expression for the inner attitude of worship even where there is no reference to formulated prayer. It seems that there can be no prayer without prostration. –Greeven, *TDNT*, 788–789.

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<sup>1</sup> Scott W. Hahn, *Covenant and Communion* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2009), 120.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, trans. John Saward (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000), 27.

“To *worship* the Lord is to bow down before him, to submit to God.” –Hill

The Body trains the Soul and the Soul informs the Body:

- What many people fail to recognize is that one’s bodily posture will both express, as well as help establish, the posture of one’s heart. When we are humbled, we hang our heads. When we are joyful, our arms and head fly up and we begin to move. –Myers, *The Lord’s Service*
- Kneeling is the posture in which a person is the most “defenseless,” and in prayer it is a symbol of dependence, humility, and contrition before God. –Hill

The Altar and the Direction of Liturgical Prayer – Ad Orientem: Facing East

Light. This is one of mankind’s primal symbols. Whether in the North that thirsts for light or in the South that is intoxicated by light, for men everywhere it has become the image of the mysterious divine power that they know sustains them in existence. In fact, at one time light was much more than an image to people. Augustine himself was still so deeply moved by the resplendent beauty of light that he dared write: “Christ is not called ‘light’ in the same way that he is called ‘cornerstone’. The latter name is applied to him by metaphor, whereas the former is meant in a literal sense” (*De Genesi ad litteram* IV, 28, 45). Earthly light is the most direct reflection of God’s reality and gives us our best glimpse of him who dwells in unapproachable light (1 Tim 6:16).

During the two great holy nights of the Church year, Christmas and Easter, the symbolism of light fuses with the symbolism of night. On both occasions, the Church uses the interplay of night and light to show symbolically what the content of the feast in question is: the encounter of God and the world, the victorious entry of God into a world that refuses him room and yet in the end cannot prevent him from taking it. –Ratzinger, *Dogma & Preaching*, 135.

Sun as Sign

Psalm 19:1–6 (ESV): <sup>1</sup>The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. <sup>2</sup>Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. <sup>3</sup>There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. <sup>4</sup>Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun, <sup>5</sup> which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy. <sup>6</sup>Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

Saint Augustine

As St. Augustine puts it, “when we stand at prayer we face the East... This is not to signify that God is dwelling there, as though He had forsaken the other parts of the world—for God is present everywhere, not in habitations of place but in power of majesty. It is done so that the mind may be admonished to turn toward God while its body is turned toward” the East. –*Commentary on the Lord’s Sermon on the Mount*