

## ***The Importance of Intentionality Throughout the Liturgy and Full, Conscious, And Active Participation by All***

Throughout the liturgy, it's important to remember that the number one focus is Christ; he is the focal point. Jesus is present and all aspects of the Mass are sacred. As Jesus says in Matthew 18:20, "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." So, in addition to being present with us in the Word and during the consecration of the Eucharist, Christ is present among us throughout the liturgy in the Church as we gather in His name and worship. Given the sacredness of the liturgy, there needs to be meaning and intentionality in our participation during Mass that reflects the reality that Jesus is there with us.

Can we say that participation in our parish reflects the magnitude of what is actually taking place throughout the liturgy? Do our actions throughout Mass demonstrate that we mean what we say and what we do? A perfect example that highlights one of many aspects of the liturgy that is often taken for granted or overlooked is the way in which we say the word Amen, which oftentimes lacks meaning, intentionality, and emphasis. The word Amen, originating from the Hebrew word *Hâ-méin*, actually means "I stake my life on this". Knowing the actual meaning of the word takes the significance of saying Amen after various prayers throughout the liturgy to a whole new level! Imagine if we all started to say Amen like we really stake our lives on it. This level of meaning and intentionality in our participation is important because we can experience a whole new level of spirituality that would most likely carry over throughout the rest of the liturgy and result in a more fruitful experience for the parish and a greater glorification of God.

Another important thing to keep in mind is that when we gather in Church, we do so as one body in Christ. As stated in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:12-27, "For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body." Do we participate as though we, the Church, are all one body in Christ? There is unity and oneness in the way that we all sing, breathe, pray, and even maintain silence together. There is unity and oneness in our body language and physical actions such as when we kneel, stand, and sit together. We are one Church, one body in Christ, and the way that we each participate throughout the liturgy can impact how we glorify God; it can impact the overall spiritual experience of the liturgy, and also the graces received from God.