

1. Read (Seek) — Read the verses slowly and prayerfully several times. Write down any words or phrases that seem to stand out:

2. Meditate (Find) — Now begin to reflect on the verses and ask God what it means and how he wants to speak to you through the passage.
God what are you saying to me through this?

3. Pray (Ask) — Respond from your heart to what God has been saying to you. **What do you want me to know?** Write down your prayer to him or record whatever he says to you.

4. Contemplate (Taste) — Be quiet before the Lord enjoying His presence. **How is God calling you to act in response to what he has shown you?**

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Gospel Reading – Luke 7:36-8:3 – Roman Missal

A Pharisee invited Jesus to dine with him, and he entered the Pharisee's house and reclined at table. Now there was a sinful woman in the city who learned that he was at table in the house of the Pharisee. Bringing an alabaster flask of ointment, she stood behind him at his feet weeping and began to bathe his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them, and anointed them with the ointment. When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, that she is a sinner." Jesus said to him in reply, "Simon, I have something to say to you." "Tell me, teacher," he said. "Two people were in debt to a certain creditor; one owed five hundred days' wages and the other owed fifty. Since they were unable to repay the debt, he forgave it for both. Which of them will love him more?" Simon said in reply, "The one, I suppose, whose larger debt was forgiven." He said to him, "You have judged rightly." Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? When I entered your house, you did not give me water for my feet, but she has bathed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but she has not ceased kissing my feet since the time I entered. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she anointed my feet with ointment. So I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven because she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little." He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." The others at table said to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" But he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." Afterward he journeyed from one town and village to another, preaching and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. Accompanying him were the Twelve and some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, Susanna, and many others who provided for them out of their resources.

Spiritual Reading

**From a Treatise on the Lord's Prayer by Saint Cyprian,
bishop and martyr**

Let your prayer come from a humble heart

When we pray, our words should be calm, modest and disciplined. Let us reflect that we are standing before God. We should please him both by our bodily posture and the manner of our speech. It is characteristic of the vulgar to

shout and make a noise, not those who are modest. On the contrary, they should employ a quiet tone in their prayer.

Moreover, in the course of his teaching, the Lord instructed us to pray in secret. Hidden and secluded places, even our own rooms, give witness to our belief that God is present everywhere; that he sees and hears all; that in the fullness of his majesty, he penetrates hidden and secret places. This is the teaching of Jeremiah: *Am I God when I am near, and not God when I am far away? Can anyone hide in a dark corner without my seeing him? Do I not fill heaven and earth?* Another passage of Scripture says: *The eyes of the Lord are everywhere, observing both good and wicked men.*

The same modesty and discipline should characterize our liturgical prayer as well. When we gather to celebrate the divine mysteries with God's priest, we should not express our prayer in unruly words; the petition that should be made to God with moderation is not to be shouted out noisily and verbosely. For God hears our heart not our voice. He sees our thoughts; he is not to be shouted at. The Lord showed us this when he asked: *Why do you think evil in your hearts?* The book of Revelation testifies to this also: *And all the churches shall know that I am the one who searches the heart and the desires.*

Anna maintained this rule; in her observance of it she is an image of the Church. In the First Book of Kings we are told that she prayed quietly and modestly to God in the recesses of her heart. Her prayer was secret but her faith was evident. She did not pray with her voice, but with her heart, for she knew that in this way the Lord would hear her. She prayed with faith and obtained what she sought. Scripture makes this clear in the words: *She was speaking in her heart; her lips were moving but her voice could not be heard; and the Lord heard her prayer.* The psalmist also reminds us: *Commune within your own hearts, and in the privacy of your room express your remorse.* This is the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Through Jeremiah he suggests this: *Say in your hearts: Lord, it is you that we have to worship.*

My friends, anyone who worships should remember the way in which the tax-collector prayed in the temple alongside the Pharisee. He did not raise his eyes immodestly to heaven or lift up his hands arrogantly. Instead he struck his breast and confessing the sins hidden within his heart he implored the assistance of God's mercy. While the Pharisee was pleased with himself, the tax-collector deserved to be cleansed much more because of the manner in which he prayed. For he did not place his hope of salvation in the certainty of his own innocence; indeed, no one is innocent. Rather he prayed humbly, confessing his sins. And the Lord who forgives the lowly heard his prayer.

Postures and Gestures – Lesson and Discussion

What do the three primary postures of the Latin / Roman rite tell us about what we believe?

Standing

A posture for various parts of the Eucharistic liturgy and the Divine Office. Since different countries have different customs, the episcopal conferences have given corresponding directives to the people. From time immemorial, however, standing has been customary during the reading of the Gospel and the recitation or singing of the Creed, the Preface, and Sanctus. Standing is a sign of respect and honor, so we stand as the celebrant who represents Christ enters and leaves the assembly. This posture, from the earliest days of the Church, has been understood as the stance of those who are risen with Christ and seek the things that are above. When we stand for prayer we assume our full stature before God, not in pride, but in humble gratitude for the marvelous thing God has done in creating and redeeming each one of us. By Baptism we have been given a share in the life of God, and the posture of standing is an acknowledgment of this wonderful gift. We stand for the Gospel, the pinnacle of revelation, the words and deeds of the Lord, and the bishops of the United States have chosen standing as the posture to be observed in this country for the reception of Communion, the sacrament which unites us in the most profound way possible with Christ who, now gloriously risen from the dead, is the cause of our salvation.

Kneeling

Resting on bent knees as a mark of reverence. The New Order [Ordinary Form of the Latin / Roman Rite] of the Mass prescribes that the faithful kneel at least during the Consecration. The posture of kneeling signified penance in the early Church: the awareness of sin casts us to the ground! So thoroughly was kneeling identified with penance that the early Christians were forbidden to kneel on Sundays and during the Easter Season when the prevailing spirit of the liturgy was that of joy and thanksgiving. In the Middle Ages kneeling came to signify the homage of a vassal to his lord, and more recently this posture has come to signify adoration. It is for this reason that the bishops of this country [America] have chosen the posture of kneeling for the entire Eucharistic Prayer.

Sitting

The posture prescribed liturgically for certain parts of the Mass. The faithful are to be seated during the First Reading, the Responsorial Psalm, and the Second Reading; during the Homily; during the Offertory (optional); and during the period of Silence After Communion. In other liturgical functions sitting is also part of the ceremony, e.g., during the reading or singing of the psalms in the Divine Office. "Sitting is the posture of listening and meditation, so the congregation sits for the pre-Gospel readings and may also sit for the period of meditation following Communion."