

### **FYI about the Liturgy**

The role of the assembly's participation in the liturgy has dramatically changed since the Second Vatican Council. It is sometimes hard to understand the full implication that we, as the liturgical assembly and as the Body of Christ, make up the royal priesthood that offers the sacrificial memorial of the Eucharist.

The U. S. Bishops state in **ENVIRONMENT and ART in Catholic Worship**:

*Among the symbols with which the liturgy deals, none is more important than the assembly of believers...the most powerful experience of the sacred is found in the celebration and the persons celebrating that is found in the action of the assembly.*

**Music in Catholic Worship** states:

*Among the many signs and symbols used by the Church to celebrate its faith, music is of prominent importance. As sacred song united to words forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy, music should assist the assembled believers to express and share the gift of faith that is within them and nourish and strengthen their interior commitment of faith. It should heighten the texts so that they speak more fully and effectively. The quality and joy and enthusiasm which music adds to community worship cannot be gained in any other way. In addition to expressing texts, music can also unveil a dimension of meaning and feeling, a communication of ideas and words which words alone cannot yield.*

The **GENERAL INSTRUCTION of the ROMAN MISSAL** states:

*In the celebration of Mass the faithful are a holy people, a people of God made His own, a royal priesthood; they give thanks to the Father and offer the victim not only through the hands of the priest but also together with him and learn to offer themselves.*

To have a liturgy without any participation by the assembly in word or in song would return the Church to the time prior to Vatican II whereby the people in the assembly were merely spectators. The Second Vatican Council's role of the assembly is to **DO** the liturgy. But **DOING** the liturgy does not just mean paying attention, singing the songs, responding to the prayers, and receiving communion. We are each called to celebrate the liturgy in such a way that it permeates our souls and changes our hearts. In that way, we come to church as an opportunity to praise and thank God, not as an hour of obligation. When we come to fully celebrate the liturgy, we are strengthened to take our Christianity out into the world and continue **DOING** the

liturgy beyond the walls of our church. In this way, we sacrifice ourselves to others we encounter in our daily living. We truly become Christ to others.