

## JUST A THOUGHT ... about Mass online. (2)

Active participation has an inner expression through presence and silence. And it has an external expression through listening together, singing together, reciting together, bringing gifts to the Table and, ultimately, through sharing communion of the Body and Blood of the Lord.

Active participation is the underlying reason for the revision of texts and the use of vernacular languages.

In virtual worship, active participation cannot mediate the balance between the immanent and the transcendent elements of liturgy, as it usually does through the liturgical arts of movement, symbol, music, posture and gesture, which are all elements of active liturgical participation.

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Active participation expresses the reality of the liturgical assembly as the subject of the liturgy. In doing so, it puts an end to the pastoral and ritual clericalism that, since the Middle Ages, had marked the Mass and popular Eucharistic devotion.

The significant move forward in the Pauline reform was to unite the liturgical prayer of the priest and assembly in one, interwoven prayer. No longer do believers go to "hear father say his Mass" while praying their prayers in parallel.

Active participation is the simple and powerful organizational idea that frames liturgy in the tradition of St Paul VI. It articulates the interrelationships of space, place, movement, ritual, presence, assembly and ministers.

Its loss, through the present crisis, has seen a reversion to pre-conciliar thinking, where virtual Eucharistic liturgy is considered as participatory.

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Going online has been easy for parishes. It has provided a ritual comfort. But it may have missed the greater task of staying with the struggle, of staying with the people.

(We need to) intuit that liturgy requires more from us anthropologically – as work of the whole people (liturgy in Greek means ‘the people’s work’), not just some of them – than we can give and get digitally.

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