

Standing

At first thought it might be awkward to stand in adoration; perhaps we feel that it would be like standing before a ruler which indicates that you have a legal right to be there or standing in the presence of a judge when he enters his court room. But it is only through the righteousness of Jesus Christ that we can approach God as His children: 'We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ who is just; he is the sacrifice that takes our sins away, and not only ours but the whole worlds,' (I John 2:1-2).

Although it is commonly accepted in the Christian community that you must pray on your knees with your eyes closed, that is not necessary. God looks on the heart. He will hear our prayers no matter what position we are in. You can pray standing up, sitting down, while walking, while running, and while lying down. Communication with God does not require a certain physical position, but postures do give expression to the attitudes of our hearts.

It became customary for Jewish people to stand for prayer while in their synagogues. Such posture has roots in the Christian faith as well. Justin Martyr, Origen, Jerome and Augustine all wrote of standing for public prayer. In our liturgies we stand during prayer (the Our Father). So, standing is a sign of respect and is a natural position especially for times of corporate prayer as the people stand in God's presence out of respect for his authority.

Jesus and Standing

'Have faith in God. I tell you solemnly if anyone says to this mountain "Get up and throw yourself in the sea", with no hesitation in his heart but believing that what he says will be will happen, it will be done for him. I tell you therefore everything you ask and pray believe you have it already and it will be yours. And when you stand in prayer forgive whatever you have against anybody, so that your Father in heaven may forgive your failings too.' Mark 11.25

There is great comfort in these words and whether we are standing or kneeling or sitting or prone we know that God is with us. All we must do is recognise this moment.

Acknowledgements

Time before the Blessed Sacrament is a series of leaflets produced by the Spirituality Committee in preparation for *Adoremus*. It is intended for individual reflection as part of a time of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament or Exposition. It could also be used with small groups.

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Standing prayer.

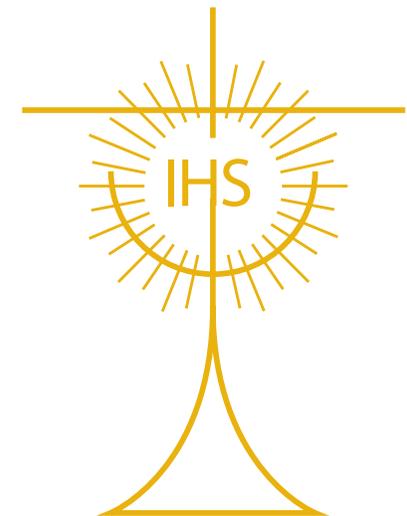
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Time before the Blessed Sacrament

Standing

Who will stand up for me
against the wicked?

Ps 92 (93):16



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Looking at Scripture

The Bible often mentions people standing to pray in public worship. When Solomon dedicated the temple, he knelt before God to pray while all the people stood (Chronicles 6:3, 13). In the same vein, Jehoshaphat “stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord” (2 Chronicles 20:5).

In the transfiguration when ‘Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him.’ Luke 9.32 So the idea of solidarity, of being ‘alongside’ each other is implicit in our Christian community.

Jesus took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white. And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, but when they became fully awake they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah”—not knowing what he said. As he was saying these things, a cloud



came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!”

Luke 9:28–35

Reflection

How easy do I find it to pray standing up?

Who do I stand with?

Who do I stand against?

What do I ‘stand for’ in my spiritual life?

What more can I do in my spiritual life to ‘stand up’?

Prayer

Lord,
make me an instrument of your peace;
where there is hatred let me sow peace,
where there is injury let me sew pardon,
where there is doubt let me sow faith,
where there is despair let me give hope,
where there is darkness let me give light,
where there is sadness let me give joy.

O Divine Master,
grant that I may not try to be understood
but to understand,
not try to be loved
but to love.
Because it is in forgiving
we are forgiven,
and it is in dying
that we are born to eternal life.

attributed St Francis of Assisi (1182 – 1226)