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Should children be seen and *heard* at liturgies?

"One Sunday, preaching in a parish church in Ohio, a mother in the front seat got up with a crying child and quickly made her exit down the middle aisle. I stopped the sermon and said: 'Madam, do not worry, the child is not disturbing me.' She said: 'No, but you're disturbing the child.'" - Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, former bishop of Rochester, from his book Treasure in Clay

Although the Catholic Church advocates for children to be fully included in liturgies, there are, well, complications.

Father William Spilly vividly re-

membered a Mass he officiated at as pastor of the Cayuga Team Ministry cluster in the mid-1980s. He recalled, with a cringe, a 2-year-old boy shouting incessantly and stamping on a pew next to his seemingly unfazed mother and grandmother.

"People were moving to different pews. During the homily I had to ask if someone could control the child three times before I finally said, 'I can't go on' halfway through the homily," recalled Father Spilly, now pastor at Rochester's St. John the Evangelist Church (Humboldt Street).

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