



A Walk through the Mass

This month's newsletter picks up where we left off in the May newsletter as we take a closer look at each of the elements of the Mass. Over the course of this year, the Office for Worship Newsletter will focus on the various elements of the Eucharistic liturgy as a means of providing an opportunity for you to stop and reflect on why we do what we do at Mass.

This newsletter is designed to be a resource for parish music ministers, liturgists, liturgy committees, as well as priests and deacons, and anyone who wants to know more about the Order of Mass and why we do what we do! Please feel free to reproduce and share these materials with your parish community; just be sure to cite the Office for Worship, Archdiocese of Milwaukee.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST – Part Two

The Eucharistic Prayer

From the Roman Missal:

31. Then the Priest begins the Eucharistic Prayer.

**Extending his hand, he says:
The Lord be with you.**

**The people reply:
And with your spirit.**

**The Priest, raising his hands, continues:
Lift up your hearts.**

**The people:
We lift them up to the Lord.**

**The Priest, with hands extended, adds:
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.**

**The people:
It is right and just.**

The priest, with hands extended, continues the Preface.

At the end of the Preface, he joins his hands and concludes the Preface with the people, singing or saying aloud:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the Highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the Highest.

Once the altar has been prepared and the gifts brought forward, the priest greets the people for the third of four times during the Mass, and thus begins the Eucharistic Prayer. The priest asks us to lift up our hearts in thanksgiving to God. The key to getting the most out of Mass is to keep lifting up our hearts in thanksgiving throughout the Eucharistic Prayer, for we are choosing to join ourselves to Christ by recognizing and thanking God for all the great things God has done for us and by offering this sacrifice in the Eucharist – a word, which itself means “thanksgiving.”

What is often overlooked in both the understanding, as well as the praying, of the Eucharistic Prayer is that the priest *turns to God*, and in the name of the whole people, gives thanks, and offers the holy and living sacrifice. This prayer is directed to God the Father, while the role of the assembly is to associate themselves with the Priest in faith and in silence.

There are eight elements that are essential parts of the Eucharistic Prayer.

- i. **The Thanksgiving:** The thanksgiving is expressed in the Preface when we thank God the Father, through Christ in the Spirit, for the gifts of creation, salvation, and sanctification. This is also known as the Preface.
- ii. **Acclamation:** Our thanks to God in the Preface continues while the congregation joins with the angels and saints in singing the *Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy)*. This is the oldest of congregational hymns and employs the words of the heavenly Church as recounted in the Prophet Isaiah (6:3).
- iii. **Epiclesis:** The epiclesis means “to call upon.” It is the term for the “invocation,” or the prayer, calling on the power of the Holy Spirit to change the bread and wine offered by human hands into Christ’s Body and Blood. Accompanying these words is the extension of the priest’s hands over the gifts, a gesture embodying the descent of the Holy Spirit.
- iv. **Institution Narrative and Consecration:** In the heart of the Eucharistic Prayer are the words of institution, or the words Jesus spoke at the Last Supper over the bread and wine. The meaning of all sacramental signs is found in our salvation history: in creation, human culture, the First Covenant, Christ, heaven, and by their use in the Church throughout time. Since it is Christ who gives sacramental signs their meaning, the institution narrative is the supreme example of this.
- v. **Anamnesis:** The word anamnesis is from the same root as the word amnesia. While amnesia is to forget, the word anamnesis means “to remember” – but we don’t remember in the sense of recalling from our memory an event from the past. Rather, the remembering we do here is recalling the death and Resurrection of Christ while looking forward to his glorious return. It is remembering in such a way that the Last

Supper and the Mass are rooted in the same reality of sacrifice and are shaped by the same signs that makes present what they signify.

- vi. **Second Epiclesis:** In the first epiclesis, we implore the Holy Spirit to do the easy thing – turn the bread and wine into the Body and Blood. In the second epiclesis, we implore the Holy Spirit to do something much more difficult – to bring unity so that worshippers “may become one body, one spirit in Christ” (Eucharistic Prayer III). Once again, the priest extends his hands and asks that “the unblemished sacrificial Victim to be consumed in Communion may be for the salvation of those who will partake of it” (GIRM, 79).
- vii. **Intercessions:** In the intercessions, prayers are made for the members of the Church – the living and the dead. Perhaps this time, rather than the Prayer of the Faithful, is the most appropriate time to pray for the souls of the deceased. Eucharistic Prayer I even invites naming the deceased, while the other prayers invite the people’s silent recollection of those who have “fallen asleep in the hope of the resurrection, and all who have died in your mercy” (Eucharistic Prayer II).
- viii. **Doxology and Great Amen:** The Eucharistic Prayer is concluded with all glory and honor for God the Father; through, with and in Christ; in the unity of the Holy Spirit. As the priest glorifies God in this final doxology, the people confirm and conclude it with the Great Amen.

Choice of the Eucharistic Prayer

The Roman Missal gives us a total of ten Eucharistic Prayers. There are four general prayers (I, II, III, IV), two on the theme of Reconciliation, three for Masses with Children, and another Eucharistic Prayer for Masses for Various Needs and Occasions, which comes in four variations. The first four are given deference – which is obvious by their placement within the body of the Order of Mass. The three prayers for Masses with Children are published in a separate volume. The Eucharistic Prayers for Reconciliation and of Various Needs and Occasions appear in an appendix.

Of the first four prayers, **Eucharistic Prayer I** is used on days when there is a proper text to be inserted – for example, the Octave of Easter – or when the Church celebrates one of the saints mentioned in the prayer, as well as on Sundays.

Eucharistic Prayer II is appropriate for weekdays and other times there is a proper preface, as well as Masses for the Dead – or even when time and brevity is desired!

Eucharistic Prayer III was added to the Missal after the Second Vatican Council and is well-suited for Sundays and festive days. It can also be an alternative to Eucharistic Prayer I.

Eucharistic Prayer IV is new to the Missal after the Second Vatican Council, but is probably the oldest prayer. It carries its own Preface, which can never be replaced because of its connection and integration to the rest of the prayer. It is best used on Sundays of Ordinary Time.

The **Eucharistic Prayers for Reconciliation** were a result of the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of 1975 and are particularly appropriate for use during the season of Lent as well as other times when reconciliation is reflected in the readings.

The **Eucharistic Prayer for Masses for Various Needs and Occasions**, and its four variations, is probably best used in Masses celebrating various needs; however, it is not prohibited at other times.

Finally, when many children are present, one of the three **Eucharistic Prayers for Masses with Children** may be used because of the simplicity of language and the variations it allows.

New Office for Worship Resource Instructions to Help Prepare a Liturgy Planning Guide

The Office for Worship has a new resource available called [Preparing Liturgies for Confirmation](#). This document gives you step-by-step instructions on how to prepare a confirmation liturgy in light of the directions given by the Ordo. This makes the completion of a [confirmation liturgy planning guide](#) more understandable. Please share the document with anyone who could benefit from it. You can always contact Kim Mandelkow, Director of the Office for Worship, if you need more information at either 414-769-3349 or oremus@archmil.org.