

**“DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME”**  
A Class on the Mass  
Part 5B Liturgy of the Eucharist (Continued)

This month we continue our discussion of the Eucharistic Prayer. The bishops write:

“Now the center and summit of the entire celebration begins: namely, the Eucharistic Prayer, that is, the prayer of thanksgiving and sanctification. The priest invites the people to lift up their hearts to the Lord in prayer and thanksgiving; he unites the congregation with himself in the prayer that he addresses in the name of the entire community to God the father through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the meaning of the Prayer is that the entire congregation of the faithful should join itself with Christ in confessing the great deeds of God and in the offering of Sacrifice. The Eucharistic Prayer demands that all listen to it with reverence and in silence.” (GIRM 78)

The priest has many options of which Eucharistic Prayer from which to choose. There are the four most commonly used: Eucharistic Prayer I is the oldest and longest and is based on the one once used in the Latin Mass; Eucharistic Prayer II which is also very old and the shortest; Eucharistic Prayers III and IV are relatively new. There are also two Eucharistic Prayers for Reconciliation Masses along with three to be used in Masses for children. In 1994 our bishops introduced four “Eucharistic Prayers for Masses for Various Needs and Occasions.” These were taken from the Swiss Church and translated for our use. We will notice that the wording of many of these Eucharistic Prayers will change when we use the new translation next Advent.

Each of the Eucharistic Prayers has the following chief elements:

- a. *Thanksgiving*, which is expressed especially in the Preface, in which the priest, in the name of the entire people, glorifies God the Father and give thanks for the whole work of salvation or for the work of God that corresponds to the day, festivity, or season.
- b. *Acclamation* or *Sanctus* in which the entire congregation joins the heavenly powers and proclaims the holiness of God and gives him praise
- c. *Epiclesis* or *Reminder* which is in the form of an invocation to the Father recalling his mighty deeds in our salvation and implores the power of the Holy Spirit that the bread and wine be consecrated, that is, become Christ’s Body and Blood. The priest toward the end of this prayer extends his hands over the gifts.
- d. *Institution Narrative* and *Consecration* involves the use of the words used by Jesus Christ at the Last Supper. It is at this time that the Sacrifice carried out by Jesus Christ takes place when he offered his body and blood under the species of bread and wine and gave to his Apostles to eat and drink. He then commanded them to perpetuate this mystery. We experience the changing of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. The priest elevates the Host and then the Chalice providing us with an opportunity to silently gaze upon and acknowledge our belief in the Real Presence of Jesus. This is followed by the

proclamation of the Mystery of Faith giving us the opportunity to proclaim our belief in the Paschal Mystery, the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ.

e. *Anamnesis* or Memorial during which the priest, in the name of the entire congregation, recalls the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ, the whole reason why we celebrate the Mass.

f. *Offering* in which we offer in the Holy Spirit the spotless Victim to the Father not only offering the Victim but also learn to offer ourselves that we might enjoy a unity with God and one another.

g. *Intercessions* are now offered for the Church with a special intention for the Pope and the bishops, along with the entire People of God, especially those present, the deceased, and a petition for all of us to be in communion with the Blessed Mother and all the saints in heaven.

h. *Final Doxology* or *Glorification of God* which concludes the Eucharistic Prayer is our “Great Amen,” our acknowledgment and acceptance of the Mystery of Salvation that we have just celebrated. The priest elevates the Host and the Chalice in a gesture of lifting up the Body and Blood of Christ to the Heavenly Father. One of the Church Fathers said that our “Amen,” whether sung or said should take off the roof of the church ! The Doxology sums up everything that has not only taken place during the Mass but also in our salvation. We admit that through Jesus, with Jesus, and in Jesus all the glory and honor, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, goes to God the Father.

#### Reflection Questions:

1. Do we pay attention during the Eucharistic Prayer in a way that we realize that we along with the priest are praying together?

2. Do we make an act of faith when the priest lifts up the Host and the Chalice at the Consecration affirming our belief in the Real Presence?

3. Is our “Amen” at the end of the Eucharistic Prayer made with enthusiasm expressing our praise and gratitude to God?