

## The Eucharistic Prayer

The Eucharistic Prayer, the great prayer of praise and thanks to God, is the central prayer of the entire Mass. The action of praise and thanks to God is the action of Christ, together with his Body, the Church.

This prayer begins with the presider calling the assembly to lift up their hearts to the Lord because it is right to give God thanks and praise. From the very beginning of this prayer we are called to get involved. When we lift our hearts to God, we pay attention to the prayer being spoken in our name. When we lift our hearts, we join the angels and saints in their song of joy, we proclaim the mystery of our faith in song, and we sing the “Amen.”

Listen carefully to the Eucharistic Prayer. The prayer of thanks and praise is offered to the Father by Christ and his Church. “We bring you these gifts... We ask you, We offer you...”. This means that we join together and offer ourselves with the self-sacrifice of Christ’s passion, death and resurrection. We renew our baptismal commitment to die and rise with Christ by the way we live our lives. We renew our call to mission – to sacrifice ourselves for others in truth and justice so that the reign of God may be established. Uniting ourselves with the sacrifice of Christ commits us beyond passive receptivity to the hard work of building the kingdom of God. And so we acclaim, “When we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus, until you come in glory” or one of the other designated

acclamations. “The Church’s intention...is that the faithful not only offer this spotless Victim [Christ] to the Father but also learn to offer themselves, and so day by day to be consummated, through Christ the Mediator, into unity with God and with each other, so that at last God may be all in all” (GIRM #79).

The US adaptation of the revised GIRM calls the assembly to stand from the beginning of the Preface of the Eucharistic Prayer, through the singing of the Sanctus/Holy Holy, and to kneel during the Eucharistic Prayer after the Sanctus/Holy, Holy through the singing of the Amen. If the assembly is prevented from kneeling on occasion due to reasons of health, lack of space, the large number of people present, or some other good reason, they should make a profound bow after the words of institution, “This is my body...This is the cup of my blood...” are prayed over the bread and cup.

The Eucharistic Prayer is the action of the assembly together with its head, Jesus Christ. This must be clear in the way we pray it. Presiders and assembly must voice praise and thanks with an attitude of gratitude. The assembly should attentively listen to the prayer, mindful of their self-offering with Christ. Presiders should speak the prayer meaningfully, from the heart, so that all who hear will be engaged in Christ’s saving action.