

## **LET'S TALK LITURGY! – Liturgy of the Eucharist: How we pray reveals what we believe**

*Prepared for the Liturgy Committee by Charlette Buescher (published originally in the November 2016 edition of QAC Spirit)*

In our last time together, we looked at the meaning of the words [Berakah, Anamnesis and Epiclesis](#). It might be helpful to have some additional general discussion about liturgy prior to looking at each of the parts of the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

First of all, the prayer in which we participate at our Eucharistic celebrations is a WHOLE that is greater than the sum of its parts. While we need to break things down to understand them, it is important to know that if we focus on one part to the detriment of others, it can skew our understanding of the whole. When we look at the Eucharistic Prayer (the parts of the Mass from the Preface to the Great Amen), it should be noted that there are no “magic moments”. The whole of the Eucharistic Prayer is consecratory – not just the words of the Institution Narrative. It is all about Anamnesis – remembering in a way that makes us present to those salvific acts which occurred centuries ago in chronological time. What could be more transcendent?

I would like to reiterate what was in this column several months ago and again last month. The documents of Vatican II tell us that there are FOUR ways that the Christ is present to us in our Eucharistic celebrations: in the person of the celebrant, in the gathered community, in the Word broken and shared, and in the bread and wine – broken and shared. No one of these presences is more real than the other. If we truly believe this, we should reverence each other as much as we do the bread and wine or the Word. And, I believe, there are some in our community who would remind us that we should reverence the Christ in the elements of bread and wine as much as we reverence the Christ in each other. THAT is a challenge of Eucharist!

There is a very old (probably from the 5<sup>th</sup> century) principle of Sacramental/Liturgical Theology that looks like this: *Lex orandi legem credendi constituit*. A loose translation of this would be: the way we pray reveals what we believe. If we listen to the prayers of the Church in our Eucharistic liturgies and other official prayers of the Church, we will find the truths of our faith, the beliefs that we hold as Catholic Christians.

Take some time to read through the various Eucharistic Prayers to see what truths we assent to at the Great Amen! One place you can find the Eucharistic Prayers online is <http://catholic-resources.org/ChurchDocs/RM3-EP1-4.htm>.