

LET'S TALK LITURGY! – Liturgy of the Eucharist: The Eucharistic Prayer

Prepared for the Liturgy Committee by Charlette Buescher (published originally in the June 2017 edition of QAC Spirit)

It has taken us awhile to get back to this series of articles. Now it is time to begin some conversation about the Eucharistic Prayer which begins with the Introductory Dialogue to the Preface and ends with the Great Amen.

The Eucharistic Prayer is a **PRIMARY** element of the Liturgy of the Eucharist and consists of 8 subparts:

- The thanksgiving (the Preface and its introductory dialogue);
- The acclamation (Holy Holy Holy);
- The epiclesis or calling down of the Holy Spirit;
- The Institution Narrative and Memorial Acclamation;
- The anamnesis;
- The oblation;
- The intercessions;
- The concluding doxology and Great Amen.

Several of these have been discussed in detail in earlier articles available on the Liturgy tab of the QAC website. So, let's take this opportunity to talk about the WHOLE of the Eucharistic Prayer.

The Documents of Vatican II, especially Sacrosanctum Concilium (SC), teach us that "liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed" and "at the same time it is the font from which all her (the Church's) power flows." (SC 10). The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) further tells us "the eucharistic prayer is the core and summit of the Mass." (CCC 1352). So, in the Eucharistic Prayer, we have the highest point in our shared prayer.

And it is important to know that the liturgy and this most important Eucharistic Prayer is NOT the private prayer of any one person in the Body of Christ. In fact, Sacrosanctum Concilium declares: "in the liturgy the whole public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and His members. From this it follows that every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the priest and of His Body which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others." (SC 7)

You might recall in our earlier discussion of Anamnesis (the remembering that makes us present to the Christ event) that the entire Eucharistic Prayer is a remembrance. It stands to reason, then, that the entire Eucharistic Prayer is "consecratory". There are no "magic moments" in our liturgical prayer. While the words of the Institution Narrative are a critical part of the remembering, they are not ALL the remembering that we do in our prayer. It is very important to hear at our celebrations the words of Jesus: "This is my Body... This is my Blood..." But it is NOT just that piece of the Christ event to which we are being made present in our prayer. God's unending love for us creates a space in the prayer of the Mystical Body where the veil between God's time and our time is thin.

We are invited to participate in ALL the Christ events that occurred centuries ago in human history but "once for all" in God's time.

The Great Amen that concludes the Eucharistic Prayer expresses our wonder at glimpsing the total love and acceptance of the Holy One as we remember and give thanks in unity with Christ and the whole Church. That GREAT AMEN deserves to be thunderous – sung with all the gusto we can manage!!

Wow! Just Wow! Or better yet, AMEN, AMEN!!!