

LITURGICAL NOTES

The following are points to keep from the document "Guidelines for a catechist of the faithful concerning the Eucharistic Prayers." It is hoped that they will prove helpful to those who have the task of instructing the faithful.

1. The liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the Eucharist form a single unit, the Liturgy of the Word proclaims the love of God the Father who planned and brought about our salvation in Jesus Christ; the Liturgy of the Eucharist makes the redeeming death and resurrection of Christ present again.

2. The great Eucharistic Prayer is the central part of the Mass. This prayer begins with "The Lord be with you. . . . Let us lift up our hearts. . . ." and ends with "Through Him, in Him, with Him. . . Amen." It is a prayer of joyful thanksgiving and praise to the Father.

The nucleus of this prayer is the narration-reactualization of what Jesus did at the last Supper.

3. Jesus took bread and proclaimed over it a prayer of thanksgiving and praise to the Father. Every Eucharistic Prayer is a hymn of thanksgiving and praise to the Father for His goodness to us and most of all for our redemption in Christ Jesus our Lord.

4. Jesus broke the bread and distributed it; this we do during the final part of the Mass.

5. Jesus said: Take and eat, this is my body given for you. During the Eucharistic Prayer we do not merely narrate what Jesus did in the past; we intend to make what Jesus did present and actual here and now. Consequently, there is a petition addressed to the Father to make this narration effective in our midst by sending His Spirit over the bread and wine, that is by making them become the body and blood of Christ, so that we who receive these gifts may be sanctified by them. This address to the Father to send the Spirit over the bread

and wine, is called the consecratory *Epiclesis*. It makes evident the work of the Holy Spirit in a liturgical celebration. Jesus our Lord sends His Spirit into the Church to complete His work on earth.

In the second invocation (*Communion Epiclesis*) addressed to the Father before the reception of Holy Communion, we ask the Father to send the Spirit upon the congregation. In this invocation, we pray that all those who share in the one body of Christ may be perfectly made once and accepted by the Father as spiritual victim together with the victim Jesus.

6. Jesus said: do this in memory of me... until I come.

The Eucharistic Prayer seeks to commemorate, to do in memory of Jesus; we engage in a celebration which remembers and contains what He is and what He has done for us. That He did for us refers above all to His Body given for us and to His Blood shed for our sins. The Eucharistic celebration, as a "memorial" which makes present the body given for us and the Blood shed for our sins, implies a sacrificial offering. For this reason, the Eucharistic Prayer includes a prayer offering holy gifts "in memory" of His passion, death and resurrection (practically speaking of the entire economy of Christ's redemption).

Jesus did likewise with the chalice.

The Eucharistic Prayer concludes with a doxology to which all the people respond Amen.

7. The *Sanctus*, the prayers of intercessions for those for whom the sacrifice is offered, the commemoration of the saints, which is a further development of the intercessions, are three elements which have been added to the central nucleus.

8. Since the Eucharistic Prayer plays such a central role in the Christian liturgy, a variety of texts is most appropriate; this will allow us to better understand what we are celebrating and to participate more fully in it.

9. The introductory dialogue between priests and faithful, and the concluding doxology, have been printed with their melodies, only in the II Eucharistic Prayer. They may be used in any Eucharistic Prayer.