

Our Prayer of Thanksgiving

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Our Eucharistic Prayers give thanks and praise for the wonders of God. These prayers form the heart of the Mass. In fact, the word *Eucharist* is a Greek word that means “thanksgiving.”

Thanksgiving is the first action in the Eucharistic Prayer, but the entire assembly participates in the eight key actions outlined here.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER Thanksgiving

The first words of the Eucharistic Prayer are “The Lord be with you.” Following the dialogue between the priest and the assembly, the Preface sets forth particular motives for praising God. The coming of Christ, his ministry, his passion and death, his Resurrection and ascension, all that he has done to procure our salvation are the main events named in our Prefaces. The nearly one hundred Prefaces in the Missal are tied to particular liturgical seasons, solemnities, or feasts.

Acclamation

We join with the angels to offer our praise to God by singing the Holy, Holy, Holy, also called the Sanctus.

Epiclesis

The term *epiclesis* comes from the Greek *kleo*, which means “to call” and *epi*, which means “forth.” The epiclesis in the Eucharistic Prayer is an invocation calling forth the power of the Holy Spirit to consecrate and transform the gifts of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ.

Another epiclesis is in several of our Eucharistic Prayers. That epiclesis invokes the power of the Holy Spirit for the unity of the Church. We pray that the Holy Spirit will come in power to sanctify and transform the gifts of bread and wine as well as ourselves.

Institution Narrative and Consecration

During the Institution Narrative and Consecration, the priest, acting in the person of Christ, proclaims the words and actions of Christ at the Last Supper. The account we hear is an adaptation of the scriptural accounts of that night.

At this point in our liturgical prayer, we might ask: How does my story relate to this story?



The assembly participates in eight key actions while praying the Eucharistic Prayer.

Anamnesis and the Memorial Acclamation

Anamnesis is a Greek word that means “memory.” We remember God’s saving and liberating actions, accomplished in Christ—not as past events—but as events that continue to achieve their effects here and now. We remember how God acted in the past and ask that God act among us now. By singing the Memorial Acclamation, the assembly proclaims its participation in the Paschal Mystery.

The Oblation

An early name for the Eucharistic Prayer was *anaphora*, which is Greek for offering. Jesus offered the gift of his life in complete obedience for the sake of our redemption. Jesus continues to offer himself in love to God for all eternity. We participate in this action by offering ourselves in union with the offering of Christ.

Intercession

In the Eucharistic Prayer, we intercede for the Church, the clergy, those who have died, and for those present.

The Concluding Doxology

Doxology means “correct praise” and serves to bring the Eucharistic prayer to a stirring climax. The assembly, through the priest celebrant, restates the whole purpose of the Eucharistic Prayer, namely to offer praise and honor to the Father through Christ and in the Holy Spirit.

This statement is made ours during the exuberant singing of *Amen*, the most important acclamation of the Eucharistic Prayer. By our *Amen*, we ratify the covenant begun by God and made new in Christ Jesus.

Although it is the task of the ordained minister to lead the Eucharistic Prayer, he does so on our behalf. As the wording of the prayers reminds us, it is we who praise, we who offer. Everyone present joins Christ in acknowledging the works of God and in offering the sacrifice.