

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER II

Although it is provided with its own Preface, this Eucharistic Prayer may also be used with other Prefaces, especially those that present an overall view of the mystery of salvation, such as the Common Prefaces.

Then the Priest begins the Eucharistic Prayer. Extending his hands, he says:

The Lord be with you.

The people reply: **And with your spirit.**

The Priest, raising his hands, continues:

Lift up your hearts.

The people: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

The Priest, with hands extended, adds:

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. *The people:* **It is right and just.**

The Priest, with hands extended, continues the Preface. At the end of the Preface he joins his hands and concludes the Preface with the people, singing or saying aloud:

It is truly right and just, our duty and salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Father most holy, through your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, your Word through whom you made all things, whom you sent as our Savior and Redeemer, incarnate by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin.

Fulfilling your will and gaining for you a holy people, he stretched out his hands as he endured his Passion,

so as to break the bonds of death and manifest the resurrection.

And so, with the Angels and all the Saints we proclaim your glory, as with one voice we sing (say):

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.

Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

COMMENTARY

The Eucharistic Prayer (also called the Anaphora or “Lifting Up of Thanksgiving”) begins with the **Preface Dialogue** and **Preface**.

Notice how the Preface begins with “It is truly right and just”, picking up the response the people have just made; then going on to explain why it is right and just to give the Father thanks and praise, through Jesus Christ his Son and the working of the Holy Spirit.

Some Eucharistic Prayers have their own preface attached to them and are intended be used with these set prefaces (for example, Eucharistic Prayer IV). Others, such as this Eucharistic Prayer II have their own preface (as you can see on the left) but any suitable Preface for the feast day or season may be substituted. And, finally, some have no specific Preface attached to them and so a Preface suitable to the day or season needs to be chosen.

The Preface leads directly to the **Holy, Holy Acclamation** (traditionally named the *Sanctus* for the Latin word for “holy”)

The typical Eucharistic prayer has several parts. All begin with the Preface dialogue, Preface (with its focus on thanksgiving) and the first acclamation (Sanctus).

OTHER WORDS/CONCEPTS:

- **“Incarnate by the Holy Spirit”**: same language we now use in the Profession of Faith (Creed) to signal that Jesus is fully and truly human.
- **“Passion”**: Literally means “suffering” but always implies all that Jesus did for our salvation: obedience to his Father’s will; suffering; death on the cross.
- **“manifest”**: to “make known” or “reveal”; his suffering and death reveals that death does not get the final say; resurrection through life with God does.
- **“God of hosts”**: literally “Yahweh Sabaoth” in the Hebrew. one of the many titles given to God in the Old Testament, meaning “God of the heavenly armies”, emphasizing God’s power and might, which is what this phrase is focusing us on.

The priest, with hands extended, says:

(Celebrant alone)

You are indeed Holy, O Lord, the fount of all holiness.

He joins his hands and, holding them extended over the offerings, says:

(Celebrant with concelebrants)

Make holy, therefore, these gifts, we pray, by sending down your Spirit upon them like the dewfall,

He joins his hands and makes the Sign of the Cross once over the bread and the chalice together, saying:

**so that they may become for us
the Body and ✠ Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

He joins his hands.

In the formulas that follow, the words of the Lord should be pronounced clearly and distinctly, as the nature of these words requires.

At the time he was betrayed and entered willingly into his Passion,

*He takes the bread
and, holding it slightly raised above the altar, continues:*

he took bread and, giving thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:

He bows slightly.

**Take this, all of you,
and eat of it,
for this is my Body,
which will be given up for you.**

He shows the consecrated host to the people, places it again on the paten, and genuflects in adoration..

Most Eucharistic Prayers then have an **epiclesis** or “invoking/calling upon”

the Holy Spirit, with a laying on of hands over the gifts. Whenever that gesture is used, it is signaling a need for and a desire that the Holy Spirit come and strengthen or change us or some other reality. But it needs to be remembered that this is not a magician’s gesture. The bread and wine represent all that we have brought to this altar—our entire lives—and so is to be understood as a prayer that the Holy Spirit come upon us as well as the gifts of bread and wine. At the Second Vatican Council the Catholic Church of the west learned that it needed to appreciate and emphasize more the work of the Holy Spirit in all that the Church does. This is reflected here and in all the many Eucharistic Prayers composed after that Council.

Eucharistic Prayers Then have a **consecration** prayer. Although it is not required, in our western, Roman tradition this done by praying what we call the **institution narrative**, recalling what Jesus did with his disciples at the Last Supper.

The one change here from the previous English translation is to move from “eat it” to “eat of it”. A very minor change but it helps capture the reality that our partaking of communion is not an individual reality but is part of a larger unity, a larger whole. We eat “of it”, enter into that larger unity.

OTHER WORDS/CONCEPTS:

- **“dewfall”**: Not an image we use much anymore but it highlights how many our Mass prayers are meant to have a poetic quality to them. The image of dewfall, where the grass is completely covered by drops of water in the evening or morning, helps emphasize that we want these gifts to be completely “covered” by the Holy Spirit. The limits of such language is that we are not to take that image literally, else we might think of the Holy Spirit as coming “down” from heaven or only “covering” the bread and wine in an external way. No, the Holy Spirit is intrinsic, within the depths of this reality and transforms it completely.

After this, he continues:.

In a similar way, when supper was ended,

He takes the chalice

and, holding it slightly raised above the altar, continues:.

he took the chalice and, once more giving thanks, he gave it to his disciples, saying:

He bows slightly.

Take this, all of you, and drink from it,

for this is the chalice of my blood, the Blood of the new and eternal covenant, which will be poured out for you and for many For the forgiveness of sins.

Do this in memory of me.

He shows the chalice to the people, places it on the corporal, and genuflects in adoration. Then he says (sings):

The mystery of faith.

And the people continue, acclaiming:

We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

or

When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.

or

The consecratory words with the cup of wine have changed a bit more than the ones over the bread. “Poured out for you” includes the meaning of the previous translation’s “shed for you” but also captures the sacramental reality of the consecrated wine that will be “poured out” for our communion.

One change that can be easily misunderstood is the change for “for all” to “for many”. See some of the comments at the bottom for why we need to be very careful in our interpretation of what that means.

We then have the second acclamation of the Eucharistic Prayer—the **mystery of faith**—previously called the **memorial acclamation**. The priest used to lead us into it by saying “*Let us proclaim the mystery of faith*” but that implied that the mystery of faith was what we said about Jesus’ death and resurrection. Here it is much clearer that the mystery of faith is all that we are doing: bringing ourselves, listening

OTHER WORDS/CONCEPTS:

- **“chalice”**: A direct translation of the Latin calix and is used for ordinary cups. However in English we tend to reserve it for special cups, highly decorated cups, and so we have to be careful not to misunderstand its use here. Jesus is not using some specially ornamented cup. His would have been the blessing cup many households used in prayer. But his transformation of that ritual prayer into one connected to his body and blood does make the cup we drink from special—not because it is made of gold or other precious material—but because of what happens in its use here. In many ways it would have been clearer if the present translation still used “cup” rather than “chalice” at this point and then, later in the prayer (see the next page), bring out the idea of the “chalice of salvation”.
- **“for many”**: It can’t be emphasized strongly enough that these words in English are not to be seen as limiting for whom Jesus is offering his life. It would be heresy to believe that Jesus died for only some of humanity and not for all humanity, past, present and future. The previous translation was much better at conveying this directly. Why the change? Because in Scripture we have the gospel stories using the phrase “for many”, most likely in reference to Jesus taking on the role of the Suffering Servant prophesied in Isaiah. But in Hebrew that is a euphemism for “all”. And in the gospels Jesus is basically saying: “my blood will be poured out not just for you few who are here, but for many”; that is, an open-ended phrase that is emphasizing how God’s salvation in Christ is not to be limited to a few. The problem is that in English the word “many” is usually heard as meaning “some but not all”. We have to work hard at always remembering that Jesus died for all and that is what is being expressed in this consecration prayer.

Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.

*Then the Priest, with hands extended, says:
(Celebrant with concelebrants)*

Therefore, as we celebrate the memorial of his Death and Resurrection, we offer you, Lord, the Bread of life and the Chalice of salvation, giving thanks that you have held us worthy to be in your presence and ministry to you.

Humbly we pray that, partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, we may be gathered into one by the Holy Spirit.

(Celebrant or one concelebrant)

**Remember, Lord, your Church,
spread throughout the world,
and bring her to the fullness of charity,
together with Benedict our Pope and Allen our Bishop and all the clergy.**

Mention may be made here of the Coadjutor Bishop, or Auxiliary Bishops, as noted in the GIRM, no. 149.

In Masses for the Dead, the following may be added:

**Remember your servant N.,
Whom you have called (today) from this world to yourself. Grant that he/she who was united with your Son in a death like his, may also be one with him in his Resurrection.**

to God's Word, offering these gifts, the transformation of these gifts and our faith that these gifts tie us to Christ's saving death and resurrection.

Eucharistic Prayers then have a formal **memorial** or **anamnesis**. The idea of memorial comes from the Jewish celebration of Passover. In remembering, we become participants in the original event. See below for some more discussion.

Immediately tied the remembrance is a formal **offering** to the Father. This is the true Offertory moment in the Mass. The offering is both of the gifts but also of ourselves. It is important to see how the Eucharistic Prayer never ends at the transformation of the gifts but always points to our own transformation and the importance, therefore, of communion.

This is followed by intercessions: especially for the whole Church, its leaders and for those who have died. If there is a weak part to this Eucharistic Prayer it is here in its lack of intercessions for the whole world, especially all who are in need. It is one reason why it is good that this "moment" of the Eucharistic Prayer has

OTHER WORDS/CONCEPTS:

- **"memorial" or "anamnesis":** We are not remembering a past event here, but the present, saving reality of Jesus' death and resurrection. We could not be present at the historical time but our participation here and now through this memorial is just as true a participation as the original participants. All these ideas are conveyed by **"memorial"** or **anamnesis** (from the Greek word for "to remember").
- **"Bread of Life and Chalice of Salvation":** We use images that convey that this is no longer merely bread or wine. For that reason the English word "chalice" is very appropriate especially here.
- **"humbly, we pray":** Words such as these are often used now in the Eucharistic prayers, to convey a sense of an unworthy petitioner coming before someone much greater than they. Because it can sound a bit "off" or even false to our modern ears, we need to be careful with how we understand it. We are not the wily petitioner who is trying to sweet talk God into something. We are truly in awe of what God has done for us in and through Jesus by the work of his Holy Spirit. It is a humility that comes from reverence and awe, one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

**Remember also our brothers and sisters
who have fallen asleep
in the hope of the resurrection,
and all who have died in your mercy:
welcome them into the light of your face.**

**Have mercy on us all, we pray, that with the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of
God, with the blessed Apostles, and all the Saints who have pleased you
throughout the ages, we may merit to be coheirs to eternal life, and may praise
and glorify you**

He joins his hands

through your Son, Jesus Christ.

He takes the chalice and the paten with the host and, raising both, he says:

(Celebrant alone or with concelebrants):

**Through him, and with him, and in him,
O God, almighty Father,
In the unity of the Holy Spirit,
All glory and honor is yours
For ever and ever.**

The people acclaim:

Amen.

Then follows the Communion Rite.

been duplicated at the Prayers of the Faithful, where more extensive intercession can take place. But it is important to see how, theologically, our intercession for others is always tied first and foremost to Jesus' own intercession for us and to what he did for us in his death and resurrection. That then gives us the ability to be intercessors for others.

The Eucharistic Prayer always tries to convey a sense of the eschatological or full and final celebration that it is pointing toward: the image of being gathered around God's throne, joined by all the saints and heavenly host. We are never praying alone, never interceding alone, but are joined, through Christ, by all who share in Christ's salvation.

All western Eucharistic prayers end with a hymn of praise to the Triune God, called the **doxology**. All then respond to that doxology with a joyous "Amen," often called the **Great Amen**, to convey how this third and final acclamation is to sound forth the culmination of all that we have prayed and all that has happened in the Eucharistic prayer.

OTHER WORDS/CONCEPTS:

- **"blessed"**: We are used to using this adjective with reference to Mary (Blessed Virgin) or to signal one of the beatitudes ("Blessed are they..."). But the current English translation uses it many more times, and it can lose any meaningful nuance to our ears. To be blessed is to be a recipient of God's grace. It is a way to convey that God has been at work, not their status as "happy" or "blessed" people.
- **"merit"**: In our culture we tie this word very quickly to what we earn or deserve because of what we have done. In that sense it needs to be interpreted with caution when we use it in our Mass prayers. "Merit" always is meant to signal that we are not worthy of what is happening, that it is God's grace that is causing this to happen. To pray that "we may merit" is to acknowledge that anything we try to do falls short without the aid of God. When we hear "may we merit" we can think "may God's grace makes us worthy"