

THE MASS AS THE BEGINNING OF HEAVEN ON EARTH - PART VI

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER, COMMUNION, AND THE CONCLUDING RITES

I. The Eucharistic Prayer, or anaphora, is the summit of the Mass and in fact of the whole of Catholic life. Catechism 1352, 1407. Anaphora is a Greek term meaning an offering and lifting up of gifts to heaven.

A. The Eucharistic Prayer is introduced with a Preface in which we, in the company of the angels and saints praise and give thanks to God through the Son and in the Holy Spirit for creation, redemption, and sanctification. The main Eucharistic Prayer then consists of four essential elements: (1) an epiclesis, or invocation, in which we ask God to send the Holy Spirit; (2) the institution narrative which describes the Last Supper and especially Jesus' consecration of the Eucharist at that time; (3) an anemnesis, which recounts the saving work Jesus as presents this offering back to the Father; and (4) intercessions. It then always ends with the doxology "Through Him, with Him, in Him, all glory and honor is Yours, almighty Father, forever and ever" and the great Amen, confirming our faith in the entire action just expressed.

B. These elements reflect Jesus' words at the Last Supper.

1. At the Last Supper, Jesus He promised to send the Spirit to continue His saving work, see John 14:26, 15:26, 16:13-14. The epiclesis reflects this sending of the Spirit, as well as the fact that the Spirit came upon Mary at the Incarnation.

2. The center of the Last Supper was the institution of the Eucharist, during which Jesus said over the bread and wine, "This is My body" and "This is My blood." See Matt.26:26-29; Mark. 14:22-25; Luke 22:15-20, 1 Cor. 11:23-25. The institution narrative reflects this glorious event. With the epiclesis, it is the words of the institution narrative makes Jesus present in what was bread and wine.

3. Jesus also recalled at the Last Supper His own mission and the glory God gave Him through it, John 17:1-7. Being a Passover meal, the Last Supper would have begun with a recounting of God's favor to Israel. The anamnesis reflects this recounting.

4. Jesus also offered intercessions for His Apostles and all who would believe through them. See John 17:9-26. The intercessions of the Eucharistic Prayers continue these intercessions in the high point of the Mass.

C. The structure of the Preface and the Eucharistic Prayer also reflects the glorious ceremony of the divine presence coming down to the Temple at the Dedication by Solomon. For in that case, there was: (1) a joyful prayer of thanksgiving, 2 Chron. 5:12-13; (2) a request that God send forth His presence to the people, 2 Chron. 6:41-42; (3) a recollection of the command and promise God gave to King David to build a temple in which God would be present among them, 2 Chron. 6:1-10; (4) a recollection of God's saving work and promises especially to David regarding the Temple itself, 2 Chron. 6:10-12, 15-17; and (5) intercessions that God assist His people and in fact all nations in doing His will and thus giving Him glory, 2 Chron. 6:18-40.

D. All of the Eucharistic Prayers include in their intercessions both prayers for the dead and prayers that we join the saints and angels and an eschatological ending focusing on the return of Christ in glory.

II. The Preface is a prayer of praise and thanksgiving for the glory of God and His saving work.

A. It begins "The Lord be with you," reflecting in part the words of the angel Gabriel to Mary at the Annunciation when the Son of God was about to come into the world for the first time. It also a common way in which St. Paul ended his letters. See 1 Thess. 5:27, 2 Thess. 3:18; 1 Tim. 6:21; 2 Tim. 4:22; Phil 25; see also Catechism 367.

- As with the beginning of Mass, the response will change to "and also with your spirit." As before, this phrasing more accurately reflects the Latin. The term spirit here may refer either to the spirit as the deepest part of the soul, or the spirit of holy power sent upon the ordained minister upon his ordination. See, e.g., Gal. 6:18; 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Tim. 1:6, 4:22; Philemon 25.

B. The phrase "lift up your hearts" and the response "we lift them up to the Lord" reflects both the idea of lifting up hands and voices in joyous praise of God, see, e.g., Ps. 63:4, 134:2, 143:8, and the idea that the heart is at the core of our worship and service of God, see, e.g., Jer. 31:33, Rom. 2:15, 2 Cor. 3:3; Heb. 8:10, 10:16; Catechism 368.

- The psalms and the Book of Lamentations also refer to lifting up one's soul in the context of a passionate plea for assistance in time of trouble. See Ps. 25:1, 86:4; Lam. 3:43; see also. Ps. 28:2

- This response will not change with the new translation, although the Latin phrase is more along the lines of: (1) The priest saying "Lifting up hearts"; and (2) the people responding, "We hold them up to the Lord." The Vatican and liturgy committees decided that it was clumsy in English to divide a sentence in half.

C. The phrase "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God" and the current response "It is right to give Him thanks and praise" reflects the idea of thanking God and praising Him for His works, preparing ourselves again for His blessings. It is natural to praise God, and all cultures throughout time and space have had a notion of this virtue of religion. See St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica Part II-II, question 81, art. 1-5.

- The response in the new translation will be simply, "It is right and just." That translation is more consistent with the Latin. The terms right and just seem like the same thing, but in the Latin the words "iustus et dignus" imply: (1) rendering what is due (iustus, the basis for just): and (2) being worthy of praise or reward (dignus.) The implication is that our prayer becomes worthy when we give God proper respect.

D. The preface current begins with "Father, all-powerful and every-living God, we do well always and everywhere to give You thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord" or some close variation of these words. The new translation will begin "It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere, to give thanks, most Holy Father through Your Beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." That translation is closer to the Latin and more majestic and formal.

- This acclamation reflects the importance of thanksgiving to God because of the inherent fittingness of doing so and because this thanksgiving in turn opens us to more blessings. See, e.g., Luke 17:11-19; Col. 3:12-17; Tobit 12:6. The term Eucharist is derived from the Greek term for thanksgiving, reflecting the fact that the accounts of the first Eucharist, as well as those of the multiplication of loaves, consistently say that Jesus blessed the food and gave God thanks. See Matt.26:27; Mark. 14:23; Luke 22:17, 1 Cor. 11:24. This idea of giving thanks to God because of His saving works and His presence also reflects the prayer of praise and thanksgiving sung by the priests when the Ark of the Covenant came to Jerusalem, upon the beginning of the Messianic reign as prophesied by Isaiah, and by Mary and Zechariah in their celebration of the conception of Jesus and the birth of John the Baptist. See 1 Chron. 16:8-30; Ps. 105; Isaiah 12:2-6; Luke 1:46-66, 68-79. The elders in heaven also sing a hymn of thanks before the ark of the covenant is opened. Rev. 11:17-18.

E. The preface ends with a call for the angels and often the saints to join us in singing God's praises.

F. The Sanctus then reflects both the song that angels and saints sing to God in heaven and the joyous proclamation of the people as Jesus entered into Jerusalem just before His passion, death and resurrection.

- Isaiah and Revelation both record the angels in heaven singing "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of power and might." Is. 6:3; Rev. 4:8. Isaiah records them adding "all the earth is filled with Your glory" and God's glory filling the temple in heaven.

- When Jesus entered into Jerusalem the people acclaimed "Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest." Matt. 21:9, Mark 11:9-10; Luke 19:38; John 12:13. This acclamation reflects Psalm 118, a classic psalm of thanksgiving which praises God for His saving work. As Jesus cleansed the Temple before His sacrifice, we ask that He cleanse our hearts in preparation for receiving Him and experiencing the re-presentation of His death and Resurrection

III. In the Epiclesis, the priest then asks God to send the Holy Spirit upon the gifts to make them acceptable to Him so that they may become the body and blood of Jesus.

A. The idea of invoking the Holy Spirit is in part that the Holy Spirit came upon Mary at the Incarnation. Luke 1:35.

B. In the Old Testament, God would send fire upon a sacrifice to indicate that it was acceptable to God. See, e.g., Lev. 9:24; Judges 6:21; 1 Chron. 21:26; 2 Chron. 7:1; 1 Kings 18:38. In the New Testament, fire would become a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:3. Fire was also a symbol of the presence of God. See Ex. 3:1-3; 19:18. When he hid the Ark of the Covenant, Jeremiah prophesied that God would again send His presence upon sacrifices acceptable to him. 2 Macc. 2:1-8.

IV. The precise phrasing of the institution narratives varies among the Eucharistic Prayers, but they all refer to the fact that it was the night before Jesus' sacrifice on Calvary and to Jesus giving thanks and praise (gratias). They all use the same words in describing what Jesus said. This description of Jesus' words at the Last Supper combines elements of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, as well as 1 Corinthians.

A. The words "Take this, all of you and eat it" are closest to translation used in the Gospel according to Matthew. (Jesus

would presumably have spoken in Hebrew or Aramaic, while the Gospels were written in Greek.) Matthew uses the words "all of you" in describing the consecration of the wine; the implication is that Jesus spoke these words also over the bread. The phrase "which will be given up for you" are from the Gospel according to Luke, with similar words in 1 Corinthians.

- The words said over the bread will not change with the new translation.

B. The words the priest says over the chalice will change slightly in the new translation, but with the same meaning.

1. Lifting up the chalice, the priest begins, "Take this all of you and drink from it," Jesus' words as recorded from the Gospel according to Matthew.

2. The priest then currently says, "This is the cup of My blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant." The new translation will be similar, but refer to the chalice, rather than cup, and to the eternal covenant, rather than everlasting covenant.

a. The description of the cup of His blood as "the new and eternal covenant" is basically in all of the accounts. The description of the covenant as new is in the Gospel according to Luke and 1 Corinthians. The description of the covenant as everlasting indicates that this covenant, while new, fulfills the ancient promises of a covenant that would continue until the end of time. See, e.g., 1 Chron. 16:17; Ps. 105:10; Ezek. 16:60, 37:26; Heb. 13:20. The idea is that the time of the old covenant with Israel has ended, or rather, been fulfilled, by the sacrifice of Jesus, in which we share through the Eucharist.

b. The new word chalice, rather than cup focuses attention on the sacred nature of the vessel. The term "eternal" indicates that the covenant is not only permanent, but even unbound by the barriers of time itself, and thus able to join all ages to the present sacrifice of Jesus.

3. The priest then currently says, "It will be shed for all so that sins may be forgiven." In a significant change, the new translation will read, "which will be poured out for you and for man, for the forgiveness of sins."

- a. The change from "for all" to "for you and for many" was significant enough that the Vatican Congregation for the Discipline of Divine Worship and Sacraments published an explanation in 2006.
- b. The Congregation explained that it is certainly true that Jesus did die for all people, citing in support of that proposition John 11:52; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Titus 2:11; and 1 John 2:2. However, the Congregation also pointed out that the merits of Christ must be applied to each person, and that the person's acceptance of those merits is essential. Thus, Christ died for all, but not all benefit from His death. See, e.g., Matt. 24:36-25:46; Luke 13:22-30; Gal 5:19-21; Rev. 20:11-15. Thus, from the standpoint of who benefits from the merits of Christ, He died for the many, but not all benefit. Thus, either formulation would be theologically correct.
- c. However, the institution narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark specifically say "the many," rather than "all" or "everyone." Furthermore, Isaiah's great prophesy about the suffering servant says that "Through His suffering, My servant will justify the many" Is. 53:11. In addition, the Eastern rites use the term "the many," as the Latin rite has historically done, and current does in the original Latin. For these reasons, the Congregation thought it best to use the term "for many."
- d. In addition, the word "shed" will be replaced in the new translation with "poured out." That reference better reflects the connection between the sacrifice on Calvary, in which the blood of Christ could be said to be either shed or poured out, with the Last Supper and the idea of wine generally, which is poured, not shed. In addition, there is a reference to the sacrificial offerings of the ancient Jews, the suffering of the just man in Psalm 22 (which Jesus quotes from the Cross) and the notion of the Spirit being poured forth upon the just. See Lev. 4:7, 8:14 (describing ritual purification with the blood of the sacrificed animals); Ps. 22:15 Is. 32:15 (the Spirit poured forth upon God's people); Acts 10:45 (the Spirit poured out upon the

Gentiles as well as Jews.)

4. The phrase "Do this in memory of Me" comes from 1 Corinthians; Luke includes Jesus' use of that phrase over the bread. In ancient Jewish thought, the idea of memory does not just include remembering of past events, but a reliving of them. Jesus clearly commands that this sacrifice continue in the future.

V. After the institution narrative, there is the acclamation of faith, which summarizes the anamnesis, the recounting of the saving events of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection.

A. The acclamation of faith was added to this Eucharistic Prayer apparently because of the personal efforts of Pope Paul VI, who in most other respects let the liturgists make the changes. Before this time, the priest prayed the Eucharistic Prayers from beginning to end without a break.

B. Part of the idea is that Pope Paul VI wanted the people to join in the phrase, which ends each part of the institution narrative, "Do this in memory of me" by personally proclaiming their faith in the saving events. See 1 Cor. 11:26. Even before that time, when hearing the recounting of the saving events, the people were meant to assent in faith. The only difference is that now this acclamation is vocal and together as a congregation.

C. The acclamation currently begins with the priest saying, "Let us proclaim the mystery of faith." With the new translation, the priest will simply say, "The mystery of faith."

1. A mystery in the Scriptural sense of the term, is something that can be understood partially, and is frequently described in a symbolic way (e.g., by parables and visions) because a more text-like description is impossible for human language. See, e.g., Dan. 2; Matt. 13:10-11; Eph. 5:32; Rev. 17.

2. One needs faith, the grace of God, and cooperation to peer more fully into the mysteries. Eph. 3:1-13; Col. 1:24-29. Jesus reveals the mystery of God's love, which is beyond all description in Himself and in His life, death, resurrection and continued saving grace. See 1 Cor. 2:1; Eph 1:7-9.

3. The Mass likewise reveals the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection and continued presence among us under symbolic form until we, with a risen body and purified intelligence are able to perceive Him face to face. See 1 Cor. 13:9-13; 1 John 3:1-3.

D. There are three forms of the acclamation of faith in Latin, and four in English. The fourth acclamation in English, which has no Latin equivalent, will not be in place with the new translation.

1. Currently, the first option for the acclamation is "Dying You destroyed our death; rising You restored our life. Lord Jesus come in glory." This acclamation combines an idea of Jesus' sacrifice as taking on death and overcoming it, see 1 Cor. 15:12-28; Heb 2:14-15, and a desire to join with the final life with Jesus when He returns to restore all things. 1 Cor. 15:26, Rev. 22:20 However, this version is only the rough equivalent of the first option in Latin. The new first option will be faithful to the Latin and read, "We proclaim Your death, O Lord, and profess Your resurrection until You come again." This response reflects the instruction of St. Paul that receiving the Eucharist is proclaiming the death and resurrection of Jesus. See 1 Cor. 11:26.

2. The second is "When we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim Your death Lord Jesus until You come in glory." This response is likewise taken straight from St. Paul's instructions regarding the Eucharist. See 1 Cor. 11:26.

- The new translation will slightly alter to words to say "O Lord," rather than "Lord Jesus" and say "until You come again" instead of "until You come in glory." The meaning is the same, but the new words are more faithful to the Latin

3. The third response is, "Lord, by Your cross and resurrection You have set us free. You are the Savior of the world." The idea is that, by Christ, we have been set free from sin and corruption. See John 8:32-38, Rom. 8:2, 28-29; Gal. 5:1; Rev. 1:4-6.

- The new translation will altar the word order, while expressing the same meaning. It will read, "Save us, Savior of the world, for by Your Cross and Resurrection, You have set us free." This version makes the acclamation more of a prayer as well.

4. The fourth response (not in the Latin) is "Christ has died; Christ has risen; Christ will come again." This acclamation is a brief description of the whole of the Christian faith and of the idea that, in the Mass we witness the re-presentation of the sacrifice of Christ, the continuing presence of the risen Christ, and the anticipation of Jesus returning in glory. See, e.g., 1 Cor. 15:1-5, 20-28; Phil 2:6-11; Rev. 1:17-19. However, because it is not in the Latin, and in fact is more of a statement than a prayer, it will not be included in the new translation.

VI. There are four main options for the Eucharistic Prayers. There are also two Eucharistic Prayers for Reconciliation, three for Masses where the majority of the congregation are children (those before about the age of thirteen) and Eucharistic Prayers for Special Needs and Intentions.

A. Eucharistic Prayer I is commonly known as the Roman Canon because it was the Eucharistic Prayer used in Rome from the mid-4th century, with some elements, especially the Institution narrative, going back to the first century, and other elements added by St. Gregory the Great in the late sixth century as well as others. It was used in almost all of the Latin Rite diocesan churches from about 1100 until 1969, when Eucharistic Prayers II, II, and IV were permitted. The reforms of the Council of Trent in the 16th century made it universal in Latin rite diocesan churches. Drawing heavily from the Gospels according to Matthew and John, it emphasizes the Eucharist as fulfilling the Old Testament, and especially the idea of sacrifice, the Church as the beginning of the Messianic Kingdom, and the communion of saints.

B. Eucharistic Prayer II is based upon the elements of a Eucharistic Prayer either composed or recorded by St. Hippolitus around 215. Its style is blunt and to the point. Reflecting Marcan style and Pauline theology, it emphasizes God's grace and especially Jesus' sacrifice making us holy and worthy of His presence.

C. Eucharistic Prayer III draws heavily from the Eastern rites, especially the Byzantine and Maronite rites (the former based upon the patriarchy of Constantinople, and the latter having developed in Lebanon.) It emphasizes the work of the Holy Spirit in drawing together the people of God and making us worthy and able to worship God.

D. Eucharistic Prayer IV is based roughly upon the eastern anaphora of Antioch. Its preface and anemnesis are a summary of salvation history. Like Eucharistic Prayer III, it emphasizes the Church as the people of God, but also includes specific intercessions for those who seek God "with a sincere heart" and the dead "whose faith is known to [God] alone." This Eucharistic Prayer has a fixed preface, and thus cannot be used with any other preface. As a result, it cannot be used when another preface is required (e.g., solemnities, many feasts, and about half of the Sundays.)

E. The Eucharistic Prayers of Reconciliation were composed for the Holy Years 1974-1975, but permission to use them for penitential occasions was extended at first for a limited time, and then indefinitely. These anaphoras emphasize both themes of God's forgiveness of our sins, and our own need to reconcile with others. They also both expressly call for the Holy Spirit to come upon the people present. Like Eucharistic Prayer IV, they also have fixed prefaces.

1. The First Eucharistic Prayer of Reconciliation has many connections to Eucharistic Prayer IV and draws heavily upon the themes of covenant, family and return from exile, both literal and figurative.
2. The second Eucharistic Prayer for Reconciliation emphasizes people's natural desire for peace and friendship and builds upon it by describing how, only in Christ and only with the Holy Spirit, can that desire be fully realized.

VII. The Our Father prepares us for communion with the ideal prayer that Jesus taught us.

A. The priest introduces the Our Father with one of the options listed. Currently, there are three options in Latin, four in the English translation. The new translation will have one option, although the US bishops have asked that the other options be made available/

1. The first English option ("Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior taught us") and the first two Latin options emphasize the fact that the Our Father was given to us by Christ Himself. See Matt. 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4. The Latin options can be translated: (1) "Instructed by saving decree, and formed by divine institution, we dare to say"; and (2) "And now let all offer together the prayer the Lord Christ taught us." The first Latin option also emphasizes the face that, when we adhere to the law of God, we have more courage to approach God. See John 15:8-17; 1 John 3:19-24; Ps. 15.
2. The new translation will have one option, "At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say."

As with the first option in Latin, it emphasizes the fact that, precisely when we are formed by God's commands, we are more free to approach Him.

3. The other three options in English are not in the general translation. However, the US bishops have asked for an adaptation so that they can still be used.

a. The second English option reads, "Jesus taught us to call God our Father, and so we dare to say," This option, which has some similarity to the first Latin option, emphasizes the point that we are adopted sons and daughters of God through Jesus, a point frequently emphasized by St. Paul and St. John. See, e.g., John 1:12; Rom. 5:18; Eph. 2:19-20; Gal. 3:26, 4:4-7; 1 John 4:7-9, 5:1-5

b. The third option in English (which no Latin equivalent), reads "Let us ask our Father to forgive our sins, and bring us to forgive those who sin against us." This option focuses on the petition from the Our Father, "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us." See Matt 18:21-45. It brings out the fact that we need God's help even to forgive others.

c. The last option in English reflects the third option in Latin and reads, "Let us pray for the coming of the kingdom as Jesus taught us." It emphasizes the second petition of the Our Father, "Thy kingdom come" as well as the end of the Book of Revelation, "Come, Lord Jesus." There is both the desire that the kingdom be more present on earth and the desire for the fulfillment of all things at the end of earthly history. See Catechism 2816-2818. The Mass is the kingdom of God coming into the world, in anticipation of the world's final fulfillment.

B. The Our Father in the fullest form is listed in the midst of the Sermon on the Mount, recorded in the Gospel according to Matthew. Matt. 6:9-13. A shorter version is in the midst of Jesus' teachings on prayer and good works, as recorded in the Gospel according to Luke. See Luke 11:2-4.

1. As described in the Gospel according to Matthew, Jesus gives the prayer in the midst of His discourse on sincere almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. That portion of the Sermon focuses especially on simplicity in prayer and of forgiveness. Throughout the entire Sermon, there is an emphasis on "your Father" or "your heavenly Father" drawing His faithful along and rewarding them. There is a special emphasis in the Beatitudes on the peacemakers being called children of

God.

2. The prayer itself is in the plural form, emphasizing that we pray together as a Church, and that our adopted sonship in God is in the context of the Church. Only Jesus can rightfully pray, "My Father." See Matt 7:21, 26:42.

3. The prayer has seven petitions. The first three deal with God's name, His kingdom, and His will. The last three deal with deliverance from the sin, temptation, and evil of this world. And the middle petition is "Give us this day our daily bread," which connects the purity and holiness of God to this realm where we need His protection.

4. The beginning of the Our Father both recognizes the relationship God has with us as a loving Father, but also the distance between heaven and earth. The Sermon on the Mount emphasizes that we must try to imitate the ways of the Father in heaven and rely on Him, thus connecting heaven and earth, as the Eucharist above all does. See Matt. 5:16, 46, 48; 6:14, 26, 32, 7:11. In the Old Testament, God was known as Father to the nation of Israel and to the king, see, e.g., Duet. 32:6; Jer. 31:9; Hos. 11:1; Mal. 2:10; 2 Sam. 7:14, but this prayer, and the life of Jesus generally emphasize His person fatherly concern for all people.

5. The first petition is that the name of God be hallowed, or made holy in our reverence. Part of the idea is that, through the holiness given to God's name, through which we approach Him, holiness is conferred upon the whole world. At the beginning of the freedom of the Chosen People God revealed His name to Moses. See Ex. 3:14-16. Thus, the psalmist and many others sing to the glory of God's name, see, e.g., Tobit 11:14, Judith 16:1; Isaiah 12:4; Dan. 2:20, Ps. 9:3, 92:2; 135:1, 149:3. The name of God, and especially the name of Jesus is very powerful in saving history, see, e.g., Ps. 33:21, 124:8, Prov. 18:10; Joel 3:5; Mark 16:17, John 16:23-24, Acts 2:21, 3:16. Thus, a failure to reverence His name indicates a weak or no faith, and is punished by God. See Ex. 20:7, Rev. 13:1-10. The glory of God's name is one reason for the salvation of Israel. See Is. 52:5, Ez. 36:20-23. And so, for each of the faithful, the glory of Jesus' name gives great glory and power. See John 14:13

6. We ask that God's kingdom come, partially in the sense of awaiting His kingdom coming at the end of all things, but also asking that His kingdom on earth increase through our faith, and especially as breaking through at every Mass. For Jesus drinks the chalice anew in the kingdom, see Matt. 26:29. And He promises that His disciples will eat with Him in His kingdom. See Matt. 22:1-14. The kingdom of God is in part present already. See Matt. 4:17, Mark 1:15; Luke

11:20, 16:16, 17:21. But, especially as indicated in the parables of the kingdom and in the Book of Revelation, the final kingdom will come at the end of all things. Mat 22:2; 25; Acts 1:6; Rev. 21-22. Meanwhile, God's faithful are meant to increase the glory of His kingdom and live by its precepts, bringing the kingdom more to earth. And, as indicated by the Book of Revelation, the kingdom breaks through in the prayers of the faithful and especially at every Mass, the first promise of the everlasting banquet. See, e.g., Rev. 4:8-11, 5:6-14, 7:9-17.

7. The prayer "Thy will be done" is particularly poignant, given the fact that in the agony in the Garden, Jesus prayed that prayer again. See Matt. 26:42; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42. In the encounter with the Samaritan woman, Jesus even says that doing the will of His Father is His food. John 4:34. In the Bread of Life discourse, He connects His saving power to His loyalty to the divine will. See John 6:35-40.

8. The prayer for "our daily bread" could have four meanings according to how the Greek word for "daily" (*epiousios*) is translated. It could mean: (1) bread which sustains us; (2) bread which comes down from the one who sustains us; (3) bread for today; or (4) bread for tomorrow. All of these meanings converge with the analogy to the manna in the desert, which the Israelites received day by day, except for the day before the Sabbath, when they received two days' worth so that they would not have to work on the Sabbath. See Ex. 16. Part of the idea was to keep them trusting in God, rather than their wealth. Jesus would take up this image of manna in describing Himself as the bread of life. See John 6:32-33, 49-50.

9. We ask God to forgive our sins, recognizing our need to forgive others. The connection between the receiving and conferring forgiveness is a frequent theme of Jesus' preaching. See Matt 5:7; 6:14-15, 18:21-35; Luke 12:57-59, 17:4; see also James 2:13. In describing the need to forgive so as to obtain forgiveness in the midst of His discussion of prayer, Jesus also indicated that, when we pray sincerely, God make us able to forgive sins.

10. In speaking of the need to forgive sins, Jesus tends to speak at the same time about the need to avoid creating temptations. See Matt. 5:6-7, 18:6-9, 15-22; Luke 17:1-4. Part of the idea is that both involve freedom from sins and the wiles of the devil, forgiveness dealing with freedom from past guilt and avoiding temptation freedom from future guilt; they are different sides of the same coin. While we know that temptation is inevitable in the world, see Luke 17:1, we ask that we be close enough to God that we will not experience any unnecessary temptation. If we are faithful to God, we will not experience any temptation that we cannot handle. See 1 Cor. 10:13. However, if one is arrogant or

distant from God, God allows temptation to draw a person back. See Sir. 14:20-15:20; James 1:13-15. We ask that this effect not happen. The phrase "trespasses" more literally means the debt owed to God from sin. It thus reminds one on the parable of the unforgiving servant. See Matt. 18:21-34.

11. The prayer ends asking that we be delivered (or more literally "freed") from "evil" or "the evil one." The idea is that evil is a constant threat, but as long as one is faithful, the threat is weak because of the presence of Christ. See, e.g., Luke 22:31-32; John 16:33, 17:13-15; 2 Thess. 3:3-4; Rev. 14:12-13.

C. The Prayer of Embolism completes the Our Father, bringing it back up to a celebration connecting heaven and earth.

1. The prayer continues along the same lines of asking God to deliver us from all evil and brings in more directly the notion of peace, freed from sin and anxiety, that is the first promise and preparation for the everlasting kingdom.

2. Part of the idea is that, at least within the Church and at especially every Mass, there should be a peacefulness and holiness that draws the world towards God. Acts of the Apostles describes the Apostles as maintaining this peacefulness within the Church even as the Church was being persecuted. See Acts 1:13-14; 2:42-47; 4:32-37, 6:1-7; 9:31.

3. The response to the prayer, "For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours, now and forever" comes from a prayer in the Didache, a church document from the first century that explained many of the rules for the early Church around Rome, including how the Mass proceeds. See Didache 10. This prayer emphasizes the glory of Jesus as the Son of Man who rules invisibly over all things even now and who will return in glory to establish His visible and final reign of splendor. See Dan. 7:13-14, 21-27; Matt. 25:31; Rev. 1:7, 19:11-16.

- Although the priest's prayer will change slightly in the new translation, this response will be the same.
- In Protestant churches, this prayer is often added to the Our Father, in part because some ancient texts of the Bible have this phrase as a part of the Our Father recorded in the Gospel according to Matthew.

VIII. The Rite of Peace sets the stage for the harmony needed for a worthy reception of the Eucharist.

A. The rite of peace then picks up on this prayer for peace, recalling Jesus' words at the Last Supper, "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you." John 14:27. They are words meant to inspire confidence in Christ's presence in the midst of what is often a troubled world. See also John 16:33.

B. The priest asks that Christ give us His forgiveness through "the faith of the Church." The letters to the Roman and Galatians emphasize that, by faith in Christ, we obtain forgiveness of our sins even before we are worthy. See Romans 4; Gal 2:15-3:29. There is a strong notion that we are not on our own, but as with the paralyzed man who was brought to Jesus or the daughter of Jarius, others help us also along the path to holiness. See Mark 2:1-12, 5:21-42; James 5:13-15; Hebrews 12:1-3.

C. The prayer then invokes the image of the peace of the kingdom and unity of God and calls God to grant that to us. Jesus calls His apostles to that peace and unity at the Last Supper, saying that through that unity the world would believe. See John 17:20-26. And the First Letter to the Corinthians says that that peace and unity is essential for the mission of the Church, especially in the context of the Eucharist. See 1 Cor. 11:17-18, 12:1-31; see also Eph. 2:14-22. Part of the idea is that we are calling upon the order of the saints and angels in heaven, as described especially in the Book of Revelation, to descend to us at the Mass, and thus guide the Church. See Rev. 3-4; see also Heb. 12:22-24.

D. As St. Paul generally does at the beginning of His letters, the priest asks that God's peace come upon those gathered. See, e.g., Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:2; Eph. 1:2; Phil 1:2; Col. 1:2.

E. There is then the option, generally used, of offering a sign of that peace with one another. The idea is in part that we should be at peace with each other, especially those within the Church, in order worthily to worship God. See Matt 5:23-26; Mark 11:25.

1. This sign of peace begins with the priest saying, "The peace of the Lord be with you always."

2. As with the beginning of the Mass, the Gospel and the Preface, the response will change to "and also with your spirit."

3. Then the priest or deacon says, "Let us offer each other a sign of peace."

IX. The Agnus Dei (Lamb of God) helps prepare us for communion by recognizing Jesus as the final Paschal Lamb, who frees us from sin and leads us into freedom.

A. The phrase "Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world" comes from the preaching of John the Baptist, who testified to Jesus before his disciples and especially spoke of the baptism of the Holy Spirit Jesus would bring. In Revelation, the angels, saints and all creation sing the praises of the Lamb who reigns and saves His people. See Rev. 5:9-13, 7:10-17, 19:1-8.

B. The symbolism of the Lamb is threefold:

1. A Passover Lamb was slaughtered for each family on the day before the Chosen People's liberation from Egypt; and its blood, placed on the door, was the indication for the angel of death to pass over their houses, sparing the firstborn. The family would then eat the Passover Lamb, indicating their communion with the people to be freed. The Lord commanded that the Passover be celebrated as a perpetual institution. See Ex. 12.
2. Isaiah had prophesied that the suffering servant of the Lord "would be led like a lamb to the slaughter" but through the offering of his life would "justify many . . . and win pardon for their offenses." Isaiah 52:12-53:12.
3. In the Book of Revelation, Jesus is repeatedly described as the conquering Lamb of God, who both unseals the scroll of God's judgment and stands at the center of the heavenly kingdom, welcoming the Church in all her purity as His bride. Rev. 5:6-13, 7:9-17, 14:1-5, 19:6-7, 21:2-4, 9-14, 22-27.

C. We pray for God's mercy and for peace. The mercy of God includes both forgiveness of sins and overcoming the effects of sin. See Matt. 18:21-35, Luke 10:37. The 51st psalm begins with the phrase "have mercy on me, O God" and continues with the idea of purification that makes one worthy to offer worship. The Book of Revelation describes the Lamb as providing final peace for His flock in the midst of the travails afflicting the world. See Rev. 7:13-17, 17:14; 21:22-27. God's merciful providence in this life leads to a peace of the soul now, and a final peace in the everlasting kingdom, see John 14:27, 17:33, of which the Mass is a first promise.

D. As the Agnus Dei is being said or sung, the priest breaks the large host and places a piece of the host into the chalice as he

says in a low voice "May the mingling of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it."

1. The breaking of bread was a common Jewish custom reflecting the unity of a household or community. Acts describes the common worship (likely the Mass) as "the breaking of bread." Acts 2:42. All of the Last Supper accounts refer to the breaking of bread. See Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24. And, in the multiplication of the loaves, Jesus broke bread, and the Apostles distributed it and gathered together the fragments. John 6:1-13. The distribution of the one broken bread, and the gathering together of the parts is a symbol of the unity of the Church, whose people, though scattered throughout the world, share in the one bread of angels. See 1 Cor. 10:17; General Instructions to the Roman Missal 83.

2. The placing of the Eucharistic bread into the chalice is a symbol of the resurrection of Christ, when His life came back to His body. For, in Jewish thought, the blood represented life. See Gen. 9:5-6; Lev. 17:11; Duet. 12:23. And, in turn the Resurrection of Christ is the cause of our own promised resurrection. See 1 Cor. 15:12-19; 1 Thess 4:14. It is only a symbol of the reunion, for the Eucharist under each species (i.e. under the appearance of bread or wine) contains all of the humanity and divinity of Jesus, for since the resurrection Jesus' body and blood can no longer be divided from each other. The difference is that, under the species of bread, the presence of the body of Christ causes all of Christ to be present. Under the species of wine, the presence of the blood of Christ causes all of Christ to be present. See Summa Theologica III q. 76 art. 1. The idea is called concomitance.

X. The priest then prays for his own purification before receiving communion and then leads the congregation also in praying for purification. Once again, the rite recalls St. Paul's warning that we should be prepared and purified before receiving communion. See 1 Cor. 11:19-32.

A. The priest, knowing his demanding role, professes his faith in the saving work of the Trinity, and asks that the Eucharist apply this salvation to his own life.

B. The priest then genuflects to the Eucharist and holds up the host, either above the paten or above the chalice. In the current translation, he says, "This is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are those who are called to His supper. The new translation will read, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb." The first phrase is again from John the Baptist, pointing the way to Christ. The second

sentence comes from the wedding song in the Book of Revelation, see Rev. 19:9, and both refers to the Mass and to the everlasting wedding feast of heaven. See also Rev. 3:20. The new translation will emphasize that God makes us blessed, see, e.g., Matt 5:2-10, not always happy. Happiness and sadness are emotions that can come and go; blessedness endures.

C. The current response is, "Lord I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed. The new translation will say, "I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed." The new translation, faithful to the Latin, makes it clear that this response comes from the words of the centurion who asked Jesus to cure his son. Jesus considered his response to be a prime example of faith, a faith that will lead peoples from around the world to God's heavenly banquet, of which the Mass is a first promise. See Matt. 8:8; Luke 7:6.

XI. The priests and any other ministers then distribute Communion.

A. The priest then receives communion after praying silently "May the body of Christ bring me to everlasting life" and "May the blood of Christ bring me to everlasting life." The new translation will be similar, "May the body of Christ [or blood of Christ] keep me safe for eternal life." He again recalls that the Eucharist is the greatest sharing even now in the life of heaven, and, if received fittingly, brings one further along the path. See John 6:54.

B. The priest, deacon, and, if necessary, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion then give Communion to the congregation. (An extraordinary minister of Holy Communion must receive the ciborium or chalice from the priest or deacon to distribute to others.) Before receiving Communion, the communicants should make a sign of reverence, which in the United States is now customarily a bow. General Instructions to the Roman Missal 160. The idea is to make a final sign of reverence before receiving the King of glory. (For a similar reason, the celebrating priest genuflects before holding up the Eucharist and saying "Behold the Lamb of God. . . ." and the concelebrating priests bow at that point and genuflect before receiving the Eucharist from the chalice.)

C. The priest and the deacon are required to receive communion under both species, reflecting Jesus' command to the Apostles (i.e. the first priests) at the Last Supper to eat and drink His body and blood under both forms. If the local bishop permits the distribution of communion under both species (i.e. under the appearance of bread and wine), and if the celebrant

decides to make both species available, others may receive communion under both species, but are never required to do so. For, as stated above, all of Christ is present under each form.

D. The priest, deacon, or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion says "The body of Christ" when giving the Eucharist under the species of bread, and "The blood of Christ" when giving communion under the species of bread. The response "Amen" indicates a full belief in this doctrine with all of one's mind and soul.

E. After distributing Communion, the priest, deacon, or installed acolyte (a ministry in the Church, conferred on seminarians, but conferable at the bishop's discretion on men who are at least 18) generally purify the precious vessels immediately. They can also be purified immediately after Mass. The idea is that every particle and every drop of the Eucharist contains Jesus and therefore must be consumed or (if under the species of bread) placed in the tabernacle. In the United States, a bishop may give permission for extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion to purify the precious vessels if necessary. Before purifying the precious vessels, the minister would currently pray, "Lord, may I receive these gifts in purity of heart. May they bring me healing and strength now and forever." The new translation will be closer to the Latin and more majestic, "What has passed our lips as food, O Lord, may we possess in purity of heart, that what has been given to us in time may be our healing for eternity." This prayer may reflect the prophecy of Malachi that God would purify the sons of Levi (the priestly tribe) that they may offer fitting sacrifice to God. Mal 3:3-4.

F. After a time of silence or song, the Communion Rite ends with the Prayer after Communion. The prayer generally asks that God make the Eucharist we have received be the source of greater holiness in our lives and lead us to heaven. By asking God for His help, we seek to avoid the error of the Apostles at the Last Supper when they assumed that their own strength would keep them faithful to Christ. See Matt. 26:31-35; Mark 14:27-31; Luke 22:31-34. Instead, heeding St. Paul's warning against overconfidence, we place our trust in God, who will not allow us to be tried beyond our strength. See 1 Cor. 10:1-13. We ask that God strengthen us to carry out our various roles, as St. Paul describes right after his instructions regarding the Eucharist. See 1 Cor. 12:1-13:13.

XII. The Concluding Rite sends the congregation forth to bring the presence of Christ to the world.

A. Jesus, after appearing again to the disciples after the Resurrection, sent them forth to evangelize the world, promising them His presence and the power of the Holy Spirit. See Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-20; Luke 24:44-53; John 20:19-23 (more

specifically for the Apostles as the first priests); Acts 1:1-12. Likewise, after experiencing the re-presentation of the death of Christ, being in the presence of the risen Christ, and receiving Him, the faithful are sent forth to bring the Gospel to the world.

B. As with the beginning of Mass, the Gospel and the Preface, the priest begins by saying "The Lord be with you.

- Currently, the people respond "And also with you." As before, the response will be changed to "and also with your spirit."

C. Then, the priest gives the final blessing. The most common blessing is "May almighty God bless you, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." The Mass, and the sacraments generally, end with a blessing. It is especially fitting at the Mass, for Jesus blessed His disciples just before ascending into heaven, and called upon them to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. See Matt 28:18-20; Luke 24:50-53.

1. There may also be a solemn blessing, which begins, "Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing" (or more literally "bow towards the blessing.") Partially, this idea comes from a common notion of reverencing God to receive His blessing and give Him thanks. See Duet. 26:10; Ps. 22:28-30, 138:1-3 . Bowing before God, we offering Him our willingness to carry out His will, and He blesses us in our efforts. See Micah 6:6-8. The blessing then includes one or three prayers, and concludes with the traditional blessing.

2. The apostolic blessing of a bishop includes a dialogue. The bishop says, "Blessed is the name of the Lord" and the people respond "now and forever." Then the bishop says, "Our help is in the name of the Lord" and the people respond, "Who made heaven and earth." The first declaration and response is from the prayer of Daniel as he was about to interpret King Nebuchadnezzar's dream, based upon God's revelation. See Dan. 2:20. Likewise, we are giving thanks to God for opening our hearts and minds to the mysteries of heaven through the Mass. The second declaration and response is from Psalms 121 and 124, pilgrim psalms that celebrate God's guidance of His people through the dangers of life. See Ps. 121:2, 124:8.

D. The priest then sends the congregation forth.

1. In Latin the final words are "Ite, missa est," which meansmean, "Go, it is sent forth." The idea is that the presence of Christ, and the graces of the Mass generally, are sent forth with the faithful. Jesus sent forth His apostles at the Last

Supper to bring His presence to the world. See John 17:18. God sends forth His word to heal the nations. See Ps. 107:20; Isaiah 55:11. As Psalm 50 says, "The Lord, the God of gods, has spoken and summoned the earth, from the rising of the sun to its setting. God shines forth in perfect beauty." The English translations of this dismissal reflect this idea in different ways. There are currently three options; a fourth one will be added.

2. Currently, the first option is: "The Mass is ended; go in peace." That option will be divided into two options. That blessing reflects a wish that the hearer be at peace that God has heard his prayer. See 1 Sam. 1:17, Luke 7:50, 8:48. This phrase reflects the joy of Simeon, who upon seeing the infant Jesus proclaimed, "Now Lord, You may let your servant go in peace." Luke 2:28-29. Currently, the second option is, "Go in the peace of Christ." It reflects a similar idea, using the phrase "the peace of Christ" from the letter to the Colossians, where St. Paul wrote of the unity of the Church achieved through living in the grace of Christ. See Col. 3:15.

3. These two options will be replaced by two others, which express similar sentiment. The first option will be, The first option will be to say, "Go forth, the Mass is ended." And the second option will be to say simply "Go in peace."

4. The commission, "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord" emphasizes again the idea of serving the Christ who has come to us. This idea of serving the Lord comes in part from the ancient Jewish commands to serve God alone. See Deut 6:13, 10:20; Joshua 24:14-15; Dan. 3:18, 28 Matt 4:10, 6:24, Luke 16:13; 1 Thess. 1:9. Partially, it is a call to live out the salvation we have received in thanksgiving. See Mark 1:31; Romans 12:11. This option will be replaced with two ways of giving the commission: "Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord" or "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life." These two commissionings may reflect the call of Christ that His disciples be lights to the world, giving glory to God and proclaiming the gospel to all nations. See Matt. 5:16, 28:19.

5. The response, "Thanks be to God" expresses once again a gratitude at receiving God's calling. See 2 Cor. 2:14-15, 9:11-15.

E. The priest then reverences the altar, showing reverence for the throne of God. See, e.g., Luke 7:36-38 (the penitent woman kissing the feet of Jesus); Is. 6:1 (the magnificence of the throne of God); Dan. 7:9-10; Rev. 4:1. This gesture can also represent the spousal love between Christ and His Church. See Eph. 5:32-33; Rev. 11:1; 21:1-2, 9-10. Then the priest, the deacon, the altar servers, and sometimes others serving at the Mass genuflect before the tabernacle, or if there is no

tabernacle, bow before the altar. They then process out of the church.