



My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Last week, we began looking at the Liturgy of the Eucharist with the Preparation of the Gifts. Immediately after this is another "oration." Oration is a prayer. We discussed one earlier (the "Collect," aka – Opening Prayer). This oration is the "Prayer Over the Offerings." It is another way of joining our prayers together as we prepare to move into the Eucharistic Prayer.

"Now the center and high point of the entire celebration begins, namely, the Eucharistic Prayer itself, that is, the prayer of thanksgiving and sanctification" (*The General Instruction of the Roman Missal* [GIRM] #78). The Eucharistic Prayer has eight essential elements:

- a) The *Thanksgiving* (in the Preface)
- b) The *Acclamation* (the "Holy, Holy, Holy")
- c) The *Epiclesis* (invocation of the Holy Spirit on the gifts)
- d) The *Institution Narrative and Consecration* (recounting Jesus' words at the Last Supper)
- e) The *Anamnesis* (literally "remembering")
- f) The *Oblation* (the Church offers the unblemished sacrifice to the Father)
- g) The *Intercessions* (invoking God's help, and recognizing the offering is given by the whole Church, on earth and in heaven)
- h) The *Concluding Doxology* ("Through Him, and with Him, and in Him..." with the people's acclamation of the "Great Amen")

It is through the Eucharistic Prayer that the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ; the sacrifice of Jesus, the Son, to the Father is brought from eternity and heaven to this place (Pelham) in this moment (2024).

We begin with the *Thanksgiving* in the "Preface." The Preface begins with the Preface Dialogue.

Presider (P): The Lord be with you.

Response (R): And with your spirit.

P: Lift up your hearts.

R: We lift them up to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

R: It is right and just.

We remember that we are not called to be passive spectators of the Mass, but to have full, active and conscious participation. The Dialogue is one way of entering into this: "Remember, we're part of what's about to happen on that Altar." We remember God is with us, we give our hearts to the Lord, and we give Him thanks. Even though the congregation does not say the words in the Eucharistic Prayer, we are all called to be focused on what's happening, giving ourselves to the Lord, worshipping Him in this Mass.

In the thanksgiving or Preface, the priest, "in the name of the whole of the holy people, glorifies God the Father and gives thanks to him for the whole work of salvation or for some particular aspect of it" (*GIRM* 79a). At the end of the Preface, there is an invitation to join in the acclamation (the "Holy, Holy"). The invitation, though, usually involves inviting us to pray *with* the saints and angels. For instance: "And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim" (Preface I of Advent, *Roman Missal*). We remember through this that we are not alone in our worship of God, in this Mass; we are joined by the whole Celestial Hierarchy (all of the levels of angels). The "Holy, Holy" (which we'll examine next week) is the prayer of the angels – and we get to participate in Angel song! This should knock our socks off... spiritually speaking.