



Praying the Mass Anew

*The New Translation of The Roman Missal
and Our Actual Participation at Mass*

18. The Eucharist Prayer: Part III – The People’s Participation.

We continue our look at the Eucharistic Prayer by reflecting more fully on the participation of the people in this central prayer of the Mass. While the spoken words of the people during this prayer are minimal, their participation is meant to be quite particular, as we will see.

When thinking about the participation of the people in the Eucharistic Prayer, of first importance is the invitation to *listen* and to *meditate* on the spoken words of the priest. In the plainest of terms, the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* says that the people are to “lift up their hearts to the Lord” (which is invited during the Preface, as was considered earlier), to “join itself with Christ in confessing the great deeds of God and in the offering of Sacrifice,” and that the prayer “demands that all listen to it with reverence and silence” (GIRM, 78). As we consider the purpose of the Eucharistic Prayer, we are mindful that the offering of the bread and wine is a *sacrifice of thanksgiving*, offered to God the Father, through the Son, in the unity of the Holy Spirit. The priest standing in the place of Christ and offering Christ’s one saving sacrifice, makes the offering on behalf of the people. The people, for their part are *not spectators* in this sacrifice. Rather, they enter into the sacrifice by their own *offering of themselves*, giving God their own lives as a sacrifice of

thanksgiving and praise, particularly through listening well to the prayer and uniting themselves with it through meditating upon its words. Such participation obviously requires that *the priest prays the words of the prayer in a manner that invites meditation*. Equally as important is that the people recognize that this prayer is offered *to the Father*, and not primarily for their viewing or witnessing. Thus, they are to unite themselves to the prayer, through listening and meditating upon it, not simply watching it happen. Such meditation, while it may be difficult at first, truly increases with practice.

As we use the new translation, it is essential that all understand that these Eucharistic Prayers *will sound significantly different* than what we have grown accustomed to hearing, as the words are more literally translated, and the sentence structure is also more reflective of the original Latin versions. **Priests will need to be very deliberate in proclaiming this prayer, simply because of the new wording and structure, if not for other reasons. Accordingly, the people should begin to practice meditative listening now – so as to be prepared to listen when we begin using the new versions.**

There are two key moments when the people verbally respond (usually in singing). The first moment comes immediately after the consecration, and is called the “**Memorial Acclamation.**” In

the previous version, this acclamation was intoned by the priest singing or saying “Let us proclaim the mystery of faith.” The words of the priest in the new translation are simply to sing or say “**The mystery of faith.**” Once more, this is a

literal translation of the Latin, *Mysterium fidei*. The following are the newly translated options of this Memorial Acclamation:

Previous Version

1. Dying you destroyed our death,
rising you restored our life.
Lord Jesus, come in glory.
2. When we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus,
until you come in glory.
3. Lord, by your cross and resurrection
you have set us free.
You are the Savior of the world.
- (4.) Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again.

New Translation

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

When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup,
we proclaim your death, **O Lord**,
Until you come again.

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

(Not given in the new translation)
(See below: “*Question of the Week*”)

As with other parts of the Mass, these options are more literally translated from the Latin. The three options for the Memorial Acclamation all are directed *toward Christ*, proclaiming his saving works and looking forward to his glorious return.

The other moment of response comes at the conclusion of the prayer. The priest says or sings words of glory to God (called the “doxology”):

“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 respond with their “Amen,” (called the “Great Amen,”) as an assent to the offering of all glory to God, which has been made in the whole of the Eucharistic Prayer. As such, the offering is brought to its fitting conclusion.

Question of the Week:

➤ **Why is there no setting for “Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again?”**

In the new translation, no provision was made for this acclamation (or any similar version of it) for two reasons. First of all, the acclamation is not in the original Latin missal, but was inserted into the first English version. Second, it is structurally different from the other, approved options: the approved options are all formulated at words of prayer *offered to Christ*, where this version is a statement *about Christ*. The purpose of the acclamation is to address Jesus Christ in proclaiming the mystery of faith, not merely to restate his works.