

LITURGY BYTES

Eucharistic Prayer



One of the longest prayers at Mass is known as the Eucharistic Prayer. For most of the prayer, we are kneeling. I thought it important to point out the many sections of this prayer in the hope of assisting us in the beauty of the prayer and our part in it. For the next few weeks, we will examine the various sections with the hope that we may find it easier to pay attention to what is happening at every Mass. I do hope it is a helpful and an enjoyable topic.

INTRODUCTORY DIALOGUE: The Eucharistic Prayer begins with an ancient dialogue of the Church. The priest says, “The Lord be with you,” and we offer in return, “And with your spirit.” The priest then says, “Lift up your hearts.” This, of course, doesn’t mean that we are supposed to lift up our bodily hearts. In the ancient world, the heart was the core of one’s affections, one’s desires, one’s very will. To lift up a heart, as the prayer states, means to give over everything that we have to God. It means to leave behind, for a moment, the troubles of your life and the world, and enter into the grace of heaven. We are asked to give our memories (actually everything about us) entirely over to God. So, we pray, “We lift them up to the Lord.” We say that because we know that God’s vision is that of love. We realize and know that we need an encounter with the healing mercy of heaven which needs to dwell here on earth. The dialogue continues with the priest inviting us to give thanks to the Lord. Our response sounds strange—“It is right and just.” Actually, that response comes from the Roman court. It is more like a pledge than a simple yes: *I promise to lift up my heart, to let it be transformed, so that wherever I go it is full of love for the Lord!*

Have a safe, prayerful, and blessed week ahead! ~ *Michele Hall*