

The Great Amen – (Part 8 of The Eucharistic Prayer) – Amen = I Agree, and I Believe!!

As we finish up our discussion of the Eucharistic Prayer, I want to include two things to continue to encourage you to enter into this part of the Mass as deeply and prayerfully as possible. First of all, here is the outline of the Eucharistic Prayer within the context of the entire Mass (because I think we need to always remember where we are and where we have been in our reflections):

- **OPENING RITES**
- **THE LITURGY OF THE WORD**
- **THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST**
 - OFFERTORY
 - **The Eucharistic Prayer:** (Anaphora – “to carry back” – brings us back to the Upper Room/Cross/Resurrection and the entire paschal mystery present to us now) {10 different options, but 4 main options Eucharistic Prayers I, II, III and IV}
 - o The Epiclesis (*calling down the Holy Spirit*)
 - o The Institution Narrative and Consecration (*Transubstantiation occurs!*)
 - § The Mystery of Faith (*and response from the people*)
 - o The Anamnesis (*Remembering, but in a sacramental sense*)
 - o The Oblation (*The offering – prayers specific to that*)
 - o The Intercessions (*General and specific intercessions*)
 - o **The Doxology and Amen (Conclusion and THE GREAT AMEN!)**
 - THE COMMUNION RITE
- **CONCLUDING RITES**

Secondly, as you see above all the other parts of the Eucharistic Prayer, we can also recognize how ancient this aspect of the Mass is for us as Catholic Christians. Here is a quote from St. Justin Martyr who was a secular academic (a philosopher) who converted to Christianity in the 100s, and in this public apology or defense of the Christian faith, he is explaining the Mass in detail to secular authorities:

“There is then brought to the president (*the presbyter or priest*) of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water; and he taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and *offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at His hands*. And when he (*the presbyter or priest*) has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, **all the people present express their assent by saying Amen**. This word Amen answers in the Hebrew language to **ge’noito [so be it]**.” – The First Apology, by St. Justin Martyr, 153-155 A.D.

This account of the Mass in the 2nd Century is truly remarkable, and it can powerfully help enter into the truth of the Eucharistic Prayer as well as the GREAT AMEN. The priest prays these longer prayers because we are offering true thanksgiving and humbling ourselves before God to be worthy to receive Holy Communion. Also, at the end of this part of the Mass, we say together, united a great AMEN to show our assent, agreement, and belief in what is taking place! Often during the Mass nowadays, this sounds like a small, tiny, and barely audible Amen – from a few percent of people. This is our moment to proclaim together united in a strong and full voice, Amen! I agree, and I believe! Amen!