

The Mystery of Faith – (Part 5 of The Eucharistic Prayer) – Mystery = Entire Paschal Reality

Right after the Catholic priest says the words of consecration/institution, he proclaims either in Latin or English the *mysterium fidei* or *the mystery of faith*. Everyone else then responds by one of three different acclamations.

<u>Words of the Acclamation/Response</u>	<u>Rooted in Scripture or tradition</u>
“We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection, until you come again.”	1 Corinthians 11:26 – “ <i>For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.</i> ” – also Romans 10:9
“When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.”	1 Corinthians 11:26; John 6:51f
“Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.”	John 4:42 – “ <i>...now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.</i> ” Also, see Revelation 5:9, 1 Pt. 2:24, see also the prayers for stations of the cross “ <i>by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.</i> ”

Overall, we can see how rich these responses are coming from not only St. Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, but parts of these acclamations can be found throughout Scripture and tradition such as in the prayers for the stations of the cross (as seen in the 3rd acclamation above). One of the best ways to approach this part of the Eucharistic prayer is to understand that the faithful should be praying along with the main priest celebrant of the Mass up to this point. Not only following the words of His prayers the best that they can, but especially praying that God the Father bring them more fully into the understanding and participation of Jesus’ entire paschal mystery, that is His life, suffering, death, and resurrection! If everyone in the Church was following along with the priest’s prayers in the 1st half of the Eucharistic Prayer, or at least trying to open their hearts and offer themselves to God our Father, then our hearts would be burning with faith, hope, and love at this point in the Mass. Therefore, this acclamation could be seen similar to the GREAT AMEN at the very end of the Eucharistic prayer as far as it could be seen as a holy explosion of the inner fire of God’s love that has been building throughout the Eucharistic Prayer so far. We are silent as a mouse during these most Holy Prayers of the Mass (the Eucharistic prayer), but interiorly, we are trying to receive God’s word and open our souls to the truth of Jesus’ presence and His very sacrifice and resurrection is becoming present to us at his moment.

This is the mystery of faith in its totality, and it is beautiful to see this part of the Mass in this way. The phrase *the mystery of faith* is very ancient, and it is not only referring to the truth of Jesus’ real presence in the Sacred Host and Precious Blood that has been transformed. The *mysterium* in the early church referred to the entirety of the sacred mysteries, truths, and practices. It is also translated as the Latin *sacramentum* or sacrament. The depth of this little part of the Mass resounds for us in many beautiful ways, and may we ask God to help us see how we can respond not only with our voices during these acclamations, but also most importantly with our hearts during the entire Eucharistic Prayer and during the entire Mass!