

The Eucharistic Prayer – The Big Picture (Let’s zoom out and look at the entire thing first)

As we are moving into one of the climatic moments in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, it is good to remember where we have been and where we are going from a zoomed-out view of our reflections. In general, we have said that there are two main parts of the Catholic Mass: The Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. We already started reflecting on first main ceremony within the Liturgy of the Eucharist, which is generally called the Offertory or the Preparation of the Altar. After the ancient Preface prayer and the Sanctus or Holy, Holy, Holy, we are now launching into reflecting on **the Eucharistic Prayer**, which is the prayer that is central to the consecration of the Eucharist and transformation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Himself. The Greek word *Anaphora* was used to describe this in the Early Church, and this word literally means a carrying back. This would have referred to being carried back in time to encounter the very love of Christ during the Last Supper, during his arrest, his scourging, his carrying the cross, his crucifixion and death, his resurrection, and his ascension into heaven! Because Jesus is God become man, His actions and His entire paschal mystery can become present us, which one of the main realities that happens during this crux moment of the Catholic Mass. See the outline below, and we will spend time reflecting on each part of the Eucharistic prayer moving forward each week. If you are interested, you can turn to page 26 of the Black St. Augustine Hymnal during each Mass here at OLV to follow along with my current choice of the many Eucharistic Prayer options, Eucharistic Prayer III, and this can help you follow the words, prayer silently along, and understand more and more each week!

OUTLINE OF THE PARTS OF THE CATHOLIC MASS

(1a) The Introductory Rites

(1b) The Liturgy of the Word

(2a) The Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Offertory (*The Preparation of the Altar*)

The Thanksgiving (*The Preface*)

The Sanctus (*Holy, Holy, Holy*)

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}

1. The Epiiclesis (*calling down the Holy Spirit*)
2. The Institution Narrative and Consecration (*Transubstantiation occurs!*)
3. The Anamnesis (*Remembering, but in a sacramental sense*)
4. The Oblation (*The offering – prayers specific to that*)
5. The Intercessions (*General and specific intercessions*)
6. The Doxology and Amen (*Conclusion and THE GREAT AMEN!*)

The Our Father, etc.....

(2b) The Concluding Rites