

Bulletin Article #6 = Collect Prayer (Opening Prayer)

Everything we've covered so far over these six weeks is included under what is considered the *Introductory Rites* of the Catholic Mass. We are about to enter into the *Liturgy of the Word*, which comes after we have opened the Mass, asked for God's Mercy, and praised Him in the Gloria. However, before we begin the Liturgy of the Word and the readings from Sacred Scripture, there is always an opening prayer that is said by the priest, and it is called **The Collect** prayer. The collect prayer comes from the ancient tradition of stational Masses, where people would literally journey from one church to another (especially found in the city of Rome), and the priest would wait for the collection of all the people before opening the prayer to begin the rest of the celebration. There are at least three things happening during and with The Collect prayer:

- All of the prayers and intentions are gathered up by the priest and offered to God the Father
- The Priest says "Let us pray" – so we are all praying together with the priest from our hearts
- The words of the prayer summarize the specific celebration at that day at Mass (if you listen to the words closely, they often correlate to the readings or the feast day that is celebrated!)

There is so much more to explain here, but overall, when the priest prays this prayer, he is praying with Jesus himself to the Father on behalf of all the people. We should try our best to imagine Jesus in this moment standing right where the priest is standing and saying to everyone in the church, "I'm going to take all your prayers and send them to God the Father right this moment. Lift up your souls and pray along with me with all your hearts!" May we experience the power of this prayer anew this weekend and every time we come to Mass.