

FROM THE PASTOR

My dear brothers and sisters,

We have just looked at the Consecration at Mass, where bread and wine become the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, our God – not as a mere symbol or ritual, but in truth and reality. After the Consecration, we sing (or say) the Mystery of Faith.

Throughout the Mass, notice to whom the priest is speaking. It is important so you can join your prayers to his. Sometimes he speaks to the congregation (i.e. “The Lord be with you.”), many times the prayers are directed to the Father (the Preface, most of the Eucharistic Prayer, the Lord’s Prayer, etc.). The Mystery of Faith is one of the few times the prayer is directed at Jesus (i.e. “We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again”).

After the Mystery of Faith, the Eucharistic Prayer prays through the *anamnesis*, or remembering. This remembering looks back at the past, but also to promise for the future. Jewish remembering brought to the present what was remembered. In the Jewish Passover, the youngest member asks the oldest member what is special about this night. The oldest then speaks about the Passover, but in the present tense, “This is the night ...” Jesus instituted the Eucharist as a new Passover celebration (where He is the Lamb that is slain, and we eat His Flesh). When we remember, it is not simply a memory of a past event, but we recognize that what happened 2000 years ago – at the Last Supper, on the Cross, and at the Resurrection – is made present and real for us here and now in the Eucharist!

Then there is a prayer of Offering (“we offer you, Lord, the Bread of life and the Chalice of salvation...”), where we offer to the Father the sacrifice that saves us – the sacrifice of Jesus! Remember that no matter how good we are, no matter what we do, we cannot bridge the infinite gap between ourselves and God. God Himself bridges that gap when the Son takes on flesh (Jesus), so that now we are no longer alienated from the Father. It is Christ’s sacrifice alone that is effective, and so we offer that back to the Father. Our sacrifices, united with Christ’s, then can have an effect that on their own they lacked.

Then the Eucharistic Prayer offers intercessions for ourselves, the needs of the Church (in union with our Pope and Bishop – remember that we are an Apostolic Church, founded by Jesus on the Apostles), for the world, and those who have died, through the prayers of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints.

The Eucharistic Prayer concludes with Doxology (a song of praise to God) and the Great Amen. In the Doxology, we recognize that it is through, with and in Christ Jesus, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, that all honor and glory belong to God the Father. Remember that “Amen” means, “I believe”. It means more than “I think there probably is a God out there.” Faith is not just an intellectual assent to an idea. Faith is when my life is grounded on what I believe. It is easy to say I believe in God, but does that believe shape my thoughts, my habits, my relationships. One theologian said that “Amen” is easier to understand if we say, “I would stake my life on it!” This is what the Great Amen says!