

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER: Heaven and earth unite in prayer

KNOW YOUR FAITH SERIES

Last week we saw that Catholics bring the offering of themselves and their intentions to Mass, place them on the altar, and unite them to the bread and wine that the priest presents to God in everyone's name.

Now we enter the central part of the Mass, the EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER, during which the bread and the wine will become the body and blood of the risen Christ.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER begins with the PREFACE, a prayer of Thanksgiving and Praise for all the great things done by the Lord on behalf of his people.

The celebrant priest selects the appropriate PREFACE, according to the liturgical season or the particular occasion and feast day being celebrated.

The priest concludes the PREFACE prayer by inviting the congregation to unite their joyful acclamation to that of the Angels and Saints from heaven, who have come down around the altar to sing with us. He says: "...And so, with the all the Angels and Saints, we exalt and bless your name and sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim (Preface of various needs IV):

"HOLY, HOLY, HOLY Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna the highest."

The triple HOLY echoes the song of praise and honour continually being sung by the "four living creatures in heaven" and by the thousands upon thousands of Angels as described in the Book of Revelation 4:8-11 and Revelation 5:11.

That is why we can declare that at Mass Heaven comes down and touches earth literally, sanctifying, purifying and bringing healing to all who are present .

Our singing at Mass becomes then a rehearsal for the singing and praising we will be doing in heaven.

FOR YOUR PERSONAL REFLECTION: choose one of the Preface prayers in your Sunday Missal or online, read it slowly, paying attention to the words. Pray them with the heart, make them your prayer of praise to the Lord.