

### Eucharistic Prayer – Part 1

#### Epiclesis

In a prayer known as the *epiclesis*, the priest prays that God the Father send the Holy Spirit upon the gifts of bread and wine to change them into the Body and Blood of our Lord, and that the faithful, by receiving them, may themselves become a living offering to God.

*“Therefore, O Lord, we humbly implore you by the same Spirit graciously make holy these gifts we have brought to you for consecration that they may become the Body and Blood of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ. Grant that we, who are nourished by the Body and Blood of your Son and filled with his Holy Spirit, may become one body, one spirit in Christ.”*

The first bell rings and consecration begins through a process called *transubstantiation*.

Transubstantiation is the transformation of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus.

Jesus, at the Last Supper, proclaims “This **is** my body” and “This **is** my blood”. It is not a symbol of his body and blood, but the real presence of Jesus Christ. The chemical structures of bread and wine remain the same but underneath these appearances, Jesus’ Body and Blood is really, truly present in the Eucharist.

#### Words of Institution and Consecration

These are the words in Jesus’ narrative at the Last Supper over the bread and wine:

*“Take this all of you, and eat of it, for this is my Body, which will be given up for you.... Take this all of you and drink from it, for this is the chalice of my Blood, the blood of the new and eternal covenant, which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in memory of me”*

Jesus is asking the apostles to make present his death on the cross, not simply recall it. Just as to the Jewish people, the Passover meal of sacrificing a lamb was a reliving each year of their exodus from Egypt, Jesus is foreshadowing that he will now be the Lamb of God sacrificed for us all at Calvary for the forgiveness of sins. The apostles are told to perform a simple ritual meal that will bring the past and present together. In the Liturgy of the Eucharist, we all are experiencing a re-presentation of this sacrifice.

#### Mystery of Faith/Memorial Acclamation

When the presider says, “*the mystery of faith*”, he is expressing his profound wonder at what has just taken place. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, whose Body and Blood were offered for our sins on Calvary, is now **really present** on the altar under the appearance of bread and wine. We, therefore, acclaim with joy and thanks to Christ, whose memory we keep.

#### Did You Know

\*The same Holy Spirit that brought about the miraculous conception of God’s son in the womb of the Virgin Mary some two thousand years ago is invoked to perform yet another miracle each and every Mass as the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ.

\*Jesus says that his Blood will be poured out “for you and for many” instead of “for you and for all” because he is pointing to the reality that though he died for all, not everyone chooses to accept the gift. Each of us must choose to welcome Jesus’ gift of salvation and follow his teachings so that we may be counted amongst “the many”.

***Good practice suggestion:*** During the Epiclesis and Consecration, put yourself in the scene of the apostles at the Last Supper. What if this was the first time you were hearing these words? What would these words mean to you? How would you respond? Making yourself present in the Upper Room or Last Supper may help keep these words from becoming routine or being taken for granted.

*Janet Gorshe, Pastoral Care Coordinator & Synod Implementation Team Member*