

**How we participate:** Members of the congregation or assembly take an active part in the prayer in these ways:

*Preparing.* We prepare for participation by our life and prayer during the week and by sharing attentively in the Liturgy of the Word.

*Responding.* We answer the priest at the beginning of the preface (the dialogue), which opens the eucharistic prayer.

*Singing.* We sing the three acclamations: the Holy, holy; the memorial acclamation; and the great *Amen*.

*Watching.* We watch as the priest takes the bread and then the cup and repeats the words of the Lord.

*Listening.* We listen attentively as the priest proclaims the eucharistic prayer. It is the prayer of the whole Church, is said in our name and in the name of the Church on earth and in heaven.

*Interceding.* During the week we pray for ourselves and for others. In the Eucharist we join these petitions with the prayer of Christ and his Church to the Father.

*Thanking.* With Jesus and the whole Church, we give thanks and praise to our heavenly Father.

*Offering.* We give ourselves to God, ready to obey his will and to live each day for him.

**A presidential prayer:** The eucharistic prayer is proclaimed by the bishop or priest as president of the assembly of believers. He alone says the prayer, in the name of the community, while all participate in the ways described above.

**Celebrating:** During the Mass, we listen to God's word in the readings and homily, and respond in prayer. As the priest proclaims the eucharistic prayer in our name, we join all God's people in our offering of this sacrifice of praise. We receive Communion and are nourished with spiritual food.

**Living:** Throughout the week, we try to live out what we have proclaimed in our Sunday Eucharist. We do everything for the glory of God. We look for ways of serving other people, and loving them as Christ loves us. We praise God, and pray to him for others, and for the world. We strive to live as God's holy people. In this way, he builds up his kingdom through our daily living.

*Loving Father,  
we praise you and give you thanks  
for all your gifts to us:  
for making this beautiful world,  
for calling us to be your people,  
for saving us by the death and rising  
of Jesus.*

*Help us to give you glory  
in all we do and say,  
and keep us in your love.*

*Father in heaven,  
we give you praise through Christ our Lord  
in the love of your Holy Spirit,  
now and for ever. Amen!*

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# THE EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

Prayer of the living Church  
How we share in it

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## The Eucharistic Prayer

To grow in our understanding of the eucharistic prayer, we must first broaden our appreciation of what liturgy is.

**Liturgy:** We hear this word often. We use it in a variety of ways. What does it mean?

Liturgy is the worship that Christ our Lord gives to his Father. Jesus sings the praise of the Father and continually prays for the Church and the world.

Liturgy is the worship that the Church gives with Christ and through him to our heavenly Father. By baptism, Jesus makes us all share in his own priesthood and gives us both the privilege and the responsibility of taking part in the liturgy.

Liturgy is the worship that we give in this community, filled with the Holy Spirit, in union with Christ and his Church around the world. When we celebrate the liturgy, Christ is among us, bringing our praise and prayer to the Father.

**We cannot do without it.** Liturgy is the primary and indispensable source of the true spirit of Christ. If we are to be his followers, we need to actively take part in the prayer and praise that his Church offers with him to God our Father. The Holy Spirit is with us and helps us to pray. When we celebrate liturgy with the people of God, we are offering our worship to the Father, through Christ his Son, in the love of the Holy Spirit. God has made us and placed us in this time and place so that we may give him glory, work for the building up of his kingdom and share his love with all.

**Liturgical celebrations:** Liturgy includes the Eucharist or Mass, the sacraments, the liturgy of the hours (especially morning and evening prayer) and other rites, such as funerals and blessings. In the Mass, the eucharistic prayer is the central and most important moment of praise and prayer.

**Thanks and petition:** The eucharistic prayer is primarily a prayer of thanksgiving, but during it we ask our Father for his help.

*Thanksgiving.* The word “eucharist” means “giving thanks.” We praise our Father for his great glory, for he is our holy God. We thank him and praise him in the name of all creatures for his wonderful works of creation. We give him special thanks for his greatest gift, Jesus Christ his Son. Through Jesus he has shown us mercy and has saved us. Now we give him thanks for his love.

*Intercession.* The Church is called to be a people of prayer. As sharers in the priesthood of Christ, we have the unending privilege of standing before God and praying in union with Christ for all. We ask for his help for ourselves, for the Church, for its living members, for the dead, and for salvation and peace for the entire human race. We ask our Father to bring all to salvation in Jesus Christ.

**One prayer:** The eucharistic prayer is not a series of disjointed prayers: it is one great prayer of thanksgiving. From the opening preface dialogue to the great *Amen*, the eucharistic prayer (in all its many versions) is one act of thanks, offered by the people of God gathered in the Holy Spirit, offered through Christ to the God and Father of us all.

**There are eight dominant notes** that penetrate the eucharistic prayer:

1. *Thanksgiving.* We join with Christ in thanking the Father for his wonderful works of creation and grace.
2. *Acclamation.* With us, the Church in heaven gives glory to the Father through Christ. People and priest sing *Holy, holy, holy Lord* as a song of praise.
3. *Asking for the Spirit (Epiclesis).* We ask the Father to send the Holy Spirit to make our offerings holy and to make us a holy gift to God.
4. *Narrative of institution.* Among the saving acts for which we thank God is Jesus’ gift of the Eucharist. The priest repeats the words of Christ at the Last Supper and we obey his command to do these actions in his memory.
5. *Remembering (Anamnesis).* We praise God for the wonderful works he has done in the past; in a special way we remember Jesus’ dying and rising. Relying on God’s faithfulness to his covenant, we ask him to continue to give us graces and blessings.
6. *Offering:* We offer “this bread and cup”, the body and blood of Christ, this sacrifice of praise. We join in Jesus’ offering of complete obedience and offer ourselves to the Father as living sacrifices.
7. *Intercession.* We pray with Jesus, asking our Father to bring all to salvation. We pray for the Church, for ourselves and for the whole human race.
8. *Doxology.* In the closing words (*Through him, with him*), the priest sums up the thanks-giving offered to the Father in this prayer. We listen and approve, by our hearty *Amen*, the eucharistic prayer proclaimed in our name.