

#21 DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME

In the last article, we examined the *Sanctus* and the *Epiciclesis*. This week we continue our discussion of the Eucharistic Prayer by looking at the Last Supper Narrative and the Memorial Acclamation. We will employ Eucharistic Prayer II as we analyze these sections, keeping in mind that the text varies in the different prayers.

The Last Supper Narrative follows the *epiclesis*. Currently, in Eucharistic Prayer II this section begins with, “Before he was given up to death . . .” In the new translation, we will hear, “At the time he was betrayed and entered willingly into his Passion . . .” This narrative, which recounts the Last Supper, is an essential part of the entire Eucharistic Prayer because it “proclaims the very center of our memorial thanksgiving,” the passover of Jesus (McCarron). The words, “Take this, all of you, and eat/drink of it . . .” are not a dramatization of the Last Supper, but a prayer in which we proclaim and remember the event. The particular text we use during this liturgical prayer is not any particular Scriptural account, but is rooted in tradition. We will also use the word chalice instead of cup, and hear, “which will be poured out for you and for many” instead of “it will be shed for you and for all.” At the end of this section, we pray Jesus’ command, “Do this in memory of me.” After each gift is offered, the priest shows the host or chalice and then genuflects. If the assembly is standing at this time, it is to bow as the priest genuflects (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal* 43).



After recalling the Last Supper, the priest announces, “The mystery of faith.” This text, in place of, “Let us proclaim the mystery of faith,” is a simple transition, which invites the assembly to acclaim Christ. According to the rubric in the Missal, the priest does not join in this acclamation. The acclamation is the assembly’s response to the entire prayer of the presider, specifically the Last Supper Narrative. Richard McCarron states in *The Eucharistic Prayer at Sunday Mass*, that “these acclamations emphasize the thanksgiving character of the prayer and give a summation to the memorial of the pasch (Passover).” Although the rest of the Eucharistic Prayer is addressed to the Father, these acclamations are addressed to Christ in thanks.

Currently, there are four acclamations given in the *Sacramentary*. The most familiar acclamation, “Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again” will not be included in the new Missal. Fr. Paul Turner states in *Understanding the Revised Mass Texts*, “It is a strong acclamation, but its weakness in this context is that it makes a statement of faith about Christ, rather than a prayer to him.” There are several changes in the three remaining acclamations. Here is one example: **“We proclaim your death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.”**

The memorial prayer follows this acclamation; this will be the subject of the next article.