

#22 THAT WE MAY BE GATHERED INTO ONE BODY

Last time we reflected on the Last Supper Narrative and Memorial Acclamation using the text of Eucharistic Prayer II. This week we continue our journey through the Eucharistic Prayer by briefly considering the next three parts of the prayer: the Memorial Prayer or *Anamnesis*, the Offering, and the Intercessions. Again, we will mostly employ Eucharistic Prayer II for this quick overview.

The Memorial Prayer follows the Memorial Acclamation. In the new translation of the *Roman Missal* it will begin, “Therefore, as we celebrate the memorial of his Death and Resurrection.” In this prayer, the assembly affirms what it is doing in the Eucharist; by our gathering and celebrating the Eucharist, we declare that we are following Jesus’ command to remember him, specifically his death and resurrection. The new text from Eucharistic Prayer IV might help make this more apparent:

Therefore, O Lord, as we now celebrate the memorial of our redemption, we remember Christ’s death and his descent to the realm of the dead, we proclaim his Resurrection and his Ascension to your right hand; and as we await his coming in glory.

This text declares that we have gathered to celebrate, to remember, and to proclaim Christ’s paschal mystery.

The Offering follows the Memorial Prayer. In the second Eucharistic Prayer, the new text will be,

“We offer you, Lord, the Bread of life and the Chalice of salvation, giving thanks that you have held us worthy to be in your presence and minister to you. Humbly we pray that, partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, we may be gathered into one by the Holy Spirit.”

The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* explains that in this offering, the Church, in the power of the Holy Spirit, offers “the spotless Victim to the Father,” but also that all the baptized are to “learn to offer themselves” (79.f).

The last line of this section is very enlightening – in our offering, we are asking to be transformed and perfected by eating and drinking of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. By celebrating this sacrificial meal and sharing in the sacred food, we say yes to God’s invitation to share in the kingdom of Heaven and in the unity of his Body. In binding us to Christ, the Eucharist necessarily binds us to each other as his Body. This is a piece of the mystery that we often neglect. Many who gather at the Eucharistic still do not understand this radical and unifying aspect of the Eucharist.



The next part of the prayer is the intercessions. You will recognize this part as the time we pray for the pope, the local bishop, the clergy, and all those who have died. This particular prayer concludes by naming Mary, the apostles, and all the saints. Because the Eucharist unites us as Christ’s Body, each Eucharist is celebrated in union with the entire Church, “living and dead, who have been called to participate in the redemption and the salvation purchased by Christ’s Body and Blood” (*GIRM* 79.g).

Next time we conclude our overview of the Eucharistic Prayer by examining the doxology and amen.