



4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time  
February 1, 2026  
Fr. Josh Luttig

So this Sunday brings us to part three of four of our homily series, Walking through the Mass. And thus far, we've had very positive feedback. A lot of people have been saying this has been helping them to enter into the Mass. And that's beautiful. That's kind of the whole point of what we've been doing. And last week, we covered part of the Mass from the Offertory to the Sanctus or the Holy, Holy, Holy. And today we are covering the Eucharistic prayer, which goes from the Sanctus all the way to what's called the Doxology, and when we sing Amen.

So picking up where we left off, we just sang Holy, Holy, Holy, which is what the prophet Isaiah heard the angels singing before God in heaven. And we just sang, "blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest", which was what was sung to welcome Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. In which he was going to offer himself to the Father on the cross on Good Friday. And we sang these words from Scripture, welcoming Jesus at the Mass before he comes present with us sacramentally in the Eucharistic prayer. And so after we sing Holy, Holy, Holy, we kneel in reverence of what we know is about to happen, that Jesus will become present before us in the Eucharist.

And there are multiple Eucharistic prayers that the priest can choose from during the Mass. And most of them come from texts that we know were used to celebrate Mass 1500 years or even more than that in the early church, so very ancient prayers. And you'll notice that towards the beginning of the Eucharistic prayer, the priest puts his hands over the bread and the wine and calls down the Holy Spirit upon the gifts. This part of the Mass is called the epiclesis, which means an invocation or a calling down upon. So the priest calls down the Holy Spirit upon the gifts, because it is the Holy Spirit who will change the water, the bread, and the wine into Jesus' body and blood.

And so the bells are actually rung at this part of the Mass. So they ring one time, recognizing that the Holy Spirit is present in a special way at this part of the Mass. So ringing the bells at this point is something that the church, the worldwide church, has done for ages and ages. And so we're going to begin to do that here at St. Andrew as well. So it might take a little while for the servers to get into the habit and remember to do this. But I believe in you servers. You can do it.

And so after the Holy Spirit is present in this special way. The priest takes the bread and says the same words that Jesus said 2000 years ago at the Last Supper. He says, "take this, all of you, and eat of it, for this is my body which will be given up for you". And when these words are said, it's no longer bread on the altar. It is Jesus' very body. And so that's why the bells are rung at this moment as well. And we ring them three times now in the symbol of the Holy Trinity, the three persons of the Trinity.

And similarly, the priest takes the chalice, which is full of wine, and says the words of Jesus, "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". And at this point, the chalice is no longer full of wine, but it is full of Jesus' blood. And that's why the bells are rung at this moment as well.

Now, you might notice a seemingly meaningless detail in that last prayer that holds a lot of significance. Because before consecrating the wine, the priest says in a similar way, when supper was ended, and so on. When supper was ended, why is that little detail important? Well, Jesus and the apostles were celebrating the Passover meal, which is meant to be a spiritual representation of the original Passover meal that happened in Egypt, where God saved the Hebrews from the Egyptians and won their freedom by the blood of the Passover lamb that was marked on their door frame of the house.



And when celebrating the Passover meal, there are four chalices that have four different names that were drunk at different times during the Passover service. And these four different times and names of the chalices represent four different promises that God made to the Hebrew people during their Exodus from Egypt. And the third of those chalices was drunk when the supper had ended. And this is called the Chalice of Redemption, remembering God's promise to redeem his people. And so the fact that Jesus took a chalice and changed the wine into his blood when the supper had ended, shows us that it was the third chalice, the Chalice of Redemption.

So Jesus is saying that the promise God made way back in Egypt to redeem you is fulfilled in me with my blood. It's my blood of the new and eternal covenant, the blood of the Lamb of God. Jesus is saying, I am the fulfillment of the Lamb from Exodus and the Passover meal thousands of years ago.

And all of this would have been very obvious to the apostles and Jews at the time of Jesus. And in fact, St. Paul points out this fact in our second reading. He says, Jesus became for us the wisdom of God as well as righteousness, sanctification, redemption. So Jesus became our redemption to save us from our sin. So this stuck out to Jews of the first century reading the scriptures. And God wants us to know and to see this beauty every time we come to Mass. Do we know what Jesus is truly fulfilling and offering us in the Eucharist?

So that covers the consecration, and Jesus is now present in the Eucharist, his body, blood, soul, and divinity. And now we come to the part of the Mass called the Mystery of Faith. And the priest actually says, the Mystery of Faith. And then we respond. Now, in part one of the series, I said that almost all of the prayers that we pray during Mass are prayed to the Father through the Son, or through Jesus, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. And I said almost all for a reason.

Because at this point of the Mass, now that Jesus is truly present on the altar, we speak directly to him for a moment. And there are three options for the mystery of faith. And so I want you to (I'll read all three of them briefly), I want you to pay attention to how they're all addressed to Jesus himself at this moment of the Mass.

The first option we respond, we proclaim your death, "O Lord, and profess your resurrection until you come again". The second option says, "when we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim your death, O Lord, until you come again". And the third and final option is, "save us, Savior of the world, for by your cross and resurrection, you have set us free".

So after the Mystery of Faith, where we speak to Jesus, who is now present in the Eucharist, we return our attention back to the Father. And on most Sundays here at St. Andrew, you'll hear the priest pray, "therefore, O Lord, as we celebrate the memorial of the saving passion of your son, his wondrous resurrection and ascension into heaven. And as we look forward to his second Coming, we offer you in thanksgiving this holy and living sacrifice".

So what's beautiful is that at every Mass, we celebrate Jesus, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension at every Mass. And this is called the Paschal Mystery. Now, in part one of the series, you heard me say that I would talk eventually about time travel. And so that's where this comes in, because the Mass is the closest thing we get to time travel. Because when we celebrate the Mass, we experience a re-presentation of the Paschal Mystery. It's not a representation. It's not a symbol. It's not. It's a re-presentation because Jesus, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension become present to us so that we can enter into these saving acts of Christ with Jesus. We enter into them with Jesus at the Mass.

So when Jesus made His body and blood present in the Eucharist at the Last Supper, and he said to his apostles, "do this in memory of me". That word memory in English is, it's really a misleading translation because we don't. Unfortunately, we don't have a word like this in English. But the Greek word for memory there is *anamnesis*.

Okay? Which does not mean just calling to mind something or trying to remember something. It really means to make something present again. To make something present again.

So Jesus was telling his apostles, his first priests, to celebrate the Eucharist, to make him present again so that we can enter into his passion and his death and his resurrection and his ascension. So just like the Passover was a spiritual re-presentation of the Exodus, the Eucharist is a sacramental, a real presentation of the paschal mystery.

So that's what we get to enter into every Mass. How beautiful is that?

And because of this, in every Eucharistic prayer, there's a part where we pray for the Pope and our bishop, the whole church and the whole world, which is similar to what we do during the prayers of the faithful or the intercessions. Again, we know that the Mass has power, and so we offer it for specific intentions. And we ask for the intercessions of the saints who we know are present with us as we worship God at Mass as well.

And this finally gets us to what's called the Doxology, which means to give glory or to give praise. And this is when the priest and the deacon lift up Jesus as an offering to the Father, and the priest prays "through him, with him, and in him, O God Almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours forever and ever. Amen".

And so Jesus, body and blood, along with us, are offered to the Father. And if you ask most Catholics what's the high point of the Mass, they would probably say what? They would say the homily. No, I'm just kidding. Probably not. They'd probably say the consecration, right? Jesus becomes present to us in the Eucharist. And that's a very beautiful part of the Mass. But that's actually wrong. That's not the high point of the Mass.

If that were the case, it would be like saying Jesus becoming Man was the most important thing he did, which is not true. That's a very important thing he did, but it's not the most important thing. It's because if Jesus became man, but he did not offer himself to the Father on the cross, we would still be stuck in our sins. We would still be slave to sin.

And so the high point of the Mass is actually this part, the doxology, Jesus offering himself along with us to the Father. That's why Jesus became man. And that's why Jesus becomes present on the altar in the Eucharist to offer himself to the Father on our behalf. And when Jesus offers himself on our behalf at Mass, what do we do? We sing, or we say, "Amen".

And it's just one word, but it's drawn out musically, and it's repeated because it's so important. That word Amen in Hebrew means it can be translated as like, it is true or it is so, or let it be done. So it's our way of assenting to what is happening when Jesus offers himself to the Father. We are assenting, or saying yes to, Jesus offering himself along with us to the Father. So that's the high point of the Mass. And so we'll actually end this part of our homily series at this very high note, this highest of notes.

And we covered a lot today, the fact that we still use the same ancient prayers for Mass that the early church did. We covered why we ring the bells at the epiclesis and at the consecration. We covered the significance of Passover, and how it's related to the Last Supper in the Eucharist. And that cup of redemption that Jesus consecrated into his own blood. We covered the fact that the paschal mystery is made present to us at every Mass, so that we can enter into those beautiful mysteries. And we covered that the high point of the Mass is when Jesus offers himself and us to the Father, accompanied by our Amen, our ascent.

And so I pray that when you hear the Eucharistic prayer today, that you'll pay attention to these aspects of it and that you'll be able to enter into Jesus passion and his death and his resurrection and ascension as they are made present to us today. So I invite us all to give our Amen to what is happening at the altar and enter into it, with Jesus, offering our lives to the Father.