**Roman Missal: Preface and the Eucharistic Prayer**

In the final week of our discussion of the Roman Missal, we will look at the heart of the liturgy, considering the Preface and the Eucharistic Prayer.

**Dialogue**:

Priest: The Lord be with you  
 People: **And with your spirit**.

Priest: Lift up your hearts  
 People: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
 People: **It is right and just.**

**Preface**: though considered part of the Ordinary of the Mass, the preface is somewhat like a proper prayer. There are a number of different options for the preface which are suited to the various liturgical seasons. So, for example, during Ordinary Time, there are four different prefaces that a priest can choose from on any given day. Also, on feast days, the preface truly is a proper prayer, as it speaks specifically of the feast at hand (for example, on August 15, the preface speaks directly about the Assumption of Mary). The preface usually begins in this way:

It is truly right and just, our duty and salvation,   
always and everywhere to give you thanks,   
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God…

**Eucharistic Prayers**: after the Sanctus (“Holy, Holy, Holy”), when the people kneel, we have the praying of the Eucharistic Prayer. The Eucharistic Prayer includes the *Epiclesis*, which is the calling down of the Holy Spirit to sanctify the gifts, and the prayer of Consecration:

**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.**

There are ten options that the priest can choose from, the most common being Eucharistic Prayers I-IV   
(I have included the opening words for each):

**Eucharistic Prayer I**: To you, therefore, most merciful Father, we make humble prayer and  
 petition through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord…

**Eucharistic Prayer II**: You are indeed Holy, O Lord, the fount of all holiness…

**Eucharistic Prayer III**: You are indeed Holy, O Lord, and all you have created rightly gives you  
 praise…

**Eucharistic Prayer IV**: We give you praise, Father most holy, for you are great and you have  
 fashioned all your works in wisdom and in love…

In addition, there are **two** Eucharistic Prayers for Reconciliation and **four** Eucharistic Prayers for Various Needs.

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