

Preparation for the New Roman Missal – Part 5

Introduction: This insert is one of several that will explore the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The Liturgy of the Eucharist invites us to center our hearts on the altar. In this insert we will review the Opening Dialogue, the Preface and the Holy, Holy, Holy, and Eucharistic Prayer II. It is important to remember that “Eucharist” means thanksgiving. In this part of the Mass we focus our awareness on gratitude to God for the gift of his Son – Jesus.

At the completion of the Preparation of the Gifts, we asked God to accept our offerings, our sacrifices, the gift of ourselves as well as the gifts of bread and wine for the PRAISE and GLORY of God’s name as well as for our benefit and that of the Church. The **Opening Dialogue** continues to focus our attention on the importance of Thanking and Praising God. We enter into this dialogue with the priest who invites to join with him in offering praise to God.

	Current Text	New Text
Preface	<i>Priest: The Lord be with you.</i>	<i>Priest: The Lord be with you.</i>
Dialogue	<i>People: And also with you.</i> <i>Priest: Lift up your hearts.</i> <i>People: We lift them up to the Lord.</i> <i>Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.</i> <i>People: It is right to give him</i> <i>thanks and praise.</i>	<i>People: And with your spirit.</i> <i>Priest: Lift up your hearts.</i> <i>People: We lift them up to the Lord.</i> <i>Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.</i> <i>People: It is right and just.</i>

Once again we notice that our response has changed to “And with your spirit.” Although the next two lines do not change it might be helpful to know that the literal translation for “Lift up your hearts” means “Hearts Aloft”. If we think about other things we raise aloft, the flag, banners, sails, kites, things that fly upward, catch the breeze, move forward and/or up, we may want to imagine our hearts doing the same thing – moving up and forward closer to God and heaven. Notice that our last line of response in this dialogue changes to a simple statement recognizing that our thanks (and praise) to God is right and just. We do not need to say any more because the priest begins the **Preface** with the same words both agreeing with us and reinforcing the rightness and justice of thanking God for God’s goodness.

In the **Preface** the priest expands our simple statement and recalls the God’s wondrous gift of Jesus and in his work of salvation on our behalf. Depending upon the liturgical season or the feast we are celebrating, specific reasons or examples of God’s marvelous deeds for which we should be grateful may be recalled. There are always specific reasons for giving thanks for each liturgy. “*Petition, thanksgiving, and contrition* all lead to God and the realization that God is goodness beyond our understanding. *Praise* makes the difference between honoring God, because God grants us favors or forgives our sins, and relating to God as a *Person*, because of his pure goodness and love. One way to this relationship is through the experience of communal praise.” (Understanding the Revised Mass Texts, Leader’s Guide, p.45) Make it a personal challenge to listen for the reasons each Sunday.

At the end of the Preface the priest invites us to join in with all the choirs of angels to sing praise to our God in the **Acclamation: Holy, Holy, Holy**. The Holy, Holy, Holy is one of the oldest prayers in the Mass and can be traced back in time to before 400AD. It is also one of the prayers that can be found in both the Western and Eastern liturgies. The Holy, Holy, Holy begins with the prayer of praise that the prophet Isaiah heard the angels singing when he was caught up in a vision before the throne of God. It is interesting to note that the angels do not address God directly but call out to each other these words of praise. We do not hesitate to speak and to praise God directly. The second half of the prayer comes

from the words of those who praised Jesus as he rode into Jerusalem prior to his Passion. The people had just experienced or heard of his raising of Lazarus from the dead and were convinced at that moment, at least, that Jesus had come in the name of the Lord. We, who are disciples of Jesus, use these same words to praise Jesus and God, the Father.

	Current Text	New Text
<i>Sanctus</i>	Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.	Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of <u>hosts</u>. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Only one word has changed. “Hosts” is the equivalent of the Hebrew “*Sabaoth*” which was never translated into Latin but carried over into Latin as is. “*Sabaoth*” refers to God’s command over an army of angels and so proclaims God’s power. When we use the word “hosts” we should think of God’s angelic hosts, the invisible powers that work at God’s command.

As we sing and pray this prayer we are reminded of the mystery of God. Our God is so awesome, so amazing, so beyond anything we can imagine. We should call to mind our mountaintop experiences of God as well as our awareness of God in the ordinary aspects of our lives as we sing of God’s holiness and power. And we should remember that we are singing with and for all of God’s creation including the angels because we dare to sing directly to God!

Eucharistic Prayer II

The **Preface** will expand the reasons to give God thanks and praise. Listen for words that we will have heard in the Creed. Jesus’ Passion is used to include not only his death but the entire experience he endured for us. Listen for how the words paint a picture for us: “**Fulfilling your will and gaining for you a holy people, he stretched out his hands as he endured his Passion, so as to break the bonds of death and manifest the resurrection.**” The vocabulary is deeper and richer and more expansive. In the **Epiclesis** God sends down his Spirit upon the gifts of bread and wine so that they may become the body and blood of Jesus. Listen for the poetic “**upon them like dewfall**” which calls to mind the falling of “manna” like dew in the desert for the ancient Israelites. “Manna” is the bread they ate in their forty years of wandering in the desert; it was proof of God’s loving care for them just as the Body and Blood of Jesus proves his continuing love for us.

In the **Institution Narrative** notice again the use of “Passion” instead of “death”. Also notice the word “Chalice” instead of “Cup”, “Eternal” for “Everlasting”, “Poured out” instead of “Shed”, “For Many” instead of “For All”. These changes invoke a more formal, sacred, poetic, and active understanding of what Jesus has done for us. We will explore this more fully next time.

The **Anamnesis** expands the current text and calls us to *celebrate* the “**memorial of his Death and Resurrection**”.

The second **Epiclesis** adds our sense of humility at being invited to partake of the Body and Blood of Christ. Instead of “brought together in unity” we pray that “**partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, we may be gathered into one**” – a more poetic wording that recalls the grains of wheat formed into one loaf, the grapes crushed into one drink as well as we the disciples gathered into one people, one community, one Body of Christ.

The **Intercessions** again expand the current text again with a more poetic and picture painting wording.