

The Eucharistic Prayer's Prayers - Prayer of Sacrificial Offering and Communion Epiclesis

After the dialogue-prayer in which we *proclaim the mystery of faith*, there is a *prayer of sacrificial offering*, and a *communion epiclesis* {recall, *epiclesis* = *invocation of the Holy Spirit*}. The first of these is *Father, calling to mind the death your Son endured for our salvation, his glorious resurrection and ascension into heaven, and ready to greet him when he comes again, we offer you in thanksgiving this holy and living sacrifice*. It refers primarily to the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ in which he is both the gift and the gift giver, who is sacramentally present in the Eucharistic celebration. The church as Christ's mystical body interiorly associate our self with this voluntary self-giving, thus joining our self-giving with that of Christ. This theme of the Church's "self-sacrifice" was already expressed at the preparation of the gifts, but here it becomes especially relevant and effective. {Recall this column on 9.5.2010: *our presentation of the gifts...symbolizes the movement of our hearts toward the Lord, and our willingness to share in the sacrifice soon to be offered on the altar. As the bread and wine are prepared and placed on the altar, we mentally place ourselves there too, prepared to give ourselves as gifts to others as Christ did, ready to share in his sacrificial self offering.*} The Church's intention here is that we not only offer the sacrifice of Christ himself, but that we also learn to **offer ourselves as a gift** through Christ to an ever greater union with the Father and one another, so that at last God may be all in all. The way to this goal leads through reception of the body and blood of Christ. So the Eucharistic Prayer also contains a prayer for the fruitful reception of communion; this communion *epiclesis* says *Look with favor on your Church's offering, and see the victim who death has reconciled us to yourself. Grant that we, who are nourished by his body and blood, may be filled with his Holy Spirit, and become one body, one spirit in Christ.*" It asks at the time for the unity of the faithful, which is acknowledged to be a special work of the Holy Spirit.

Please let us know what else about our faith tradition you'd like to find out more about. Contact our Council for Catechesis at tkautza@saintmaryhc.org.