

What Are We Praying and Why?

“Under My Roof”

Last week I noted that the one word in the revised translation of our Mass prayers I hear questioned most is *consubstantial*. The word that comes in “second” in the ‘question department’ is *roof*, as prayed right before communion, in response to *Behold the Lamb of God*. At that point both the priest and the people pray *Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed*. I have heard some say how strange they think it is that this prayer makes such a reference to the *roof of their mouth* as the “unworthy place” Jesus enters. {The previous translation of this was *Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed*.} However, the “roof” referred to here is not the roof of the communicant’s mouth. As with all prayers in the new translation, the new wording follows closely the original Latin text, which in this prayer is directly based on a text of scripture. Both the gospels of Sts. Matthew and Luke (Mt.8:8; Lk.7:6) present the story of a Roman centurion {army officer} who came to Jesus on behalf of his sick servant who needed healing. As Jesus approached the soldier’s house to cure the servant the soldier said “*Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof; only say the word and my servant will be healed*. The reference to the officer’s *servant* is changed to *my soul* in our prayer, but the reference to *roof* – the actual physical roof of his house - remains unchanged. The meaning or intent of our prayer here is to express our need for the healing and forgiveness offered in the Eucharist we receive.

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.