

What Are We Praying and Why?
The Eucharistic Prayer's Prayers – 1

Following the *Preface's* opening dialogue between priest and people (which, again, signals that the EP is the prayer of **all** the people, not just the priest), the *Preface* continues with a prayer that praises God's saving action toward us. The *Preface* of the EP is called *preface* not in the sense that it "comes before" the EP, but because we as God's people "come/stand before" God in our prayer. There are three parts to the *Preface*: (1) the fixed introductory dialogue (*The Lord be with you... etc*); (2) the variable prayer that praises some particular aspect of God's saving action (which always begins with *Father, all-powerful and ever living God, we do well always and everywhere to give you thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord*); and (3) the *Sanctus*, or *Holy, Holy, Holy*, which always remains the same: *Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and mighty, 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.* The text of the *Sanctus* is drawn from two passages of Scripture: the angel's hymn of praise in a vision of Isaiah the Prophet (Is.6:2ff) and the acclamations of the crowd when Jesus entered Jerusalem (Mt. 21:9). The *Sanctus* prayer is one of the oldest parts of the liturgy. *Hosanna* is a Hebrew word that originally meant "Help!" or "Save me, I pray", but which later came to be used as a triumphant cry in honor of God. An important feature of the *Preface* evident in its second part is that it is addressed **to** God the Father **through** Jesus Christ. Christian prayer is always directed in this way to God the Father, through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Many Christians commonly pray to Jesus, and Charismatic or Pentecostal Christians also pray to the Holy Spirit. But in the liturgical prayer of the Catholic Church, following our age old theology, prayer is always addressed only to God the Father.

Please let us know what else about our faith tradition you'd like to find out more about.
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