

The Eucharistic Prayer's Prayers – A Return to Holiness

It often happens when I preach that as I preach and afterwards I get new ideas about what I *could* have said or wish I would have said in my homily. The same thing happened last week as I spoke at Masses about the first section of Eucharistic Prayer III, particularly about its references to the holiness of God:

Father, you are holy indeed... All life, all holiness comes from you...

This week I would like to say a bit more about what it means to say that God is holy, and our own holiness in relationship with God. Again, *What does it mean to call God “holy”, and what is the “holiness of God” that calls for our praise?* Most simply, it means that God, as Creator, is *separate, distinct, or other than* who we are as creatures. As such, God is superior to us (and all of Creation), and thus worthy of praise and thanksgiving for creating us and giving us not only life, but also love. “Holiness” is the very nature of God, as are love and self-giving. In our Jewish-Christian tradition we speak of created things as holy in a couple of ways. We look upon all creatures as holy or sacred because they are the work of God who is holy, and simply by their existence express or manifest the holiness of God their Creator. We also call holy those things that are set apart for use in connection with God, people, places, times, or things that are dedicated to prayer, worship, the life and work of the Church, or anything else intended to remind us or and turn us to God. For us to act or live in a holy manner means that we intend and strive to act and live like God, or in imitation of God who is holy. In view of what I’ve said above about the nature of God as creative, self-giving, and love, we are holy most simply when we too are creative, self-giving, and loving. When we go out of ourselves and out of our own way to do and share what we can with others, we share in and express the very holiness of God. Mother Theresa is universally regarded as one of, if not the most holy people of the modern day. She is also universally recognized as one who lovingly went far out of her way and comfort zone to care for the needs of others. Many often have the image or idea of holiness as meaning someone is praying all the time, always does the right things and never does anything wrong. But these first words of EPIII point to the holiness of God *from whom life and all its good gifts come*. Likewise, we live and grow in holiness when we give the gifts of our life and love to others.

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