

The Eucharistic Prayer's Prayers - Epiclesis

Following the introductory section of EPIII, with its focus on the holiness of God, the Holy Spirit is called down upon the gifts of bread and wine to transform them into the body and blood of Jesus. This prayer is called the *epiclesis*, a Greek word that means “invocation” or “calling upon”. It is addressed to God the Father, requesting the poser of the Spirit. It says ***And so, Father, we bring you these gifts. We ask you to make them holy by the power of your Spirit that they may become the body*** {the sign of the cross is made over the gifts here} ***and blood of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at whose command we celebrate this Eucharist.*** During the praying of this prayer there are two rites of blessing done by the priest, the extension of his hands over the gifts, an ancient gesture signifying the giving of the Spirit, and the sign of the cross noted above. In addition to the invocation and work of the Holy Spirit which makes holy the gifts of bread and wine, the *epiclesis* prayer also serves the sanctification of the people presenting those gifts. Both gifts and people are transformed by the power of the Spirit: the gifts of bread and wine become the signs of Christ’s sacramental presence as food; the people enter into communion with Christ and with one another; we are unified, given life and sanctification. Just as bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood of Christ, so by sharing the loaf and chalice we are also to be transformed, we are to become more fully the body of Christ we already are by Baptism. This point is expressed well in the prayer after communion for the feast of St. Augustine on August 28th: *Lord, make us holy by our sharing at the table of Christ. As members of his body, help us to become what we have received.*

Please let us know what else about our faith tradition you'd like to find out more about.
Contact Fr. Dan Krettek at dkrettek@saintmaryhc.org.