

Pastor's Message

This week we return to ordinary time and so these reflections return to our consideration and conversation on the Mass. In our last reflection before Advent we discussed the role of the memorial acclamation after the words of institution over the bread and the wine. We spoke of the three responses we make as a community to Christ's presence in bread and wine. Now we enter the Eucharistic prayer proper.

Using the fourth century Eucharistic prayer of St. Hippolytus (Eucharistic Prayer 2), we will discuss the individual parts of this prayer with a specific focus on that for which we are praying. In the first paragraph after the memorial acclamation through the voice of the priest we pray: "Therefore, as we celebrate the memorial of his Death and Resurrection, we offer you, Lord, the Bread of Life and the Chalice of salvation, giving thanks that you have held us worthy to be in your presence and minister to you. Humbly, we pray, that, partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, we may be gathered into one (family) by the Holy Spirit". Remember in the words of institution when the Holy Spirit is called down upon the bread and the wine to transform them into the body and blood of Christ? That is called the "epiclesis of consecration" or the calling down of the spirit upon the elements of bread and wine. This part of our EP is the "epiclesis of communion" or the calling down of the Spirit upon our community. We gratefully recall that in Christ we have been made worthy to be in the presence of the Lord and to be his disciples in our world in our time. In humility and in truth we recognize that as we partake in eating the Body of Christ and drinking his Blood we have been made one family by this same Holy Spirit. This awareness and calling down of the Spirit is not only a sign of our oneness as a group celebrating this particular Mass or even as a whole parish family but as a universal Catholic community which as James Joyce once famously said means "Here comes everyone". I would argue that this epiclesis, this calling down of the Holy Spirit not only acknowledges that all believers in Christ are One but that all that God has created is One.

The Eucharistic prayer is inviting us first to recognize that Christ is really present among us in bread and wine and now to recognize Christ present in each and everyone (and everything) God has created. Next our EP will turn toward asking God for what we need (intercessions) but not until we recognize that Christ is with us and that we are all One in Him.

Fr. Chris