

Lesson 22--The Doxology and Great Amen

Action

This morning I'd like to go over what we call the "Doxology" and the "Great Amen." But first let's review what we talked about last time. Last time I talked about the so-called "intercessions." The intercessions are, if you recall, the part in the Eucharistic Prayer when the priest asks the Virgin Mary, the apostles and the saints to intercede to Christ for our help. He also asks God the Father to strengthen our Pope, all the bishops and priests, the deacons and all the faithful.

Next the priest raises the chalice in his right hand, the paten in his left, and holding them up so everyone can see, he says, "Through him, and with him, and in him, O God, almighty Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours for ever and ever." If there is a concelebrating priest or an assisting deacon, he hands him the chalice to him which he also holds up.

At the end of the doxology, the people say, "Amen."

Discussion and History

"Doxology" is a Greek word that means "a word of praise." If you've ever been to morning or evening prayer at a monastery you probably noticed that at the end of the psalms the monks rose, bowed at the waist and said the *Glory Be to the Father and to the*

Son. By doing this they were continuing an ancient practice in which prayers were always ended by recalling the supreme purpose of prayer: the creature bowing before our Creator and singing His praises. Therefore, every Eucharistic Prayer ends with this same doxology.

Next the “Great Amen.” From an earlier lesson, you may remember that the word “Amen” means, “Yes” or, “I agree;” or “All of what you have just said is absolutely correct.”

One of the early fathers of the Church, a priest by the name of Justin Martyr, in 155 A.D, wrote, “When the priest has finished the prayers and thanksgivings (of the Mass), all present give their assent with an “Amen.” It’s important to say “Amen” because as Catholics we are all agreeing that the prayer just offered by the priest has both made our Lord present among us and offered Him in sacrifice to the Father.

St. Augustine said that, the “‘Amen’ is the people’s signature.” By this he means it is like signing a contract. In our “amen,” we don’t just sign our name in agreement, we proudly write it large!
What we can do to better participate in this part of the Mass?

When the priest holds up the consecrated Host and the chalice and says, “through him, and with him and in him” the “him,” he is referring to is, of course, Jesus Christ who is now present. That which a few minutes earlier were just bread and wine is now the
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Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ. We all respond with the “Great Amen,” which is our agreement that this is in fact true.

It’s been said that during medieval times, when the people said the “Great Amen” the windows literally shook because they said it with such great conviction. Christ is now truly present among us under the disguise, if you will, of bread and wine.