

The Liturgy of the Eucharist—October 23, 2011

(The Lord be with You. And with your spirit. Review response. I am trying to impress Father that your learning curve to the new changes in the Mass is almost complete.)

Thanksgiving is around the corner. As a young boy I thought everyone ate cranberries, mashed potatoes, hot rolls, candy yams, gravy, pumpkin pie, stuffing, and turkey. As I got a little older, I realized not everyone ate yams for Thanksgiving. In fact, when I married, I learned there were differences in the types of stuffing used for turkey, and rutabagas were considered to be an important element of the Thanksgiving meal. Traditions of the Thanksgiving meal between families differ. The essential is always the same—the shared meal.

I am here to re-assure you the changes made to the Liturgy of the Eucharist have modified only some of the accessories. The essentials have always been the same throughout its earliest beginning: The Lord took bread and wine, our Offertory; the Lord said the prayer of blessing, the Eucharistic Prayer; The Lord broke the bread, and the Lord gave the broken bread and the cup to his disciples, the Communion rite. It is the whole Eucharistic rite, beginning with the Offertory and ending with the prayer after Communion which is completing the Lord's command do this "in memory of me."

The Offertory or the Preparation of the Gifts has changed in a few words. The gesture is the same: God's gifts to us and our gifts to God. At the end of the Preparation of the Gifts our response has changed to add one word, *Holy*.

Keep in mind there is a definite pattern to the Liturgy of Eucharist. It is framed in praise to God our Father through Jesus. Beginning the Eucharistic Prayer is the preface. There is a slight change here. When the priest says "*Let us give thanks to the Lord our God,*" we now respond, "*It is right and just.*" In the spirit of giving thanks, the priest says in 86 of the 89 prefaces, the constant phrase "We do well always and everywhere to give you thanks." The Church believes what it prays. Try doing just that—praise God with gratitude even when the bad stuff is happening in your life. Watch how praise and practiced gratitude toward God will neutralize the power of whatever or whoever it is giving you the struggle.

The Eucharistic Prayer is the blessing and praise of God the Father in memory of Jesus. It is not merely lip service of praise. The pattern begins again. What God has done in the past in creation, in the Old Testament, and in His son Jesus Christ is recalled. The Eucharistic Prayer looks to the future when everything will be joined and unified in Christ. We say Amen at the end to confirm this Christic reality.

The present moment of our lives are placed in this mystery. We want to share in salvation now through our lives which are offered to God. "This is my body; This is my blood" are not just signs or a symbol of a mere person's presence but the presence of God in our midst. As in the Old Testament, the priest would declare three times a year at the feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles: "Behold, God's love for you," when the Bread of the Presence would be brought out for the pilgrims to see. Just as the old Bread of the Presence had been the sign of God's "everlasting covenant," so now the Eucharist becomes the perpetual sign of the new covenant, sealed in Jesus' blood. The Eucharist is now the Bread

of the Face of Christ. The mystery of Jesus' presence in the Eucharist is closely tied to the mystery of his divine identity. That mystery becomes our calling as well: To live the life of Christ in our life. We are called at this moment to think like Him, act like Him, love like Him, and surrender our lives like Him. Hence, we come to the Mystery of Faith. The mystery of faith has changed to having only three responses of faith. These responses are:

We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

When we eat this Bread and drink this cup, we proclaim you death, O Lord until you come again.

Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection, you have set us free.

Dolores will lead us in these responses. Thank you.