

#5: *The very heart of our celebration* [November 6, 2011]

At the heart of the celebration of Mass is the Eucharistic Prayer. There are several Eucharistic Prayers that may be used, chosen by the priest to best fit the occasion of the celebration. On Sundays, we typically hear Eucharistic Prayer I, called the *Roman Canon*, or Eucharistic Prayer III. Each prayer expresses in its own way the Paschal Mystery of Jesus' passion, death, and resurrection; this remembering is called the *anamnesis*. Each Eucharistic Prayer calls down the Holy Spirit to change the bread and wine into the True Body and Blood of Jesus Christ; this invocation is called the *epiclesis*. Each Eucharistic Prayer intercedes on behalf of the entire Church, both for the earthly members like the Pope and the Bishop, as well as for those who have died in Christ, that they may enjoy eternal life in heaven.

Although the images and language differ in the various Eucharistic Prayers, the words of consecration remain constant recounting the words and actions of Jesus at the Last Supper. This is sometimes called the *Institution Narrative*. In a beautiful way, these words bring together the various Gospel accounts of the Last Supper where Jesus instituted the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist which is celebrated "in memory" of Him. The one offering of Jesus on the Cross is made present again through the praying of the Eucharistic Prayer. This allows us to stand mystically at the foot of the Cross. Our holy remembering, through the power of the Holy Spirit, brings the offering of Christ into the present moment and allows us to share in the redemption He won for us.

