



## Archdiocese of New York + 2011

### THE OTHER EUCHARISTIC PRAYERS

**A Rich Variety of Eucharistic Prayers:** In the history of the Church there has been a rich variety of Eucharistic Prayers. The use of different Eucharistic Prayers, prevalent throughout the early Church, has continued in the Eastern Church to this day. In the western, Roman Church, however, the Roman Canon, (Eucharistic Prayer One), began to be used exclusively in the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, a practice that continued until the Second Vatican Council. Following the Council, it was decided that the liturgy would benefit from the use of additional Prayers and so four Eucharistic Prayers are now permitted throughout the western Church. These include the Roman Canon and three others drawn from different strands of the Church's tradition. Permission has also been obtained from Rome by Conferences of Bishops around the world for the use of other Eucharistic Prayers, some taken from tradition, others newly composed. In the United States, for example, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has obtained approval for the use of two Eucharistic Prayers for Reconciliation, three for use in Masses with Children and a Eucharistic Prayer for Masses for Various Needs and Occasions. While there is a variety of Eucharistic Prayers in use throughout the Church today, the elements essential to this prayer, the *center and summit of the entire celebration*, are found in each of them although the words by which some of these elements are expressed may differ from one Prayer to another.

**Eucharistic Prayers Two, Three and Four:** These Eucharistic Prayers are found in the *Typical (Roman) Edition of the Roman Missal* and are common to the Roman Catholic Church throughout the world. The structure of each of these prayers is basically the same, however, they differ in other ways.

**Eucharistic Prayer Two:** This Canon is derived from an ancient Greek Eucharistic Prayer formula, that of Hippolytus, and in its origins is even older than the Roman Canon. It has a Preface of its own, but may also be used with other Prefaces. It is recommended for use on weekdays and is also appropriate in Masses for the Departed because in the Memento of the Dead the deceased person may be named.

**Eucharistic Prayer Three:** This prayer has no Preface of its own. It is largely derived from the Roman Canon with some elements rearranged and enriched by formulas drawn from other liturgical traditions. Although not mandated, it is preferred for

Sundays and is also recommended for the feasts of saints because it includes a prayer formula for commemorating the saint of the day or the patron saint. When used in Masses for the Dead it has a special section in which the deceased may be named.

**Eucharistic Prayer Four:** The fourth Eucharistic Prayer is drawn in large part from the Eastern liturgy of the Church in Antioch. Its Eastern roots are particularly evident in the relationship between the Preface, the Sanctus and the beginning of the Canon. While in the other Eucharistic Prayers the Sanctus concludes the thanksgiving begun in the Preface, in Eucharistic Prayer Four the Preface, the Sanctus and what follows the Sanctus form a continuous whole. Because the Preface is structurally related to the total Eucharistic Prayer, no other Preface may be used with it. For this reason, Eucharistic Prayer Four may not be used on Sundays or on other days (for example on major feast days) to which a proper Preface is assigned.

#### **Eucharistic Prayers for Reconciliation, Masses with Children and for Special Needs and Occasions:**

These prayers have been approved by the Holy See for use in the United States.

The **Eucharistic Prayers for Masses with Children** are more simply worded than the other Eucharistic Prayers; they also provide for children's involvement through the use of additional acclamations which may be sung and may incorporate gestures. These Eucharistic Prayers may be used only in Masses in which the entire congregation or a substantial majority of the congregation is composed of children.

**The Eucharistic Prayers for Reconciliation** are intended for use in Masses with a theme focused on reconciliation and penance. They are particularly appropriate in Lent and during spiritual pilgrimages or retreat gatherings.

**The Eucharistic Prayer for Various Needs and Occasions** is a prayer developed in Europe and approved for use in the United States in 1995. It is really four different Eucharistic Prayers, each built around a theme and each with a corresponding Preface. The four themes are: *The Church on the Way to Unity; God Guides the Church on the Way to Salvation; Jesus, Way to the Father and Jesus, the Compassion of God*. The prayer is intended for use in conjunction with the section of the *Roman Missal* titled *Masses for Various Needs and Occasions*.