

Mass Parts 26/52:

Preface and the “Holy, Holy, Holy”



The Preface changes for each Mass, day, and season. The wording continues by agreeing that “it is right and just...” which responds again to the dialogue. The Preface sums up why it is right and just for us to give praise to God on this day, in this Season, on this Feast. At the end of each Preface, there is a move to recognize the connection of our particular, earthly Mass, with the eternal liturgy in heaven. This is always worded in terms of joining our voices of praise with the angels who are forever singing praise to God. This sets us up, then, for the angels’ song: the “Holy, Holy, Holy.”

The prophets actually had visions of the heavenly Eucharist. The Eucharistic liturgy is not something added on, but part of our faith, hidden and prefigured in the Old Testament. The first part of the “Holy” comes from two prophetic visions of the angels singing the liturgy in heaven. The first vision is by Isaiah:

In the year King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, with the train of his garment filling the temple. Seraphim were stationed above; each of them had six wings: with two they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they hovered. One cried out to the other: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts! All the earth is filled with his glory!” At the sound of that cry, the frame of the door shook and the house was filled with smoke. (Isaiah 6:1-4)

The second vision is from John:

The four living creatures, each of them with six wings, were covered with eyes inside and out. Day and night they do not stop exclaiming: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come.” (Rev 4:8)

In the Mass, we are then joining with the angels in singing our song of praise and thanksgiving to God. The second half of the song connects us perfectly with this past weekend in our liturgical year. It echoes the song of the crowd on Palm Sunday:

The crowds preceding him and those following kept crying out and saying: “Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest.” (Mt 21:9)

The crowds themselves were echoing in turn the song of praise found in Psalm 118:25a: “Lord, grant salvation!” The Hebrew for “O Save” is transliterated as “Hosannah.”

This whole song goes back in a simpler form to the Didache in the year 70 AD, while other books of the New Testament were still being written. We have continued for almost 2000 years, this song celebrating the arrival of the Messiah into our city, into our hearts.

-Fr. Kopp

Next Week: Kneeling

Easter Pastoral Letter 2019 from Fr. Kopp

As we begin our Easter Season, I must first say thank you to all of those who helped with our Lenten programs. First, for all of those who cooked and donated for our Tuesday evening soup suppers, as well as those who helped clean up, and participated in the discussions. What a great focus for our year spent on examining and deepening our understanding of the Mass. With this current bulletin, we are exactly half-way through the series. Continue to pay attention and study, continue to do your own readings.

Thank you and blessings to those who spent their Friday nights together walking the Stations of the Cross. It is a concrete way of walking in the footsteps of Jesus. We can continue walking them, we can continue them as a devotion throughout year, imitating Christ in every facet of our lives. Adoration is always available after weekday Mass. Many saints' lives are marked by frequent stops into churches. The Eucharistic Chapel in our parish office is always available for prayer between 9:30am and 1:30pm. It is always humbling for me as a priest to celebrate reconciliation with people. You don't have to wait for next Advent or Lent to go to confession. During most of my priestly formation, we were encouraged to go to confession once a month. To be a good confessor, I still try to keep to this. I encourage everyone to go more frequently. If once a year, go twice. If twice a year, go every 3 months. Once a month is something good to work up to. We can never hear the words "you are forgiven" too many times.

How did you all do with your Lenten promises? I didn't follow my own advice about choosing one thing for Lent. I had 2 things to give up. Originally this was in case I failed at one, I could focus on the other. But thankfully I stayed away from both for the most part. Perhaps keep up the habit of fasting or giving things up throughout the whole year. If you chose to add something better to increase in virtue, then keep being better. If it was something that was bad for you, then stay away from it. St. Francis of Assisi was known to keep 3 Lents in the year. A constant cycle of practicing virtue and avoiding vice should put all of us on the path to sanctity.

For the Easter celebrations themselves: thank you to those who have helped with beautifying our church; whether in the outside landscaping, the church decorations, the music, or volunteering as ministers at the many services. I know one priest many years ago that thought we should get rid of the other Obligatory Holy Days and take off work and be in church throughout the days of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil. While we can't just change such things, these are the highest holy days of the year, and it is right and good that we celebrate them together.

Our celebration doesn't end with the Resurrection. Stay connected to Jesus. The more intensely you celebrated Lent, the greater will be your enjoyment of Easter. Remember that the Easter Season only begins on Easter Sunday. The first 8 days are the Octave, where every day is like Easter Sunday. The season goes on through Ascension and Pentecost Sunday. Let the experience of being forgiven, the experience of God's mercy, the experience of being released, be carried with you in your interactions with your family, friends, and with everyone you run into. As we have been forgiven, as we have been raised from the dead, let us spread this message everywhere we go. We have been released from sin, we have been released from eternal death, why be so sad? There is hope! There is a future! We will rise again! May the peace of Christ and the joy of the Resurrection be with you every moment of your life.