

Mass Parts 34/52:

Prayers for the Living: Hierarchy



Included in each of the Eucharistic Prayers are intentions for the living church, with the hierarchy first. The reason for this points to the unity of the church. In our Creed, we state our belief in “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.” We are one united church under Christ our head. Our apostolic unity is found not just in that our current bishops trace their connection back to the apostles, but that they are also connected with each other. In the early years of the Church, bishops would mention other bishops near them during the Eucharistic Prayer to show their connection to each other. This included lists of popes. Today we mention the Pope to show our unity as Roman Catholics and we mention our own local bishop to show our unity as a diocese.

When I happen to celebrate Mass in another diocese, I have to mention the name of their bishop in the prayers, not my own. I am in his territory and he deserves the prayer as the head of that local church. So when travelling, I need to look up that name first. I could just fall back on “the bishop of this diocese,” but that would be lazy.

We offer up more prayers for those in authority and power, not because they are more important than others, but because they are open to more attacks and temptations. Bishop Murry gets praised and listened to wherever he goes. Imagine the pride of position or from adulation that he is subjected to. I think Pope Francis is attacked by Satan even more. We offer our prayers for them to give them strength in their ministry, but also protection from falling for the complements.

Now if a bishop is celebrating Mass, normally a concelebrant says his name, but if he is on his own: he does not say his own name, he says “We pray for Francis our Pope, and me, your unworthy servant.”

-Fr. Kopp

Next Week: Prayers for the Living: the Gathered Community, and the Dead