**Liturgy Matters Lesson #24**

**Preface to the Eucharistic Prayer & Holy, Holy, Holy**

**By Bishop Chad Zielinski**

I am Bishop Chad Zielinski serving the Diocese of New Ulm. Thank you for joining me and asking the Holy Spirit to guide us as we continue our lessons on "What Happens at Mass."

The third part of the preface connects with the preceding by always saying, “Therefore…” With this, it presents our desire and our request of God that our voices might blend with the voices of all the angels and saints in singing God’s praises. We have stated that the priest leading this prayer images for the assembly the reality of Christ as head of his praying body. The phrase “through Jesus Christ our Lord” in the preface, as well as the second part which expresses his action on our behalf, give occasion to add a refinement to how we understand this. Thus, while it is true that the priest is a sacrament of Christ in his role as head, we are not to imagine somehow that he is Christ. He is an image of Christ but, at the same time distinguishable from him.

The preface leads up to the Holy, Holy, Holy, where we all sing the heavenly hymn that has been revealed to us by several key scriptural texts. These texts unveil for us, to some extent, the invisible realities into which we are now caught up. There is, first of all, the vision of God that the prophet Isaiah had when he was caught up in prayer and, as he says, “I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, with the train of his garment filling the temple.” He goes on to describe what he saw: “Seraphim were stationed above; each of them had six wings: with two they veiled their faces, with two they veiled their feet, and with two they hovered aloft.” Then he hears them crying aloud to one another: “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts! All the earth is filled with his glory!” In Revelation, John writes a very similar vision when he is "caught up in ecstasy on the Lord's day” and “writes on a scroll” the visions he sees of the heavenly liturgy. At one point in his vision, he sees the very throne of God, surrounded by the same winged creatures that Isaiah had seen. He, too, gives us the words of their ceaseless hymn. He tells us, “Day and night, without pause, they sang: ‘Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come!’” These visions of the holy prophet and apostle help us to take the measure of all that is happening at Mass when we sing the same words of the angelic song.

Thank you for joining me today in this lesson on the Preface to the Eucharistic Prayer and the Holy, Holy, Holy. I look forward to sharing Lesson #25 with you next week as we continue our lessons on the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Let us keep one another in prayer. May God bless you and your families.