**Liturgy Matters Lesson #25**

**The Eucharistic Prayer**

**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."

After the assembly sings the Holy, Holy, Holy, all the people kneel while the priest alone remains standing and, with outstretched arms, again takes up the prayer directly addressed to God the Father. The people kneeling and the priest alone standing and saying the prayer is meant to indicate even more clearly that the whole body directs its prayer to the Father only through the head, Christ. Kneeling here is meant also as a gesture of adoration.

In the Roman rite, since the time of the reform of the liturgy mandated by the Second Vatican Council, one of four different Eucharistic prayers is chosen for any given celebration of Mass. All of these prayers begin with dialogue, a preface, and the singing of the angelic song. Now as the priest continues, he "confesses" God. In acknowledging God, we recall before Him the wonders of creation and the great deeds He worked in history for our salvation. The priest's words recognize this and celebrate it with the words: "We come to you, Father, with praise and thanksgiving."

Alternatively, "Father, you are holy indeed, and all creation rightly gives you praise." Or, "We acknowledge you, Holy Father, for you are great, and you have fashioned all your works in wisdom and love." Poetic language manages to express a lot with a little. The language here is dense and evocative. A single phrase, word, or concept will represent before God whole epochs of what He has done for us. If we acknowledge to the Father what He has done for us, we will come quickly to the Son and the Spirit He has sent to us. "And you so loved the world, Holy Father, that when the fullness of time had come, you sent your only begotten Son to us as Savior." Or, "All life, all holiness comes through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, by the working of the Holy Spirit." Of course, God already knows these things. But He wants to hear from us that we know, and this is exactly what we say to Him. This is the biblical sense of confessing.

Thank you for joining me today in this lesson on the dialogue of the Eucharistic Prayer. I look forward to sharing Lesson #26 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.