

## Eucharistic Prayer I (The Roman Canon)

### Eucharistic Prayer I (Roman Canon)

1. Longest: longest of the four Eucharistic Prayers
2. Ancient: parts of it goes back at least as far as the time of St. Ambrose (4<sup>th</sup> Century)
3. Authorship: scholar, Sts. Gelasius, Leo, Gregory, John XXIII, Paul VI (5<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Cents)
4. 12 Apostles & 12 Roman Martyrs: “Peter and Paul, Andrew, James, John, Thomas, James, Philip, Bartholomew... Linus, Cletus, Clement, Sixtus, Cornelius”(cf. Matt 10:1-4)
5. “To You, Therefore” (Latin *Te igitur*): “T” = Shape of Crucifix (cf. *Roman Missal*)
6. Always: “*Eucharistic Prayer I*, or the Roman Canon, which *may always be used*, ...it is *especially suited for use on Sundays...*” (GIRM 365)

### The Roman Missal: Eucharistic Prayer I (2011)

*To you, therefore* (Latin *Te igitur*), most merciful Father, we make humble prayer and petition through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord: *that you accept and bless † these gifts, these offerings, these holy and unblemished sacrifices...* which we offer you firstly for your holy catholic Church. Be pleased to grant her peace, to guard, unite and govern her throughout the whole world, together *with your servant N. our Pope and N. our Bishop*, and all those who, holding to the truth, hand on the catholic and apostolic faith.

*Remember, Lord* (Latin *Memento, Domini*), your servants N. and N. and all gathered here, whose faith and devotion are known to you. For them, we offer you this sacrifice of praise or they offer it for themselves and all who are dear to them: for the redemption of their souls, in hope of health and well-being, and paying their homage to you, the eternal God, living and true.

*In communion* (Latin *Communicantes*) with those whose memory we venerate, especially the glorious ever-Virgin Mary, Mother of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ, *and blessed Joseph, her Spouse*, your blessed Apostles and Martyrs, *Peter and Paul, Andrew, (James, John, Thomas, James, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Simon and Jude; Linus, Cletus, Clement, Sixtus, Cornelius, Cyprian, Lawrence, Chrysogonus, John and Paul, Cosmas and Damian)* and all your Saints; we ask that through their merits and prayers, in all things we may be defended by your protecting help.

*Therefore*, Lord, we pray: graciously accept *this* (Latin *Hanc igitur*) oblation of our service, that of your whole family, order our days in your peace, and command that we be delivered from eternal damnation and counted among the flock of those you have chosen.

Be pleased, O God, we pray, to bless, acknowledge, and approve *this offering* (Latin *quam oblationem*) in every respect, make it spiritual and acceptable, so that it may become for us the Body and Blood of your most beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

On the day before he was to suffer, he took bread in his holy and venerable hands, and with eyes raised to heaven, to you, O God, his almighty Father, giving you thanks, he said the blessing, broke the bread, and gave it to his disciples, saying... [Words of Consecration] In a similar way, when supper was ended, he took this precious chalice in

his holy and venerable hands, and once more giving you thanks, he said the blessing and gave the chalice to his disciples, saying... [Words of Consecration]

*Therefore, O Lord, as we celebrate the memorial (Latin Unde et memores) of the blessed Passion, the Resurrection from the dead, and the glorious Ascension into heaven of Christ, your Son, our Lord, we, your servants and your holy people, offer to your glorious majesty from the gifts that you have given us, this pure victim, this holy victim, this spotless victim, the holy Bread of eternal life and the Chalice of everlasting salvation.*

*Be pleased to look upon these offerings (Latin Supra quae) with a serene and kindly countenance, and to accept them, as once you were pleased to accept the gifts of your servant Abel the just, the sacrifice of Abraham, our father in faith, and the offering of your high priest Melchizedek, a holy sacrifice, a spotless victim, (Latin immaculatam hostiam).*

*In humble prayer (Latin Supplices) we ask you, almighty God: command that these gifts be borne by the hands of your holy Angel to your altar on high in the sight of your divine majesty, so that all of us, who through this participation at the altar receive the most holy Body and Blood of your Son, may be filled with every grace and heavenly blessing.*

Remember, also, Lord, your servants N. and N., who have gone before us with the sign of faith and rest in the sleep of peace. Grant them, O Lord, we pray, and all who sleep in Christ, a place of refreshment, light and peace.

*To us, also (Latin Nobis quoque), your servants, who, though sinners, hope in your abundant mercies, graciously grant some share and fellowship with your holy Apostles and Martyrs: with John the Baptist, Stephen, Matthias, Barnabas, (Ignatius, Alexander, Marcellinus, Peter, Felicity, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucy, Agnes, Cecilia, Anastasia) and all your Saints; admit us, we beseech you, into their company, not weighing our merits, but granting us your pardon, through Christ our Lord.*

Through whom you continue to make all these good things, O Lord; you sanctify them, fill them with life, bless them, and bestow them upon us. (Roman Missal, *Order of Mass*, nos. 83-97)

## Scripture

### Eucharistic Typology in the Old Testament

1. Abel: brought “some of the *firstlings* of his flock” (Genesis 4:4)
2. Melchizedek: first “priest”; “king of Salem”; offered “bread and wine” (Genesis 14:18)
3. Abraham: offers his “only Son” on mount “Moriah” (Genesis 22:1-14)

### The Angel of God, the Prayers of the Saints, and the Altar in Heaven

*And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer; and he was given much incense to mingle with the prayers of all the saints... (Revelation 8:3-4)*

## Tradition

### The Twelve Apostles and the Twelve Roman Saints

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|---|---|
| 1. <u>Peter</u> : 1 <sup>st</sup> Pope, martyred in Rome. | 1. <u>Linus</u> : 2 <sup>nd</sup> pope, martyred in Rome. |
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| 2. <u>Paul</u> : the Apostle, martyred in Rome.     | 2. <u>Cletus</u> : 3 <sup>rd</sup> pope, martyred in Rome.     |
| 3. <u>Andrew</u> : martyred in Greece.              | 3. <u>Clement</u> : 4 <sup>th</sup> pope, martyred in Rome.    |
| 4. <u>James</u> : martyred in Jerusalem.            | 4. <u>Sixtus</u> : 8 <sup>th</sup> pope, martyred in Rome.     |
| 5. <u>John</u> : imprisoned on Patmos.              | 5. <u>Cornelius</u> : 22 <sup>nd</sup> pope, martyred in Rome. |
| 6. <u>Thomas</u> : martyred in India.               | 6. <u>Cyprian</u> : bishop, martyred in Africa.                |
| 7. <u>James (the Less)</u> : martyred in Jerusalem. | 7. <u>Lawrence</u> : deacon, martyred in Rome.                 |
| 8. <u>Philip</u> : martyred in Asia Minor.          | 8. <u>Chrysogonus</u> : lay martyr in Rome.                    |
| 9. <u>Bartholomew</u> : martyred in Armenia.        | 9. <u>John</u> : layman, martyred in Rome.                     |
| 10. <u>Matthew</u> : martyred in Persia.            | 10. <u>Paul</u> : brother of John, martyred in Rome.           |
| 11. <u>Simon</u> : martyred in Jerusalem.           | 11. <u>Cosmas</u> : Arab doctor, martyred in Rome.             |
| 12. <u>Jude</u> : martyred in Syria.                | 12. <u>Damian</u> : Arab doctor, martyr in Rome.               |

### The Catalogue of 15 Martyrs<sup>1</sup>

1. St. John the Baptist: proto-martyr; beheaded by Herod Antipas (1<sup>st</sup> Century)

#### Male Martyrs

2. St. Stephen: deacon, stoned in Jerusalem (1<sup>st</sup> Century)
3. St. Matthias: apostle, beheaded with an axe (1<sup>st</sup> Century)
4. St. Barnabas: apostle, martyred in Cyprus (1<sup>st</sup> Century)
5. St. Ignatius: bishop, martyred in Rome (2<sup>nd</sup> Century)
6. St. Alexander: pope of Alexandria (non-martyr) (2<sup>nd</sup> Century)
7. St. Marcellinus: priest, beheaded by Domitian (4<sup>th</sup> Century)
8. St. Peter: exorcist, beheaded by Domitian (4<sup>th</sup> Century)

#### Female Martyrs

9. St. Felicity: thrown to beasts, killed with the sword in Carthage (3<sup>rd</sup> century)
10. St. Perpetua: thrown to beasts, killed with sword in Carthage (3<sup>rd</sup> century)
11. St. Agatha: virgin and martyr; tortured to death in Sicily (3<sup>rd</sup> century)
12. St. Lucy: tortured and martyred in Rome (4<sup>th</sup> Century)
12. St. Agnes: virgin and martyr, beheaded in Rome (4<sup>th</sup> century)
13. St. Cecilia: martyred in Rome under Alexander Severus (3<sup>rd</sup> century)
14. St. Anastasia: burned to death on Christmas under Diocletian (4<sup>th</sup> century)

### The Earliest Witness to the Words of the Roman Canon (4<sup>th</sup> Century)

St. Ambrose: And the priest says: “*Therefore we call to mind his most glorious passion, his resurrection from hell, and his ascension into heaven. We offer you this spotless sacrifice, this spiritual sacrifice, this unbloody sacrifice, this holy bread and the cup of eternal life. We beseech and pray that you accept this offering upon your altar on high through the hands of your angels, just as you deigned to accept the gift of your just son Abel and the sacrifice of Abraham our Father and what the high priest Melchizedek*

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<sup>1</sup> See Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012), for traditional accounts of each of these martyrs lives and deaths.

*offered to you.*” What, then, does the Apostle say to you each time you receive? *“As often as we receive, we proclaim the death of the Lord.”* If we proclaim his death, we proclaim the forgiveness of sins. If each time that his blood is poured out, it is poured out for the forgiveness of sins, then I should always receive it so that the Lord may always forgive my sins. Since I always sin, I should always have a medicine.<sup>2</sup>

### **Who Wrote the Roman Canon? An Unknown “Scholar” (6<sup>th</sup> Century)**

St. Gregory the Great: The Lord’s Prayer we say immediately after *the prayer* since it was the custom of the apostles to consecrate the offering by that same prayer only. It seemed to me highly unsuitable that we should say over the offering *a prayer composed by a scholastic* [Latin *scholasticus*] and not say over his Body and Blood the very prayer composed by our Redeemer.<sup>3</sup>

### **Popes (and One Scholar) Who Changed the Canon (2<sup>nd</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> Centuries)**

1. St. Alexander: added the institution narrative (“the Lord’s Passion”) (2<sup>nd</sup> Century)<sup>4</sup>
2. St. Leo the Great: added “a holy sacrifice” etc. (5<sup>th</sup> Century)<sup>5</sup>
3. St. Gelasius: “was the first to arrange the Canon. However, the whole Secret [i.e., the Canon] was not composed at the same time by a single author... (5<sup>th</sup> Century)<sup>6</sup>
4. St. Gregory the Great: added “and order our days in your peace, and command we be delivered from eternal damnation...” etc. (6<sup>th</sup> Century)<sup>7</sup>
5. Alcuin of York: apparently added the Commemoration of the Dead (8<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>8</sup>
6. St. John XXIII: added “and blessed Joseph, her Spouse.” (20<sup>th</sup> Century)<sup>9</sup>

### **The Council of Trent on the Roman Canon (1562 AD)**

Council of Trent: That this sacrifice might be worthily and reverently offered and received, the Catholic Church many centuries ago instituted the sacred canon. It is so free from all error that it contains nothing that does not savor strongly of holiness and piety and nothing that does not raise to God the minds of those who offer. *For it is made up of the words of our Lord himself, of apostolic traditions, and of devout instructions of the*

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<sup>2</sup> Ambrose, *On the Sacraments* 5.27-28. In Johnson, *Worship in the Early Church*, 2:58.

<sup>3</sup> Gregory the Great, *Letter* 26. In Johnson, *Worship in the Early Church*, 4:68.

<sup>4</sup> *Liber Pontificalis* 7.1-2. In Davis, *The Book of Pontiffs*, 3-4.

<sup>5</sup> *Liber Pontificalis* 47.8. In Davis, *The Book of Pontiffs*, 37.

<sup>6</sup> William Durandus, *Rationale of the Divine Offices*, 4.35.12.

<sup>7</sup> *Liber Pontificalis* 66.3-4. In Davis, *The Book of Pontiffs*, 60 (adapted); John the Deacon, *Life of St. Gregory the Great*, 2.20.

<sup>8</sup> Foley, *A Commentary on the Order of Mass*, 252; “It is not found in... the Gregorian Sacramentary called the *Hadrianum*.”

<sup>9</sup> S.C.R., Decree on Inserting the Name of St. Joseph into the Canon of the Mass (13 November, 1962).

*holy pontiffs*.<sup>10</sup>

## Mystagogy

### **Asking the Martyrs to Intercede for Us**

St. Augustine: Church custom has it that at the place *where the names of the martyrs are recited at God's altar, we don't pray for them*, while we do pray for the other departed brothers and sisters who are remembered there. It is insulting, I mean, to pray for martyrs, *to whose prayer we ought rather to commend ourselves*. They have tackled sin, after all, to the point of shedding their blood.<sup>11</sup>

### **The Mystical "T" (Cross) of the *Te Igitur* (13<sup>th</sup> Century)**

William Durand: Now it has happened, by God's permission, without human industry having done anything for it, that the Canon begins with the letter T, which is called in Hebrew *thau*. *This letter represents and expresses by its form the figure and the mystery of the Cross*; which is why the Lord said, by the mouth of Ezekiel, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem: and mark Thou upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and mourn for all the abominations that are committed in the midst thereof" [Ezek 9:4 Vulgate], because it was in the Passion of Christ that all these things have been accomplished and have the efficacy of the Cross. *However, in some books, we represent the majesty of the Father and also the image of Jesus crucified, so that the priest has some representation of Him whom he invokes and to whom he speaks these words, "We, therefore," etc., and let him contemplate with the eyes of the heart the Passion that is represented in the book*.<sup>12</sup>

### **The Angel of the Heavenly Altar (13<sup>th</sup> Century)**

St. Thomas Aquinas: The priest does not pray that the sacramental species may be borne up to heaven; nor that Christ's true body may be borne thither, for it does not cease to be there; *but he offers this prayer for Christ's mystical body, which is signified in this sacrament, that the angel standing by at the Divine mysteries may present to God the prayers of both priest and people, according to Apoc. 8:4: "And the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints ascended up before God, from the hand of the angel."*<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Council of Trent, Doctrines and Canons on the Sacrifice of the Mass (17 September, 1562), Chapter 4. In Denzinger, *Compendium of Creeds*, no. 1745.

<sup>11</sup> Augustine, *Sermon 159*. In Saint Augustine, *Sermons III/5 (148-183)* (trans. Edmund Hill, O.P.; Works of Saint Augustine III/5; Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press, 1992), 121.

<sup>12</sup> Durandus, *Rationale of the Divine Offices*, 4.35.11.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, III, q. 83, art. 5.

**Questions for Discussion and Reflection**

1. What are some distinctive elements of Eucharistic Prayer I? When does the Church encourage priests to pray Eucharistic Prayer I?

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2. What are the biblical roots of Eucharistic Prayer I?

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3. How is Eucharistic Prayer I rooted in the living Tradition?

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**For Further Reading**

Edward Foley, ed. *A Commentary on the Order of Mass of The Roman Missal*. John F. Baldovin, Mary Collins, and Joanne M. Pierce, associate eds. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2011. [Pp. 230-278 provide an extensive analysis of the history and theology of the Roman Canon.]

Mazza, Enrico. *The Eucharistic Prayers of the Roman Rite*. Translated by Matthew J. O’Connell. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2004. Pp. 49-87. [An in-depth historical and theological explanation of the four Eucharistic Prayers of the Roman Rite, with an entire chapter on EP I.]