

### **a. *Preparation for the Banquet of the Eucharist***

- 371 The *Cherubic Hymn* prepares us for the Banquet of the Eucharist. Before we can "lift our hearts on high" and "sing the thrice-Holy Hymn," that is, "Holy, holy, holy Lord of Sabaoth," we need to "set aside all cares of life" so that indeed "we may receive the King of all" in Holy Communion.
- 372 During the Cherubic Hymn the priest prays that the Lord would make him worthy "to stand before this, [his] holy table, and offer the sacrifice of [his] holy and most pure Body and precious Blood." During the Great Entrance he transfers the gifts, prepared on the Proskomide table, to the Holy Table. This symbolizes the triumphant entry of Christ into Jerusalem for the salvific sacrifice, as well as our reception of him as the King of all—visible and invisible, the living and the dead—in order to be joined to his Paschal Mystery. This is why, as he processes with the gifts to the Holy Table, the priest commemorates the Church hierarchy and all the faithful. He asks that the Lord remember them—make them participants of his kingdom.
- 373 In the Litany of Supplications, the priest prays for "the gifts that have been presented." He asks that "the good Spirit of [God's] grace may rest upon us, upon these gifts present before us, and upon all [his] people." Before the Symbol of Faith, that is, the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, the deacon exclaims: "Let us love one another..." This indicates that a common confession of faith is possible only in love, a love that we receive from our Lord and then offer to our neighbour. As a sign of this love, the priests kiss the Holy Table and exchange the holy kiss among themselves, greeting each other with the words, "Christ is among us." The response is, "He is and will be." this expresses the unity of the liturgical assembly in Christ. We also express this unity by pronouncing the Symbol of Faith. In this Creed, each of us, personally and together with others, confesses the faith of the Church in "the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Trinity one in being and undivided."

### **b. *The Anaphora***

- 374 Saint Justin Martyr testifies to the faith of the early Church:

Just as Jesus Christ our Saviour was made flesh through the Word of God, and took on flesh and blood for our salvation, so too (we have been taught that) through the word of prayer that comes from him, the food over which the thanksgiving has been spoken

becomes the Flesh and Blood of the incarnate Jesus, in order to nourish and transform our flesh and blood.<sup>293</sup>

The Eucharistic Prayer, or Anaphora (from the Greek, meaning oblation or lifts up), which the presider proclaims over the bread and wine, expresses the fourfold substance of the mystery of the Eucharist: (i) it is thanksgiving to the Father for creating the world and giving his Son for our salvation; (ii) it is the memorial of all that the Son of God did for us; (iii) it is the offering of ourselves to the Father in "rational and bloodless worship;" and, (iv) it is prayer for the sending of the Holy Spirit "upon us and upon these gifts" so that the mystery of salvation be accomplished in us.

#### 1) Thanksgiving

375 The prayer of thanksgiving is preceded by the dialogue between the clergy and the faithful. There we hear the basic conditions of the Eucharistic mystery: receiving the "mercy of peace"—God's gift of reconciliation—we respond with the "sacrifice of praise." Our response is praise, blessing, thanksgiving, worship, and offering—the entire Eucharistic work. We are able to bring this "holy oblation" because we have received "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship [i.e., communion] of the Holy Spirit."

376 The mystery of the Eucharist takes its name from this prayer of thanksgiving in which we express gratitude for all that we have received from God. We thank God "for all things which we know and do not know, the benefits bestowed upon us, both manifest and hidden. "This gratitude-thanksgiving precedes all petitions for our needs. This is because we realize that, having given us his Son and the Holy Spirit, he has given us all for our salvation. Praying to God, the "ineffable, inconceivable, invisible, incomprehensible," we confess that he is infinitely greater than all that we know or can say about him or his deeds. We thank God for creation: "[he] brought us from nothingness into being, and for salvation: "After we fell [he] raised us up again [and] did not cease doing everything until [he] led us to heaven and granted us [his] future kingdom." We also thank him "for this liturgy which [he has] deigned to accept from our hands." And then we thank him for making us able to know this gift and to respond to it. Joining the song of the Seraphim "Holy, holy, holy, "we offer praise to the Most Holy Trinity: "Holy are you—truly all-holy—you and your only-begotten Son and your Holy Spirit."

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<sup>293</sup> JUSTIN MARTYR, *Apology*, I, 66: PG 6, 428-429.