

Choosing the Eucharistic Prayer

The centre and summit of the entire celebration is the Eucharistic Prayer, that is, the prayer of thanksgiving and sanctification

The Preface

The purpose of the many prefaces that enrich the Roman Missal is to bring out more fully the motives for thanksgiving within the Eucharistic Prayer and to set out more clearly the different facets of the mystery of salvation.

The Eucharistic Prayers

- a. Eucharistic Prayer I, that is, the Roman Canon is especially suited to be sung or said on days when there is a proper text for the *Communicantes* (In union with the whole Church) or in Masses endowed with a proper form of the *Hanc igitur* (Father, accept this offering) and also in the celebrations of the Apostles and of the Saints mentioned in the Prayer itself; it is likewise especially appropriate for Sundays, unless for pastoral considerations Eucharistic Prayer III is preferred.
- b. Eucharistic Prayer II, on account of its particular features, is more appropriately used on weekdays or in special circumstances. Although it has been provided with its own Preface, it may be used with other Prefaces, especially those that summarize the mystery of salvation, such as the common Prefaces. When Mass is celebrated for a particular dead person, the special formula may be inserted in the place indicated, namely, before the *Memento etiam* (Remember our brothers and sisters).
- c. Eucharistic Prayer III may be said with any Preface. Its use is preferred on Sundays and Feast days. If, however, this Eucharistic Prayer is used in Masses for the Dead, the special formula for the dead may be used, to be included at the proper place.
- d. Eucharistic Prayer IV has an invariable Preface and gives a fuller summary of salvation history. It may be used when a Mass has no Preface of its own and on Sundays in Ordinary Time. Because of its structure, no special formula for the dead may be inserted into this prayer.

GIRM 78, 364–5

Some Questions

- What tones and other sung settings are in the parish repertoire for sung Eucharistic Prayers - including Prefaces, Sanctus and other acclamations?
- Who selects the Eucharistic Prayer and Preface for Mass? Why?
- Is choice advised to music group before rest of music is chosen?

Further References

General Instruction of the Roman Missal:
17–18, 20; 78–79; 352

Celebrating the Mass: 186–199

Redemptionis Sacramentum: 36–42, 51–56

Practical Points

- In addition to the four Eucharistic Prayers in the Missal, the following are also approved for use: Eucharistic Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions; for Reconciliation; for Masses with Children; for Masses with Deaf People.
- Guidance concerning the use of these additional prayers is given in *Celebrating the Mass*, 188.

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Questions for Groups

1. What is good about current practice?
What concerns do you have?

4. Who is most directly involved in these matters, e.g. liturgical ministers?
What formation/information is necessary to engage them in the renewal of current practice?

2. In what ways does the documentation affirm or challenge your current practice?

5. How will the assembly be engaged in the process?
What, in particular, needs addressing at Sunday and/or weekday celebrations?

3. Prioritise the issues you have identified.

6. How will you know whether the formation has worked?