

Number Eleven: Introduction to the Eucharistic Prayers

The four principal Eucharistic Prayers that we use are very ancient in terms of their content. The New Missal translation is a more literally accurate translation of the language used in the oldest prayers. It is important to recognize that there is a distinctive “Christian way of speaking” in the Eucharistic prayers. The language and the structure of these prayers sound different because the Eucharistic Prayers are a unique communication between human beings and God. What takes place during the Eucharistic Prayer is a miracle – ordinary bread and wine are transformed into the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ! The different rhythm, formulation and “sound” of the language we use draws our attention to the fact that what we are participating in at the Divine Liturgy is something completely different than any other dialogue or activity we do anywhere else. The language in the Eucharistic Prayers of the New Missal sounds very humble, for example, which emphasizes our dependence on God’s goodness and mercy. Another difference is the increased emphasis on praising God and thanking Him in more effusive and respectful terms. These changes will help us remember that what we participating in together is a miraculous, blessed and most special event.