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**ANAPHORAS**  
of the  
**MASS**





GUIDELINES FOR THE  
EPISCOPAL CONFERENCES  
FOR A CATECHESIS OF THE  
FAITHFUL CONCERNING THE  
ANAPHORAS OF THE MASS

**Prepared by the Consilium for the Implementation  
of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy**

June 14, 1968

and

DECREE OF THE SACRED  
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## GUIDELINES FOR THE ANAPHORAS OF THE MASS

In recent months episcopal conferences everywhere have taken advantage of the permission to proclaim the Canon of the Mass in the vernacular. The introduction of the new anaphoras in the Roman liturgy now marks a further step forward. The purpose of these improvements is clearly spiritual and pastoral: to open the biblical treasures and the riches of the tradition of the universal Church, in the manner of celebrating the Eucharist, more generously for the clergy and faithful, and to facilitate the understanding and vital assimilation of this wealth. In this way they will be more easily able to achieve that full, active participation, both internal and external, which the Council set as the goal of liturgical reform. By this new discipline concerning the anaphoras, the Church therefore wishes to be of assistance to every priest, every baptized Christian and every community of faithful in assuring that the entire worship of the Church and the whole Christian life really may "flow from and lead to the celebration of the eucharistic sacrifice" (Instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium*, n.3; cf. Vatican Council II, *Lumen gentium*, n.11; *Sacrosanctum concilium*, n.41; *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, nn.2,5,6; *Unitatis redintegratio*, n.15).

It is essential though that an intensive, spiritual and catechetical preparation precede and accompany the introduction of this new discipline, beginning with the clergy, then with specially competent groups, and finally with all the faithful.

For the clergy, the preparatory catechesis should also be more technical, but always keeping in mind, and trying to facilitate, their

pastoral responsibilities. In the education of the faithful, care must be taken to avoid, as much as possible, lengthy historical explanations and difficult theological fine points (especially if these are questions still being discussed by the theologians themselves); rather, stress should be placed on the meaning of these prayers for modern man and on their relevance for daily life.

The principal points which seem necessary in attempting to offer the faithful an adequate catechesis on the anaphoras are the following:

### I. *The meaning of an anaphora in general*

Since the terminology which will be adopted in every language to designate the anaphora (anaphora, eucharistic prayer, canon, etc.) is new, it should be explained to the people.

The anaphora is the great prayer which is said during the central part of the Mass; it begins with "The Lord be with you . . . Let us lift up our hearts . . ." and ends with "Through him, in him, with him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, forever and ever. Amen."

It is a prayer of joyful thanksgiving and praise to the Father, and also a prayer of supplication to Him, pronounced over the bread and wine. During the course of this proclamation, what Jesus did at the Last Supper is repeated and made present, in imitation of Him and in obedience to His command, before partaking of His Body and Blood in communion.

### II. *The essential elements of the anaphora*

The components of an anaphora consist of a nucleus and of elements of further development.

a) The nucleus is the narration-reactualization of that which Jesus did at the Last Supper, with the exception of the actual breaking of bread and communion which take place in the final part of the Mass.

For Jesus took the bread and: 1. proclaimed over it a prayer of thanksgiving and praise to the Father; 2. broke the bread and distributed it; 3. said: take and eat, this is my body given for you; 4. and added: do this “in memory” of me, that is, engage in a celebration which remembers and contains that which I am and have done for you.

Jesus did likewise with the chalice.

These elements, therefore, constitute the nucleus of the anaphora, which consists in:

1. A hymn of thanksgiving and of praise to the Father for the marvelous works of His goodness to us; and first and foremost among these, for our redemption in Christ our Lord (in the Roman Canon: the preface).

2. The narration of the gestures and words pronounced by Jesus in the institution of the Eucharist (in the Roman Canon: *Qui pridie*).

3. We are not, however, speaking of a mere narration of something which only happened in the past; but rather, of a narration which intends to make what Jesus did present and actual here and now. Consequently, there is a petition addressed to the Father to make this narration effective in our midst by sanctifying the bread and wine, that is, by making them become the Body and Blood of Christ (in the Roman Canon: *quam oblationem*), so that we who will receive these gifts may be sanctified by them (in the Roman Canon: *Supra quae . . .*).

4. Jesus said that we should do this “in memory” of Him: that is, give ourselves to a celebration which remembers and contains what He did for us. This refers to our redemption, achieved by His redemptive death on the cross. In other words, that which He did refers above all to His body given for us and to His blood shed for our sins. The eucharistic celebration, as a “memorial” which makes present the Body given for us and the Blood shed for our sins, implies a sacrificial offering. For this reason, the anaphora includes a prayer of offering of holy gifts “in memory” of His

passion, death and resurrection (practically speaking, of the entire economy of Christ's redemption). (In the Roman Canon: *Unde et memores . . . offerimus.*)

5. The anaphora concludes with a doxology to which all the people respond Amen.

b) To this nucleus, three further elements are added: 1. The Sanctus as a conclusion, in which all the people participate, to the hymn of joyful thanksgiving or preface. 2. The prayers of intercession for those for whom the sacrifice is offered—a natural evolution of the concept of offering sacrifice for someone's benefit (in the Roman Canon: *In primis quae tibi offerimus, Memento of the living, Hanc igitur*, and after the institution narrative: *Memento of the dead and the Nobis quoque*). 3. The commemoration of the saints, which is a further development of the intercessions.

### III. *Variety of texts for the anaphora*

In its different liturgies, especially in the Oriental ones, our tradition contains a wide variety of texts for the eucharistic prayer. One thus notes certain elements common to them all, and at the same time certain differences, sometimes quite noteworthy, in their secondary elements.

1. Even as far as the common elements are concerned, a diversity is often found in their placement in the various eucharistic prayers. For example, the supplication that the Father make of the bread and wine the Body and Blood of Christ comes before the institution narrative in the Roman Canon (*Quam oblationem*). In the anaphoras derived from the liturgy of Antioch, however, it is found after this narration; whereas in the early liturgy of Alexandria it probably comes before, as in the Roman Canon. But in the later texts of the Church of Alexandria this supplication is repeated twice: before and after the institution narrative. The intercessions for the living and dead are found separated, before and after the institution narrative, in the Roman Canon. In the Alexandrian tradition though, these are found together before, while in the Antiochene tradition together after, the institution nar-



rative. It follows that the pattern of the anaphora which results from the arrangement of its various elements can vary to some extent, and that its resulting structure may be of a greater or lesser degree of clarity.

2. Another reason for differences comes from the fact that in some liturgical traditions almost all the elements of the anaphora are fixed or constant and do not vary according to the feast: this is the case in the Eastern liturgies. But in other traditions, certain important elements do vary according to the feast. The Roman Canon has variant prefaces (the *Hanc igitur* rarely changes); in the Spanish and Gallican traditions the whole text varies according to the feast, except for the institution narrative.

3. A third element of variety arises from putting more or less emphasis on certain ideas or aspects, rather than on others.

4. A fourth factor comes from possible varieties of style: more or less concise, solemn, metaphorical, scriptural, etc.

Every Oriental Church usually has more than one anaphora, and sometimes several; on some occasions they use one, at other times another, depending on the circumstances.

This variety of anaphoras in the tradition of the universal Church is of very real value because one anaphora complements another, insofar as each one expresses some concepts which cannot possibly be expressed completely or in the same way in them all.

#### IV. *New anaphoras in the Roman liturgy*

Faithful to the wish expressed by many bishops, which was recently confirmed in the Synod of Bishops, and desirous of broadening the possible ways of expressing, in the central part of the eucharistic celebration, the marvelous events of God's goodness and of the history of salvation, the Holy See has introduced three new anaphoras into the Roman liturgy.

And so, including the Roman Canon (hereafter called Anaphora I), the Roman liturgy will, in the future, have four anaphoras.

But why this innovation? A consideration of the variety of anaphoras in the tradition of the universal Church, and of the contents of each, clearly shows that no one anaphora is able to contain all the riches which are desirable from a pastoral, spiritual and theological viewpoint. To complement the naturally inevitable limitations of each one, a plurality of texts is necessary. With the sole exception of the Church of Rome, all Christian Churches have always had, and continue to have, a variety of anaphoras. Some of them have a very wide variety. By introducing three new anaphoras into the Roman liturgy in addition to the Roman Canon, the Church now wishes to give this Roman liturgy a similar richness pastorally, spiritually and liturgically.

## V. *The characteristics of the anaphora in the Roman liturgy*

### 1. *The Roman Canon*

From the viewpoint of the structural arrangement of its various components, the Roman Canon is characterized by its placement of the supplication that the Father make the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ (*Quam oblationem*) before the institution narrative. Another feature is that it has the intercessions for the living and dead partially before and partially after that same narrative. The commemoration of saints is likewise found in two separate prayers. A final characteristic is that the first part of the Canon, the preface, is variable according to the different feasts (a quality found also in the Spanish and Gallican traditions), while the *Hanc igitur* varies only rarely.

In our Roman Canon, however, the unity and logical development of ideas are not easily perceived. One receives the impression that the Canon is composed of a series of juxtaposed prayers, which are apparently independent and which hardly seem to flow, one from another. To discover their organic unity, a certain amount of reflective analysis is necessary.

Nevertheless, the Roman characteristic of variant prefaces according to the feast contributes greatly to the wealth and variety of the first part of the Canon. The nine new prefaces which the

liturgical reform is introducing increase the spiritual and pastoral potential of this element even more.

From the aspect of a thematic idea, the specific motif of the Roman Canon is its constant insistence on the offering of gifts and asking God to accept them for our benefit.

The Roman Canon also has its own characteristic literary style. This typically “Roman” style is distinguished by solemnity, redundancy and brevity—all simultaneously.

The value of the Roman Canon as a theological, liturgical and spiritual document of the Latin Church is exceptionally precious. It dates from at least the beginning of the fifth century, and has undergone practically no change since the beginning of the seventh century. It later became the one and only canon for the entire Latin Church.

2. The three new anaphoras were composed on the basis of the following criteria:

a) Unity and clarity of structure, by means of a logical flow of ideas and an obvious development of parts, one from another.

Yet, the structure is basically identical in all three cases:

1) Preface (variable in Anaphoras II and III; constant in IV) terminating with the Sanctus.

2) Movement from the Sanctus to the consecratory epiclesis, that is, to the supplication to the Father that, by the power of the Spirit, He may make the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ. This section is very brief in Anaphora II, relatively brief in III and rather long in IV.

3) Consecratory epiclesis.

4) Institution narrative.

5) Anamnesis, that is, the “memorial” of the passion and, at the same time, of the “mystery” of Christ, together with the offering of the divine victim.

6) Prayer for the acceptance of the offering and for a fruitful communion.

7) and 8) Commemoration of saints and intercessions (Anaphora III), or intercessions and commemoration of saints (Anaphoras II and IV).

9) Final doxology.

The principal difference between this structure and that of our Roman Canon is that in the three new anaphoras the commemoration of saints and intercessions are grouped together in the second part of the anaphora, while in the Roman Canon they partially precede and partially follow the institution narrative. Following the example of the Antiochene tradition, this new arrangement gives these three compositions a much greater clarity, due to a natural development of the various parts. Nevertheless, the new anaphoras retain the distinctively Roman style, mainly by placing the consecratory epiclesis before the institution narrative.

b) Variety. Even though all have this same basic structure, yet each of the three new anaphoras has its own spiritual, pastoral and stylistic character which distinguishes them from one another as well as from the Roman Canon. Thus, as much as possible, each of these three anaphoras avoids a repetition of concepts, words and phrases found in our Roman Canon or in another one of the new compositions.

The Roman liturgy is noticeably enriched by these three new anaphoras. For by their use, fresh expression can now be given among other things, to our theology of the Eucharist, of salvation history, of the People of God and of the Church in particular, as well as to the theology of the Holy Spirit in the Church and, specifically, of the Spirit's role in the Eucharist. The world-wide and ecumenical horizons of the Second Vatican Council and also those of the so-called theology of secular values will find here a discrete, biblical and real reflection. All this in no way detracts from the fact that these new texts possess a most definitely traditional character; this is an easily documented fact.

Anaphora II is distinguished by brevity and simplicity of concepts. Its style and several of its expressions are inspired by the Anaphora of Hippolytus (beginning of the third century).

Moderate length, clarity of structure and an immediately noticeable flowing of one part into the next are the distinguishing marks of Anaphora III. Its structure and style are designed for use with any of the old or new Roman prefaces, to which it is deliberately attuned.

The specific characteristic of Anaphora IV is its synthetic presentation of the total movement of salvation history. This panoramic summary, which is modeled upon the admirable Antiochene tradition, is developed in orderly fashion before the institution narrative. Consequently, the preface needs only to touch upon the themes of creation in general and the creation of the angels in particular. For these first two phases of the history of salvation are further developed, in a consideration of the creation of man and what follows, between the Sanctus and epiclesis.

For this reason the preface of this fourth anaphora must always be the same. If it were variable according to the feast, it would inevitably have to treat of other themes. This, however, would complicate, disorganize or reduplicate parts of an organic synthesis of salvation history which is the whole point of this anaphora.

Helping the faithful on occasion to sense the total movement of salvation history is something of great pastoral value. Such a well-ordered and complete synthesis can serve as the general framework, in the minds of the faithful, within which the various particulars of this history of salvation, which are highlighted on other occasions, can find their orientation and due place.

## VI. *Guidelines for the use of the anaphoras*

To establish fixed and binding criteria for the four anaphoras of the Roman liturgy which would determine their selection and usage according to a particular type of feast or according to a specific liturgical season would be wrong. These new compositions

were deliberately designed to fit the Roman tradition, which does not develop a theme referring to the mystery being celebrated for the entire anaphora; the Roman tradition, rather, limits itself to a presentation of one aspect in the preface.

Therefore, the prevailing criteria must be of a pastoral nature: (a) the possibility of making use of the already existing texts, which are proper to the greater solemnities, together with the new prayers; (b) the relationship of the effective value of the text to the intellectual and spiritual potential of the faithful for whom it is chosen.

These two pastoral principles would be reflected in norms such as these:

1. The Roman Canon, which can be used at any time, ought to be the preferred choice for those special feasts which have proper texts as part of the anaphora, i.e., the preface, *Communicantes*, *Hanc igitur*. These are the texts which, in the Roman tradition, give the anaphora the characteristic motif of the day. Moreover, this anaphora should be used for days on which saints mentioned in the Canon are celebrated.

2. The second eucharistic prayer, distinguished by the concise quality of its language and the relative simplicity of its concepts, can be used with great benefit for ferial Masses, and Masses for children, youth or small groups. Its simplicity makes it a good starting point in a catechesis on the various elements of a eucharistic prayer.

It has a proper preface which should be used with the rest of this prayer. Nevertheless, as a substitute, another similar preface can be used, i.e., one which concisely expresses the mystery of salvation, e.g., the new prefaces proposed for Sundays throughout the year or the new common prefaces.

3. The third eucharistic prayer can be joined to anyone of the existing prefaces in the Missal. It could be used alternately with the Roman Canon for Sundays.

4. The fourth eucharistic prayer should be used in its entirety, with no substitution of parts possible. Even the preface must remain constant. Moreover, since it presents a rather broad synthesis of salvation history which presumes a fairly solid grasp of Sacred Scripture, it should be the preferred choice for groups that are well-grounded in the Scriptures. It may be used on days which do not demand a proper preface or proper part of the Canon.

Following the example of the Roman Canon which has some proper elements for certain occasions (the *Hanc igitur*), the new eucharistic prayers have also been provided with a special embolism. This special embolism can be inserted in the intercessions when the Mass is celebrated for someone deceased. This can be inserted into the second and third anaphoras; not, however, in the fourth, for here the unified structure would be broken.

### *Conclusion*

These are the guidelines which were used in the work of preparing the new eucharistic prayers. To propose them with the presentation of the new texts was considered useful, so that they might facilitate an understanding of the true character and purpose of these compositions. In this way they can contribute, from the outset, to the nourishment of the piety of the faithful, to their more intelligent participation in celebrating the eucharistic mystery, and, as the specific fruit of these new prayers, to the health and growth of Christian formation and life.

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# DECREE OF THE SACRED CONGREGATION OF RITES

May 23, 1968

In the eucharistic prayer, during the celebration of Mass, the Church is accustomed to repeat what Christ did at the Last Supper and to give thanks to the merciful Father for the wonderful deeds accomplished by him in Christ in the economy of salvation—in obedience to the commandment of the Lord himself who said: “Do this in memory of me” (1 Cor. 11:24-25). In recent times many bishops and members of the faithful, including promoters of the liturgy, have expressed the desire that this be done in richer and more varied forms and that the Latin Church, like other Churches, would introduce additional eucharistic prayers besides the traditional and venerable Roman Canon, which clearly is also to remain in use.

At the direction of the Supreme Pontiff, the Consilium for the implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy has therefore prepared three new eucharistic prayers, together with a larger body of prefaces. The latter, since they are parts of the eucharistic prayer itself, unfold and proclaim the mystery of salvation in a clearer manner during the course of the year.

This Sacred Congregation of Rites has examined these texts prepared by the Consilium, and the Supreme Pontiff, Paul VI, has approved them and permitted them to be published, so that they may be used in all churches of the Latin rite beginning on August 15, 1968, the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.



Vernacular translations of these texts should be approved by the Conferences of Bishops in accord with the norm of the conciliar Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (art. 36, §3 and 4) and the instruction *Inter Oecumenici* (n. 29 and 30), and the acts to be approved, that is, confirmed by the Apostolic See, should be sent to the Consilium as usual, together with the translations.

All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

Rome, May 23, 1968, the feast of the Ascension of the Lord.

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