The Eucharistic Prayer and the Holy Spirit
An analysis of the Epiclesis and its effects in the celebration of the Roman Mass

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Erklärung

Ich versichere, dass ich die Diplomarbeit selbstständig verfasst habe, andere als die angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel nicht benutzt und mich auch sonst keiner unerlaubten Hilfe bedient habe.

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Dedication

To my late parents:
Pa Abraham Obi Nwachukwu
Mrs. Rosaline Agunasaokwu Nwachukwu
And all the Faithful departed

„It is our choice of good or evil that determines our character,
not our opinion about good or evil“.
- Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics.
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Abstract

The eucharistic prayer of the church is the heart and centre of the eucharistic celebration. The community of the faithful celebrates the eucharist because Christ instituted it as a memorial sacrifice of love and a worship of praise and thanksgiving to God the Father which he entrusted to the care of the apostles as a new covenant before his passion. For the church it is also a celebration of faith in the paschal mystery of the risen Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit which is given to the church on the day of pentecost as the counsellor evokes the faith of the church in the Word of God made flesh and inspires the church’s articulation and reflection of this mystery, hence the church has never ceased to celebrate this mystery of faith trusting the promise of the abiding presence of the risen Lord in his mystical body as the High Priest and so makes the liturgy of the church – this worship of glory in honour of the Holy Trinity – as the work of the Holy Spirit.

The four eucharistic prayers of the 1970 Roman Missal are the presidential prayers of the church during the liturgy of the eucharist through which praise, thanksgiving and supplication are made in the power of the Spirit of Christ to God for his redemptive work in Christ. The prayers have a common, but double epicletic petition: that God the Father may send down his Spirit on the gifts of bread and wine offered to him by the church so that together with the divine Word of Christ they may become the body and blood of Christ his Son. And that nourished by this body and blood of Christ, the church here present in the faithful in worship, may be filled with the Holy Spirit and be sanctified to become one Body and one Spirit in Christ.

This study has, therefore, attempted to analyse the content of the epiclesis of the eucharistic prayers in order to bring out the theological and devotional values with respect to its effects on the faithful during the Mass. It is observed that the epiclesis itself, as a prayer of invocation of the Holy Spirit which is addressed to God the Father, is actually a signification of God’s self-communication and self-revelation through his divine presence in Christ his Son by the power of his Spirit. The prayer texts are a testimony of the mystical event of every eucharistic action. In this event a petition is made to God and he manifests himself concretely by his personal presence in the Son in the transformed eucharistic bread and wine through the Holy Spirit. So that the efficacy of the prayer of epiclesis becomes a ritual expression of the dynamic role of the Spirit of God in the economy of salvation thereby revealing the presence of Christ as eucharistic food of salvation for the faithful.
Introduction

As the Christian Liturgy gradually establishes itself from the Jewish Liturgy in the early church, one of the essential creations of Christian worship is the celebration of the Holy Eucharist as the high point of her Christian mystery.¹ It is a celebration of the Paschal Mystery of the risen Lord Jesus Christ as this tradition is handed over to us in the scriptures of the New Testament. Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the early church was able to formulate her great traditional Eucharistic prayer which expresses in a magnificent way the Eucharistic mystery, whereby the Holy Spirit joins together the church’s sacrifice at the altar to that of the historical sacrifice of Christ on the cross. So that consequently, the Mass communicates to us the redemptive effects of Christ’s crucifixion and his death on the cross that brings us reconciliation and fellowship with God the Father through Christ himself. And in the same manner brings us communion with each other. That means in effect that the Spirit fosters the active participation in worship of the faithful with the celebrating priest in order to realize the Eucharistic “koinonia”² which is the ultimate aim of the Eucharistic celebration.

If then, the Liturgy is, according to Pope Pius XI, the main vehicle of the ordinary Magisterium of the church³ it is not, in the first place, because of the authority of those who composed it or ratified it, but because of the active presence of the Holy Spirit who makes Christ present in the celebrating community. One sees from this point of view that the root of both the sacrificial and the sacramental aspects of the Eucharist is to be found in the activity of the Holy Spirit who dwells in the mystical body as its soul. Therefore, the Liturgy itself is the work of the Holy Spirit⁴ through which the church is able to be in touch with the reality behind her faith in an unprecedented manner, and for this reason the Holy Mass is the proper context for understanding the Christian mystery in which the faithful are participating. It is within the context of the Father sending the Spirit [Pentecost and the epiclesis of the Mass] to make us one body with Christ and to confirm our faith in truth, and the Spirit uniting us to Christ in our ascent to the Father in worship and praise [the doxology at the end of the Eucharistic prayer], that the New Testament was written and which through the Eucharistic

action and gestures a deeper catholic understanding of it is expressed. It is therefore, through the means of eucharistic action that the church is able later to articulate her trinitarian mystery in the Apostles Creed [Credo]. In this sense the church in her liturgy is the work of the Spirit, the third person of the Holy Trinity. The church proclaims her faith to the world that God lives in communion as one God in three persons and that God equally wishes and therefore, invites all people to share in this same communion with him the Father, through his Son Jesus Christ whom he sent into the world as his eternal Word, and in the Holy Spirit. So that by this sharing in his divine life we, as God’s people, may learn to live in a new communion with one another in worship and praise of the Holy Trinity. That is why the whole form of the eucharistic rite is thoroughly trinitarian in its structure. Two of its dimensions in the eucharist are noteworthy: firstly, God the Father gives himself through his Son Jesus Christ to the world in the church, specifically, the faithful in worship and the Holy Spirit manifests and makes clear the very purpose of this gift given to the world through the ministry of the church. And secondly, the church responds by offering back to God the Father in thanksgiving and praise the same divine gift she has received, the eternally-begotten Son of the Father. The Holy Spirit who is the bond between the Father and the Son now effects the transformation of the gifts of the church into the real body and blood of the Son. This explains, in the words of Bouyer,

the eucharist of the church, being by nature a human response to the Word of God in Jesus Christ, cannot be fully accomplished as long as the church is not consummated in her perfect union with her Bridegroom, the whole Christ reaching his adulthood only then in the definitive multitude and the perfect union of all his members. It is this movement, this spiritual burst of energy of the eucharist, which from the first is oriented toward the ‘sign of the Son of Man,’ that documents of the Christian liturgy’s creative period must allow us to recapture, and then to rediscover in the great prayers which have remained classic and which still today continue to consecrate our eucharists.\(^5\)

In the worship of the church, there is no place that the dynamic of the Holy Spirit is more greatly experienced than in the celebration of the eucharist – the Holy Mass. And this celebration makes the church to be what it is, even as also noted in Lumen Gentium 4: “Hence the universal Church is seen to be ‘a people brought into unity from the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.’”\(^6\) Now the desire of many in our Catholic Church is to rediscover a fully lively and moving eucharistic celebration that can be called a true worship

\(^5\) Bouyer, Eucharist, 13-14.
\(^6\) See LG, 4.
in the spirit where the experience of the divine presence of God in the worship and the transforming power of his Spirit can be felt. This can be achieved only when we have a new appreciation of the profound activity of the Holy Spirit in the holy celebration of the eucharist.

This study therefore, has as its aim to examine the eucharistic prayer of the Holy Mass in the light of the epiclesis. By so doing, the study attempts to describe and demonstrate the devotional aspect of the eucharistic prayer with respect to God’s action in the Spirit. Although the precise role of the Holy Spirit in relation to worship and the celebration of the eucharist remains not fully developed in the catholic theological discourse, the study focuses on the epiclesis as a testimony as well as an expression of the communication of God’s fellowship with his people who beseech him. It maintains the argument that the entire eucharistic celebration is a trinitarian event which has its summit in the invocation of the Holy Spirit during the Mass. That God the Father is supported by the Spirit, at the epiclesis, to give his only-begotten Son to the church in worship. That the Son, aided by the Spirit, empties himself at the anamnesis in order to give his body and blood to his faithful in worship – the celebrating community. And that this same Spirit, now comes upon the communicants so that they may receive the fullness of grace, be confirmed in the truth of the faith and thus share in the unity, peace and joy of the eternal Holy Trinity. It means in essence that salvation is seen in the fact that through the celebration of this great mystery the church is now able to share in the divine life of the three persons of the Trinity. This is obvious especially in the eucharistic prayer whereby the celebrating priest invokes the power of the Holy Spirit from God the Father over the gifts of bread and wine, says the words of Jesus Christ in total obedience to the Father and God makes present the paschal mystery, i.e. the body and blood of Jesus Christ in the eucharist. And he further asks the Holy Spirit to transform the worshippers taking part in the celebration so that they may share in the communion and divine life of God through his Son. However, it is the whole assembly participating as worshippers who, through the mouth of the priest, calls upon God to make his presence felt here and now. The priest in this case “appears as authorized spokesperson of the community, proclaiming God’s deeds in Christ and petitioning that the saving work of Christ be applied in the present. In this activity, he is supported by the ‘Amen’ of the liturgical assembly, identifying this prayer as its own”.

Therefore, the whole eucharistic event is a mutual encounter between God present in space and time and the faithful in worship gathered together in prayer to receive the coming Lord and to express this coming in earthly symbols and ritual. And the Holy Spirit, who is the go-between the Father and the Son, acts not only upon the eucharistic elements or gifts but also upon the faithful in worship.

The study will examine liturgical texts and documents of the church as well as attempt an evaluation and interpretation of the materials in the light of the current theological discourse on the issue. Its scope is limited to the eucharistic prayer in its four forms as represented in the Roman Missal of 1970 and the action of the Holy Spirit expressed in the epiclesis of the Mass.
Chapter One

Eucharistic Prayer and Epiclesis in its historical context

The liturgical action expresses the faith of the church and it has always been accompanied by the liturgical formula of words and gestures whose sacramental meaning transcend time and space. In the catholic tradition every such liturgical action begins with the sign of the cross and the corresponding words which call down the three divine persons upon the worshipping assembly signifying the fact of the divine presence in their midst. This is so because in the liturgy, and more especially the eucharist, the church prays and celebrates at the same time. It is a mystical coming together of the divine and the human. And what helps to underline both the divine action and the faith of the church in the sacraments is the prayer character of the epiclesis which can take various forms. Probst attempts to give us an understanding of epiclesis in the following words:

Unter Epiklese versteht man allgemein das Anrufen Gottes über einer Person oder Sache, die dadurch geheiligt wird. Diese Gebetsart wird vor allem durch das feierliche Anrufen des Namens Gottes vollzogen.8

Its immediate context is that of the presence of Christ [the pneuma of the Logos] in worship. And the church, the celebrating assembly or community, is totally dependent on God through the action of the Holy Spirit for this presence. Kunzler brings out the point when he said that der Epiklese liegt die Glaubensüberzeugung zugrunde, dass jedes Heilswirken kein Menschenwerk sein kann, sondern von Gott erbeten werden muss. In der heilsökonomischen Sicht der Trinität ist der Heilige Geist der Übergeber und Vollender der göttlichen Gnade, und deshalb ist er es, der in der Epiklese des Eucharistischen Hochgebetes, aber auch in den epikletischen Elementen der anderen Sakramente angerufen wird.9

The Canon of the Mass which was at once eucharist and epiclesis in the ancient and broad sense of the word presents a good example of this divine presence in praise of the Trinity.10

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9 Ibid., 491-492.
Already the early liturgical texts bear testimony of the dynamic interchange between the
divine action in the sacraments and the praying community within the framework of the
eucharistic prayer. For according to Schillebeeckx, “the Fathers thought of the sacraments as
the bringing together of an earthly and a heavenly element, which was manifested externally
in the liturgical action and a prayer of petition or epiclesis”. This interplay between both
actions – the divine and the human – in realizing the eucharistic celebration has inspired the
fathers of the church in modern times to see the eucharist as the source and summit of the
Christian life.

1.1. Patristic Era

In the early church, the fathers considered the whole eucharistic prayer as a consecratory
trinitarian epiclesis. Its liturgical form followed closely that of the baptismal rite indicating an
everbal christological form of the confession of faith [verbum fidei]. The appearance of a
trinitarian confession of faith [Credo] in the course of time was considered to be a later
development. This would seem to indicate that even though the Holy Spirit was given at
baptism in the apostolic times which was followed by the patristic, a christological confession
of faith continued to serve at that time as the form of the baptismal rite. Thus up to the
fourth century, and in some areas perhaps even up to the fifth and sixth centuries, the
liturgical word or form of the sacrament was twofold. It consisted of an epiclesis over the
water and a profession of faith. Schillebeeckx maintains that, as a matter of fact, they are
two epicleses since the profession of faith was also in a sense an epiclesis. For example, the
Apostolic Tradition [Traditio Apostolica] dated around 215 AD is viewed to be composed
by Hippolytus of Rome. It gives us information about the early model liturgical texts
existing at this time. After the bishop had said prayers at cockcrow over the water and the oil
of thanksgiving which were used for the baptism of the candidates, he went further with the
baptismal rite by saying the following prayers while laying his hands on them:

11 Schillebeeckx, E.: Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield
13 Cf. Rom 10, 9
14 Cf. Schillebeeckx, Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God, 98-100; Mazza, Enrico: The Eucharistic
15 Cf. Mk 1, 9-10.
16 See Jones, Simon: Wombs of the Spirit: Incarnational Pneumatology in the Syrian Baptismal Tradition, in:
17 Cf. Schillebeeckx, Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God, 98-100.
19 See Bouyer, Eucharist, 163. However, scholarly discussions in recent times seem to dispute this assumption.
Herr, Gott, du hast sie gewürdigt durch das Bad der Wiedergeburt des Heiligen Geistes die Vergebung der Sünden zu erlangen, mache sie auch würdig mit Heiligem Geist erfüllt zu werden. Sende in sie deine Gnade, damit sie dir nach deinem Willen dienen. Denn dein ist die Herrlichkeit, Vater und Sohn mit dem Heiligen Geist in der heiligen Kirche, jetzt und von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit. Amen.20

Concerning the eucharistic epiclesis the object of the prayer is twofold: it asks that the Holy Spirit consecrates the gifts, making them the body and blood of Christ and that the Father be pleased with the sacrifice and pour the fullness of his grace upon the faithful.21 Here is the full text of Botte’s translation of the TA, the so called Hippolytus’ eucharistic prayer:

Let the deacons present the oblation (to the bishop) and let him, while laying his hands upon it with the whole presbyterium, say in giving thanks:
The Lord be with you.
And let all say:
And with your spirit.
- Lift up your hearts.
We lift them up to the Lord.
- Let us give thanks to the Lord.
It is right and just.
And then let him continue in this way:
We give you thanks, O God, through your beloved Child (puerum) Jesus Christ, whom you have sent us in the last times (as) saviour, redeemer and the messenger (Angelum) of your plan; who is your inseparable Word, through whom you have created all things and whom, in your good pleasure, you have sent down from heaven into the womb of a Virgin and who, having been conceived, became flesh and was shown to be your Son, born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin. It is he who, fulfilling your will and acquiring for you a holy people, stretched out his hands while he was suffering that he might free from suffering those who have trust in you. While he was being betrayed to his voluntary suffering, in order to destroy death and break the chains of the devil, tread hell underfoot, bring forth the righteous into light, set the guiding principle (terminum) and manifest the resurrection, taking bread, he gave thanks to you and said: Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you.
Likewise the cup, saying: This is my blood, which is shed for you. When you do this, do it in memory of me.
Wherefore we, being mindful of his death and his resurrection, offer you this bread and this cup, giving thanks to you that you deemed us worthy to stand before you and to serve you as priests.

And we beseech you to send your Holy Spirit upon the oblation of Holy Church. And in bringing (them) together, grant to all those who partake of your holy (mysteries) (to partake of them) in order that they might be filled with the Holy Spirit, and for the strengthening of (their faith) in truth; that we may praise you and glorify you through your Child Jesus Christ, through whom be to you glory and honor with the Holy Spirit in the Holy Church, now and for ever. Amen.  

We see in this text that following a brief introductory dialogue the prayer takes up the theme of thanksgiving. It gives God [the Father] thanks through Jesus Christ, his Child [puerum], through whom he began the work of creation and whom the Father sent to humankind born of the Virgin by the power of the Holy Spirit. He came to redeem humankind through his suffering and his death. With this theme of thanksgiving the prayer moves up to proclaim the words of Christ himself which forms the institution narrative with its command to “do it in memory of me”. The prayer of epiclesis which in effect asks for the strengthening of the faith in truth then follows and is tightly woven into the text of the anamnesis that precedes it and the doxology that comes after it. This is, simply said, the structure of this great eucharistic prayer. In our today’s understanding this prayer can be said to consist of six elements namely: 

a) Acclamation; b) Thanksgiving; c) Institution narrative; d) Anamnesis; e) Epiclesis; and f) Doxology.

Also we notice that this prayer of epiclesis is addressed to God, the Father. He is asked in this prayer to send his Holy Spirit upon the oblation of the Church. Bouyer explains that,

The mention of the Holy Spirit here was brought about both by the idea of the gathering of all together in the body of Christ in its fullness, and by their unanimity in the glorification of the Father through the Son. This eschatological fulfilment of the Church brought about in unity, and the consecration of mankind to the glory of the Father through the Son are actually two inseparable parts of the work of the Spirit in primitive Christian pneumatology: he is the seal of unity in the body of Christ, and he is the ‘Spirit of glory,’ the one who glorifies the Son and thereby perfects his own glorification of the Father.

This is exactly the effect desired for those taking part in this eucharist. That they be gathered together in unity. That they be filled with the Holy Spirit for the confirmation of their faith in truth. So that finally they might in turn praise and glorify God, who is the initiator of this work of salvation. However, for the proper understanding of the trinitarian epiclesis issue in

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23 Cf. Lk 1, 35.
24 Bouyer, Eucharist, 176-177.
the aforementioned text, Bouyer presented another model of text called the Testamentum Domini which may have been “a vestige of Hippolytus’ original text”. The text reads as follows:

We offer you this thanksgiving, eternal Trinity: Lord Jesus Christ, Lord Father before whom every creature trembles and draws back, Lord Holy Spirit, obtain for us this food of your holiness, so that it may not turn to our judgment, nor to our shame or our condemnation, but to the healing and the consolation of our own spirit.

And he went further to comment that this “enables us to understand how the epiclesis of the Spirit was introduced at this place in the eucharistic liturgies of the East”. Of course there are other models of liturgical texts in composition at the time, especially that of the liturgy of Addai and Mari as well as Chrysostom and Basil in the Byzantine liturgical tradition. Addai and Mari liturgy is an early type of eucharist, which was modelled directly and exclusively on the Jewish meal prayers found also in a group of other texts like that of the Didache – a eucharistic prayer of the Twelve Apostles – in use by the Jewish-Christian community.

With this point in mind, we understand why a number of authors hold that in the fourth century the Logos-epiclesis gave way to a Spirit-epiclesis. They argue from the nature of second-century theology, which tended to attribute to the Logos what post-Nicene theology attributed to the Holy Spirit, and from fourth-century echoes of a Logos-epiclesis, for example, in Serapion. However, Taft maintained that at that time “this epiclesis is a communion, not a consecratory epiclesis”. And only in the final stage of the evolution is the Spirit-epiclesis “in explicitly consecratory form” observable in Jerusalem and elsewhere. So that in the fourth and fifth centuries, the oral compositional tradition of the eucharistic prayer was becoming fixed in written formulas.

This brings us to a brief description of The Apostolic Constitutions [Constitutio Apostolica] which seem to date around 380 AD towards the end of the fourth century. Its eighth book

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25 Ibid., 175.
26 Ibid., 174.
27 Ibid., 175.
28 See ibid., 146-156.
30 Ibid., 499.
31 Ibid.
32 See Bouyer, Eucharist, 250-268.
contains a eucharistic prayer. According to Bouyer, “the liturgy of the 8th book of the Apostolic Constitutions seems to be the result of an attempt at delimiting as exactly and as widely as possible the content and the progression which were considered ideal by its author for a good eucharist”.33 This prayer has a close relationship to the original eucharistic prayer of the so called TA of which it seems to be an extended form of it used maybe during the Easter night vigil. And it is composed based on the trinitarian plan of salvation initiated by God.

After an introductory dialogue like that of the TA the prayer recounts the history of salvation with a long hymn of praise to the Father for the gift of creation through his only begotten Son – the visible and the invisible world and especially humankind. This part of the prayer further recounted the history of the fall of man and to praise the Father for the events subsequent to the fall, his promise of a resurrection for man, the flood, his treatment of the patriarchs, the events of the Exodus, and the entry into the promised land Canaan. The second part with its mention of the angels leads into a form of “Sanctus” which we did not have in the TA above. Here the Sanctus stresses the direct participation of the angels, though invisible, in the mystery of the eucharist. And after the Sanctus, the hymn then picks up the theme of praise to the Father, this time for what he has done in the Son, our Lord and God Jesus Christ, describing the redemption seen in the incarnation, Christ’s earthly life, his passion, death, resurrection, and ascension. This third part of the prayer still in the fashion of praise and thanksgiving to God can be said to now prepare the way to realize the present eucharistic celebration by the worshippers in fulfilment of the command Christ gave on the night he was betrayed. The institution narrative recounts this command and serves as the basis for the anamnesis proper and the epiclesis. After the epiclesis come then a long series of intercessions which is followed by the doxology that concludes the prayer.34 The relevant section containing the text of the institution narrative and the epiclesis reads as follows:

Wherefore we, having in remembrance the things which he for our sakes endured, give thanks unto thee, O God Almighty, not such as are due but such as we can, and fulfil his injunction. For he in the same night that he was betrayed, took bread in his holy and blameless hands, and looking up to thee his God and Father, brake it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: This is the mystery of the new Testament, take of it, eat; this is My Body which is broken for many for the remission of sins.
Likewise also he mixed the cup with wine and water, and sanctified it, and gave it to them saying:

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33 Ibid., 251.
34 Cf. ibid., 253-265.
Drink ye all of it; this is My Blood which is shed for many for the remission of sins; do this in remembrance of me: for as often as ye eat of this bread and drink of this cup, ye do show forth my death until I come.

Therefore, having in remembrance his passion and death, and resurrection, and his return into heaven, and his future second advent, in which he shall come to judge the quick and the dead, and to give to every man according to his works, we offer unto thee, our King and our God, according to his injunction, this bread and this cup, giving thanks unto thee through him that thou hast counted us worthy to stand before thee and to sacrifice unto thee (i.e. to perform a priestly function). And we implore thee to look graciously upon these gifts lying before thee, who art the God who hast no need of aught, and to be well pleased with them to the honor of thy Christ, and to send down upon this sacrifice thy Holy Spirit, the witness of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus, that he may declare this bread the Body of thy Christ, and this cup the Blood of thy Christ, that they who partake thereof may be strengthened in godliness, may receive remission of their sins, may be rescued from the devil and his deceit, may be filled with the Holy Ghost, may become worthy of thy Christ, and may obtain eternal life, thou being reconciled unto them, O Master Almighty.35

We see here interwoven in this elegant text a consecratory epiclesis as well as a communion epiclesis – the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon the gifts and this same Holy Spirit be sent upon us, the celebrating community, and fill us with godly life in praise of the Almighty Father’s glory. Already we are reminded by this eucharistic prayer from the beginning that the Holy Spirit is the link between this present celebration and the passion and death of Jesus Christ. However, the addressee throughout the prayer is God, the Father whom the worshipping community prays that he looks graciously upon the gifts and that he sends his Holy Spirit upon the sacrifice so that the Holy Spirit may declare or manifest the bread and wine as the body and blood of Christ. And all this is done so that through the action of the Holy Spirit the communicants may share in the benefits by bringing them a strengthening in godly life, receive pardon for their sins, receive a greater fullness of the Holy Spirit, be reconciled with the Father and reach eternal life with Christ, among other petitions.

In summary therefore, it seems, with respect to the above mentioned eucharistic prayers of the Apostolic Tradition and the Apostolic Constitutions, that the authors regarded the entire canon as a single trinitarian epiclesis, an event which the institution narrative is specified as a eucharistic epiclesis in the broad sense. Since on the other hand, as Schillebeeckx maintains, the words of institution are basically narrative in form and since all the sacraments draw their form and effective power from a “verbum fidei” which informs the sacrament a brief epiclesis

The proper calling down the Holy Spirit upon the offerings was added.\textsuperscript{36} The problem of the relationship between the institution narrative and the epiclesis proper within the consecratory canon as a whole arose only with the growing precision of the consecratory epiclesis. The East tended to lay stress on the epiclesis while the West on the institution narrative. But in the early centuries, however, neither did so to the exclusion of the other element. Therefore, one tends to agree with Stuflesser and Winter

\begin{quote} dass die untersuchten Eucharistischen Hochgebete der frühen Kirche eine solche Konzentration auf einen Wandlungsmoment, wie sie in späteren Jahrhunderten vorliegt, noch nicht kennen: Das gesamte Eucharistische Hochgebet bewirkt die Konsekration der Gaben – so die Auffassung der frühen Kirche –, und die versammelte Gemeinde unterstreicht und bestätigt dies durch das festliche ‘Amen’ am Ende des Eucharistischen Hochgebets.\textsuperscript{37} \end{quote}

Only later, especially since the early scholastic era the theologians began to focus attention on a moment of consecration within the context of instantaneous transubstantiation. And since this development it has become the constant tradition of the Roman Catholic magisterium with its Roman Canon of the Mass to affirm with a strong degree of exclusivity the consecratory value of the words of institution as the authentic eucharistic form.\textsuperscript{38}

\subsection*{1.2. Scholastic Era}

The desire for precision arose with the sacramental theology of the early scholastic era. This theology listed the eucharist as one of the seven sacraments of the church. And because of this a conflict arose between the prayer of epiclesis and the moment of consecration in realizing the eucharist. In their explanation, the scholastics were prone to stress philosophical speculation and applied the Aristotelian concept of substance in explaining the make-up of the sacraments. With the prevailing Aristotelian hylomorphic concept coupled “with the intellectual engagement with grammatico-logical underpinnings of the biblical phrases”\textsuperscript{39} they employed “a priori” reasoning to determine the conditions of validity of the sacraments and the elements essential to each of them without recourse to historical or liturgical data of the

\textsuperscript{36} Cf. Schillebeeckx, Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God, 112-127.
patristic. Their attention was merely focused on the philosophical question of the “matter” and “form” of the sacraments.

Congar informs us that


Also Thomas von Aquin, followed the same scholastic method of Lombard’s in determining the structure of the sacrament and

unterscheidet zwischen der ‘manducatio spiritualis’, welche die ‘res tantum’, die letztlich angezielte geistliche Wirklichkeit, betrifft, und der ‘manducatio sacramentalis’, welche die ‘res et sacramentum’ betrifft, das, was wir die Realpräsenz nennen. Im Grunde genommen ißt man bei dieser nur das sacramentum. Dem geistlichen Essen hingegen, das normalerweise das sakramentale voraussetzt, wohnt eine solche Kraft inne, daß sie die Wirkung des Sakraments hervorzubringen vermag, ohne dass man das Sakrament selbst empfängt.41

This actually explains why the fourth council of Lateran 1215 required christians to attend the mass and receive communion at least once a year after proper preparation, confession and penance which later led to the adoration of the blessed sacrament in the Middle Ages. Stuflesser and Winter inform us that

man versuchte den Moment genauer zu bestimmen, bei dem beim Sprechen des Eucharistischen Hochgebetes die ‘Wandlung’ geschieht. Man suchte den so genannten Konsekrationsmoment, versuchte also innerhalb des Eucharistischen Hochgebets, das ja in sich schon den Höhepunkt der gesamten Eucharistiefeier darstellt, noch einmal dessen genaunen Höhepunkt zu bestimmen.42

40 Congar, Yves: Der Heilige Geist, Freiburg: Herder 1982, 483-484.
41 Ibid., 484.
One may note on the one hand that this concentration provided some valuable insights about the eucharist at the time. But, on the other hand, there was a danger that such efforts for precision which concentrate on the change in the purely physical elements could overshadow the interest on the redeeming activity of the Trinity which shows expression in the action of the Holy Spirit. And this brought the attitude that one only focuses emphasis on a more static concept of the eucharist than looking at the redeeming activity of the Trinity proper which has become central and present in mystery of the eucharist. At the time also, the scholastic theological discourse was accompanied by a spirituality and a number of liturgical practices that had the same focus, for example, the case of the elevation of the host with the intention that the worshippers can see “the eucharist at the moment of its elevation in the hands of the priest after the words of consecration” portrays this phenomenon. With a wide range of regulations and practices regarding the veneration of the consecrated hosts, it was almost inevitable in this context that the controversy over the eucharist and its moment of consecration would arise.

It began by asserting the identity of the eucharistic body of Christ and his historical body as well as “the distinction that existed in the eucharist between “what is seen” and “what is not seen”… and to this distinction applying the distinctions of “accidents” and “substance” borrowed from the vocabulary of the school and progressively explored along the lines of the peripatetic philosophy, whose influence increased in the 12th and 13th centuries”. All these efforts for precisions later influenced the development of sacramental theology which reached its peak in the teaching of the councils of Lateran 1215, Florence 1439 and Trent 1545-1563 with the promulgation of the doctrine that the sacraments of the New Covenant are all instituted by Christ and specifically opted for the transubstantiation of the eucharist through the words of institution. Already, since the time of St. Thomas it is widely believed that the transubstantiation of the eucharist is effected by a supernatural act of God.

While in the East efforts were made to continue to see the epiclesis, conditioned by the words of institution, as the consecratory rite, in the West it was the words of the institution
determined by the “Hanc igitur” and/or “Quam oblationem” which formed the rite of transubstantiation of the eucharist. And so the council of Trent in its decree on the sacrament of the eucharist, while not directly treating the question of epiclesis, merely underscored the real presence of Christ in the eucharist by the following words:

… und stets war dieser Glaube in der Kirche Gottes, dass sogleich nach der Konsekration der wahre Leib unseres Herrn und sein wahres Blut unter der Gestalt des Brotes und des Weines zusammen mit seiner Seele und Gottheit da sei: und zwar der Leib unter der Gestalt des Brotes und das Blut unter der Gestalt des Weines kraft der Worte... 

Weil aber Christus, unser Erlöser, sagte, das, was er unter der Gestalt des Brotes darbrachte, sei wahrhaft sein Leib, deshalb hat in der Kirche Gottes stets die Überzeugung geherrscht, und dieses heilige Konzil erklärt es jetzt von neuem: Durch die Konsekration des Brotes und Weines geschieht eine Verwandlung der ganzen Substanz des Brotes in die Substanz des Leibes Christi, unseres Herrn, und der ganzen Substanz des Weines in die Substanz seines Blutes. Diese Wandlung wurde von der heiligen katholischen Kirche treffend und im eigentlichen Sinne Wesensverwandlung genannt.

This forms the substance of the sacrament of the eucharist as defined by this council. The position of the church since then has always remained, according to Schillebeeckx, “that the power of consecration lies in the words of institution which, for this reason, we call the ‘consecration’”. The Roman Catholic teaching authority seems to presuppose then that Christ himself intended the words of institution as a liturgical consecration formula and that, as a result, this specific “form” or formula belongs to the unchangeable substance of the sacrament. Therefore, the recitation of the dominical words alone became “a doctrine that had been specifically reaffirmed by Pius X in 1910”. The specific eucharistic prayer form approved by the council of Trent reads in part as follows:


48 Cf. Schillebeeckx, Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God, 129-130.
49 DH, 1640.
50 DH, 1642.
51 Schillebeeckx, Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God, 130.
52 Cf. ibid., 112-132.
53 Bradshaw, The Rediscovery of the Holy Spirit in Modern Eucharistic Theology and Practice, 80.
Quam oblationem tu, Deus, in omnibus, quaesumus, signat ter super oblata, bene+dictam, adscriptam, ra+tam, rationabilem, acceptabilemque facere digneris: signat semel super hostiam, ut nobis Cor+pus et semel super calicem, et San+guis fiat dilectissimi Filii tui, iungit manus, Domini nostri Iesu Christi.

Qui pridie quam pateretur, accipit panem in sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas, et elevatis oculis in caelum ad te Deum, Patrem suum omnipotentem, tibi gratias agens, bene+dixit, fregit, deditque discipulis suis, dicens: Accipite, et manducate ex hoc omnes. Hoc est enim Corpus meum. Simili modo postquam coenatum est, accipiens et hunc praeclarum calicem in sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas: item tibi gratias agens, bene+dixit, deditque discipulis suis, dicens: Accipite, et bibite ex eo omnes. Hic est enim Calix Sanguinis mei, novi et aeterni testamenti: mysterium fidei: qui pro vobis et pro multis effundetur in remissionem peccatorum. Haec quotiescumque feceritis, in mei memoriam facietis.54

In summary, therefore, one sees that the scholastic philosophy, indeed, affected the shape of the eucharist as a whole. This however, tended to influence the official teaching on the epiclesis issue which only allows a decision based on choosing either the one or the other option of the moment of consecration as expounded by the scholastic sacramental theology of the eucharist. This theology itself was according to Bouyer, “no longer the development of a contemplation of the divine Word, but a simple pile-up of scholarly digressions”.55 So that “far from profiting from the possibilities that it was bequeathed, the Middle Ages simply witnessed the withering away of the richness of the old sacramentaries”56 which led, among others to the development of the “silence of the canon”57 where the bishop or the priest alone enters into the canon.

But, however, when we consider that in reality, according to the thinking of the patristic, the eucharistic prayer as a whole forms a unity of praise, blessing, thanksgiving, and request of the church, the controversy between the East and the West regarding the moment of consecration would have been avoided. This is so because, as we have noted with the old anaphora, the entire eucharistic prayer itself is consecratory whether one views it from the perspective of the epiclesis or that of the institution narrative, but not to the exclusion of one against the other. The two actually belongs inseparably together.

55 Bouyer, Eucharist, 346.
56 Ibid., 365.
57 Ibid., 366, DH, 1759.
1.3. Modern Era

The modern era can be described, for purposes of this work, as the period beginning with the papacy of Pius X ending with the reforms of the liturgy undertaken by the second council of Vatican 1962-1965. Pius X convinced of the scholastic thought patterns regarding epiclesis wrote the Greeks in 1910 stating as follows:

Aber auch… die katholische Lehre vom heiligsten Sakrament der Eucharistie wird nicht unberührt gelassen, wenn rücksichtslos gelehrt wird, man könne die Auffassung annehmen, die behauptet, bei den Griechen erlangten die Konsekrationsworte keine Wirkung, wenn jenes Gebet noch nicht vorgetragen worden sei, das man Epiklese nennt, während doch bekannt ist, dass der Kirche nicht im geringsten das Recht zusteht, in bezug auf das Wesen der Sakramente selbst irgendetwas zu verändern…

This means that from the substance of the sacrament, the power of the consecration of the eucharist is to be seen exclusively in the words of the institution, although there is no express denial in this statement that the epiclesis also could have a “share in the consecratory significance” if examined from the point of view of the role of the Holy Spirit. Pope Pius X in fact, on the matter of this statement, did not bother to examine this aspect and thereby only concentrated himself on the eucharistic words of institution by simply rejecting the putting off of the moment of consecration until the epiclesis proper.

However, the role of the Holy Spirit in relation to the eucharist increasingly began to dominate the thoughts of roman catholic scholars and liturgists in this era. And with this growing interest on the Holy Spirit coupled with the theological discourse on the mysteries of the eucharist provoked by the liturgical movement, the roman catholic theologians began to consider the epiclesis proper as an expression of the intervention of the Holy Spirit in his communication with the praying, believing church as also essential. With this began the scholars to pay greater attention about “the character and location of the epiclesis in eucharistic liturgy”. Its consideration was then later integrated into the liturgical renewal efforts for the reshaping of the eucharistic prayer.

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58 DH, 3556.
60 Cf. Ibid., 128-130.
61 Bradshaw, The Rediscovery of the Holy Spirit in Modern Eucharistic Theology and Practice, 80.
These modern theologians realized that the basic function of the prayer of epiclesis is to express the role of the Holy Spirit in the eucharist. And their starting point of consideration is the act of faith of the church that forms the third part of the Apostles’ Creed with its confession of the Holy Spirit as the Lord and giver of life, whose divine power is the source of sanctification within the church through the saving history which began with the incarnation. The fruits of the pneumatological reflection were, among others, the appreciation of a new eucharistic pentecost, whereby the epiclesis is seen as the expression of the Holy Spirit’s activity not only in the eucharistic elements but, more especially in the church through her sacraments, and his movement in worship of the faithful themselves. Therefore, one begins to see the epiclesis of the eucharist as aiming to realize a communication of the life of the risen Christ to the faithful, thus uniting them more deeply with Christ and with one another. The prayer of epiclesis articulated as such becomes a sign of the invisible action of the Holy Spirit as the counsellor, uniting the presence of the risen Christ in heaven and upon the altar and the devotional pledge of our participation in the grace of his resurrection. The text of the english translation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church articulates the work of the Spirit as follows:

In the liturgy the Holy Spirit is teacher of the faith of the People of God and artisan of ‘God’s masterpieces,’ the sacraments of the New Covenant. The desire and work of the Spirit in the heart of the Church is that we may live from the life of the risen Christ. When the Spirit encounters in us the response of faith which he has aroused in us, he brings about genuine cooperation. Through it, the liturgy becomes the common work of the Holy Spirit and the Church.

The mission of the Holy Spirit in the liturgy of the Church is to prepare the assembly to encounter Christ; to recall and manifest Christ to the faith of the assembly; to make the saving work of Christ present and active by his transforming power; and to make the gift of communion bear fruit in the Church.

This explains exactly the work of the Holy Spirit in the church and how he transforms and empowers the faithful after the outpouring of the Spirit on pentecost as true witnesses of the resurrection of our Lord. The Spirit which the church had received at pentecost as counsellor

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64 Cf. Schillebeeckx, Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God, 133-152.
65 See Joh 15, 26.
of her life, and which her members continue to receive at the initiation sacraments of baptism and confirmation helps the church, especially in the eucharist to live in a devotional attitude of invocation and expectation of the same Holy Spirit. This attitude is appropriately expressed by the epiclesis with its invocation of the Holy Spirit. Thus in the eucharistic epiclesis the church joins Christ’s priestly intercession in heaven, praying to God to bestow his Spirit on the gifts and upon the faithful. And a new pentecost is experienced each time when in answer to this invocation the Holy Spirit comes upon the gifts and also upon the celebrating assembly. This coming of the Holy Spirit upon both is “the tangible pledge that the offerings of the Church have been accepted upon the celestial altar… for the Spirit which now descends upon the gifts offered by the Church is the same Spirit which descended upon the apostles in the upper room as a pledge of the Father’s good will and his reconciliation through the sacrifice of his only Son”.

That is why after many theological debates on the issue of epiclesis and words of institution with respect to the Roman Canon, a gradual consensus among theologians and liturgists “emerged that both parts of the prayer together should be seen as forming the equivalent of the Eastern invocation. The Roman Canon was thus said to have a split epiclesis: a consecratory one, an invocation on the bread and wine before the narrative, and a communion epiclesis, an invocation on the people, after it”.

With this understanding the theologians and liturgists attempted to move the hearts of the council fathers during the second Vatican to initiate reforms into the eucharistic prayer proposed to incorporate and harmonize the epiclesis of the Eastern liturgies with that of the Roman tradition which has become universalized before now due to the mission activity of the church.

In summary, therefore, one sees that the problem with regard to epiclesis in the eucharist was made difficult because of the connection of the roman catholic teaching authority on what actually determines the substance of the sacrament of the eucharist to its consecration. Confusion then arose about the activity of Christ seen in the dominical words of institution vis-à-vis the activity of the Holy Spirit seen in the eucharistic epiclesis. This resulted in the exclusive attention given to the words of institution since the promulgation made by the council of Trent. The modern theologians, however, began to shift this focus away from an isolated christology to a discussion about the pneuma of the Logos proper.

68 Bradshaw, The Rediscovery of the Holy Spirit in Modern Eucharistic Theology and Practice, 83-84.
And so the era can be said to be characterized with an engaging theological reflection on pneumatology as well as theological discourse on the sacraments and the liturgical celebration of the church. This platform prepared the ground for the renewed eucharist and the liturgical reform undertaken by the second council of Vatican. With this development came not only the restoration of the Roman canon, but new formularies were established in the form of three new eucharistic prayers.

1.4. Second Vatican Council

The second council of Vatican 1962-1965 at its first session approved the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy Sacrosanctum Concilium [SC] thereby laying the ground work for the much awaited liturgical reform. The theological pattern of thought which guided the council and the goal of the reform proper can be appreciated from the following texts of SC:

Die Liturgie, durch die sich, besonders im göttlichen Opfer der Eucharistie, ‘das Werk unserer Erlösung vollzieht’, trägt nämlich in höchstem Maße dazu bei, daß die Gläubigen das Geheimnis Christi und die eigentliche Natur der wahren Kirche zum Ausdruck bringen und anderen offenbar machen; ihre Eigentümlichkeit ist es, zugleich menschlich und göttlich zu sein, sichtbar mit Unsichtbarem ausgestattet, glühend im Handeln und frei für die Betrachtung, in der Welt gegenwärtig und doch unterwegs; und zwar so, daß in ihr das, was menschlich ist, auf das Göttliche hingeordnet und ihm untergeordnet wird, was sichtbar ist, auf das Unsichtbare, was zur Tätigkeit gehört, auf die Betrachtung, was gegenwärtig ist, auf die künftige Stadt, die wir suchen. Daher baut die Liturgie täglich die, welche drinnen sind, zum heiligen Tempel im Herrn auf, zur Wohnung Gottes im Geist bis zum Maße des Vollalters Christi; zugleich stärkt sie in wunderbarer Weise ihre Kräfte, um Christus zu verkünden und stellt so denen, die draußen sind, die Kirche vor Augen als Zeichen, das aufgerichtet ist unter den Völkern; unter diesem sollen sich die zerstreuten Kinder Gottes zur Einheit sammeln, bis eine Herde und ein Hirt wird. (SC, 2) …

Und wie daher Christus vom Vater gesandt wurde, so hat er auch selbst die vom Heiligen Geist erfüllten Apostel gesandt, nicht nur, um der ganzen Schöpfung das Evangelium zu verkünden und die Botschaft zu bringen, daß der Sohn Gottes uns durch seinen Tod und seine Auferstehung von der Macht des Satans und vom Tod befreit und in das Reich des Vaters versetzt hat, sondern auch, um das Heilswerk, das sie verkündeten, durch das Opfer und die Sakramente zu vollziehen, um die das ganze liturgische Leben kreist. So werden die Menschen durch die Taufe dem österlichen Geheimnis Christi eingefügt: mitgestorben, mitbegraben, miterwacht; sie empfangen den Geist der Annahme an Kindes Statt, ‘in dem wir rufen: Abba, Vater’ (Rom 8,15), und werden so zu wahren Anbetern, wie der Vater sie sucht.

Seither hat die Kirche niemals aufgehört, sich zur Feier des österlichen Geheimnisses zu versammeln und dabei das zu lesen, ‘was in allen Schriften von ihm (geschrieben) war’ (Lk 24,27), die Eucharistie zu feiern, in der ‘Sieg und Triumph seines Todes vergegenwärtigt werden’, und zugleich ‘Gott für die unaussprechliche Gabe’ Dank zu sagen (2 Kor 9,15), in Christus Jesus ‘zum Lob seiner Herrlichkeit’ (Eph 1,12), durch die Kraft des Heiligen Geistes. (SC, 6)

Here we notice that the council realized from the beginning that the communication between God and his people throughout the history of salvation, seen in the creation of the world and the fall of man; and God’s initiative to redeem man through the incarnation of Christ Jesus his Son, his passion as well as his death and resurrection; and man’s gratitude and thanksgiving to God for the wonder of redemptive mystery, is symbolically re-enacted and made present in the liturgy. And at the same time in the liturgy the church of God on earth reaches out in the hope of the eschatological city of God which is our destination. And that this work of salvation being executed in the church by the power of the Holy Spirit is not to be viewed only as history, but also to preach this word of God as the gospel message of salvation to all creation thereby making it really present and visible and effective in our time through the celebration of the eucharist as seen in this other text of SC:


Mit Recht gilt also die Liturgie als Vollzug des priesterlichen Amtes Jesu Christi; in ihr wird durch sinnenfällige Zeichen die Heiligung des Menschen bezeichnet und in je eigener Weise bewirkt und vom mystischen Leib Jesu Christi, nämlich dem Haupt und seinen Gliedern, der gesamte öffentliche Kult vollzogen. (SC, 7)
Therefore, the council fathers did not lose much time in noting the importance of the faith of the church in the sacraments and the role of the worshippers, that is to say, the believing, praying and celebrating assembly that participate in the eucharistic celebration. So that by looking at the eucharistic celebration as the work of the Spirit of Christ, the overemphasis on the material rites as well as an overemphasis on the role of the ordained minister is avoided. The main aspect becomes to focus attention on what the Spirit of Christ, the high priest, who is present in the many different forms of participation and rites, does in a wider perspective of the liturgical action with its words and gestures. All the members – the priest and the participants – are only depending on God alone for the realization of the eucharistic mystery. Hence,

With these statements of the council fathers began the liturgical reform which in its wake brought about the creation of new eucharistic prayer formularies. The old canon of the Roman Catholic West which reigned in an absolute manner since its fixed form around the seventh century until November 30, 1969 when the new roman missal came into use was restored and became the first Eucharistic Prayer. Three other prayers, the Eucharistic Prayer II, Eucharistic Prayer III and Eucharistic Prayer IV were approved for the missal for ordinary Masses.

According to Bouyer, Eucharistic Prayer II was formulated word for word in its greatest part after the eucharist of the Apostolic Tradition, Eucharistic Prayer III took the form developed by the formulas of the Mozarabic and Gallican tradition, while Eucharistic Prayer IV “is directly inspired from the great Eastern formularies, particularly the Apostolic Constitutions, St. James and St. Basil” 69

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69 Bouyer, Eucharist, 448.
To conclude, an attempt has been made above to place the eucharistic prayer and the epiclesis question in a historical context by selectively tracing the development of sacramental theology of the eucharist and its consequences with respect to the moment of consecration. We have seen that in the patristic the whole eucharist is consecratory in nature and the distinction later made in the course of time between the words of institution and the spirit epiclesis proper did not occupy the thoughts of the fathers. Only in the scholastic did the interest arise to specify and make precise the form of the sacrament of the eucharist as different from its matter following the ruling scholastic philosophical frame of thought. This tended to affect the shape of the eucharist as a whole which then influenced the position of the magisterium on the question of the substantia sacramenti with respect to the moment of consecration that provoked the controversy between the East and the West. This situation persisted till the papacy of Pius X when later the catholic theologians and liturgists were beginning to be convinced of the role of the Holy Spirit in realizing the eucharist. With a shift on focus came the appreciation that the function of the prayer of epiclesis is to exactly express this role. Hence, finally they brought together the christological dimension of the eucharist with its pneumatological component as well as the faith of the worshipping assembly which now come to show expression in the liturgical reform of the second council of Vatican.
The eucharistic liturgy which is the church’s celebration of Christ’s paschal mystery is the highpoint and summit of catholic worship as well as the christian life itself. This is demonstrated by the pronouncements of the council fathers of Vatican II.\textsuperscript{70} This liturgy itself is composed of two main and mutually flowing parts “closely interconnected that they form but one single act of worship”.\textsuperscript{71} The first part is the liturgy of the word which recounts the history and the mystery of salvation and at same time proclaims the gospel message of Christ’s redemption. Through the word of God, the people are transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit moving in their hearts which makes them open for the communion with the Lord Jesus Christ himself and with one another in the eucharistic elements. The second part is the liturgy of the eucharist, known by the Greek and Eastern Orthodox as the anaphora, a term indicating the eucharist as an offering sacrifice of Jesus Christ ascending unto God the Father who began and fulfilled the work of salvation through his Son and continues to do so in our time by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is so because,

\begin{quote}
… Sooft das Kreuzesopfer, in dem ‘Christus, unser Osterlamm, geopfert wurde’ (1 Kor 5,7), auf dem Altar gefeiert wird, vollzieht sich das Werk unserer Erlösung. Zugleich wird durch das Sakrament des eucharistischen Brotes die Einheit der Gläubigen, die einen Leib in Christus bilden, dargestellt und verwirklicht (vgl. 1 Kor 10,17). Alle Menschen werden zu dieser Einheit mit Christus gerufen, der das Licht der Welt ist: Von ihm kommen wir, durch ihn leben wir, zu ihm streben wir hin. (LG, 3)
\end{quote}

Hence, the church in the eucharistic celebration responds to this great work of redemption with the sacrifice of thanksgiving unto the Lord God as an expression of her faith and gratitude for the graces received. And this is usually regarded as “eucharistia”, a Greek biblical word for thanksgiving. Therefore, the eucharistic liturgy can be seen as a communication between God and his people – a movement from God above sending down his redemption and grace as well as a movement upward from the faithful in their prayers of

\textsuperscript{70} Cf. LG, 11, SC, 10.
\textsuperscript{71} Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani IGMR, 28.
thanksgiving for the gift of salvation in the body of Christ offered unto heaven to God. That is why,

in this way the Eucharistic celebration is the crucial moment of the exchange of life between God and man, a celebration in act of the universal Eucharist, in which the entire creation will be introduced into the fullness of life of the Trinity… it is the work of the triune God for the many exchange of life by means of the participation of the believers in the deified human nature of the Son in the Eucharistic gifts.72

This explains why the church

always commemorates the upward movement of the liturgy, through which earth and heaven meet. In the liturgy we participate in the one, eternal liturgy of heaven; and heaven itself stoops towards us and enfolds us, raising up our transfigured humanity to heaven. The whole of temporal time is sanctified and receives the value of eternity.73

The church therefore in her wisdom expressed this upward movement of the liturgy by situating the eucharistic prayer in a position that depicts it as the summit of the whole eucharistic celebration. The liturgy itself begins with the introductory rites that open the celebration and lead up to the liturgy of the word, whereby their purpose “is to ensure that the faithful, who come together as one, establish communion and dispose themselves to listen properly to God’s word and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily”.74 Through the service of readings of the Sacred Scripture,

as explained by the Homily, God speaks to his people, opening up to them the mystery of redemption and salvation, and offering them spiritual nourishment; and Christ himself is present in the midst of the faithful through his word. By their silence and singing the people make God’s word their own, and they also affirm their adherence to it by means of the Profession of Faith. Finally, having been nourished by it, they pour out their petitions in the Prayer of the Faithful for the needs of the entire Church and for the salvation of the whole world.75

And so concludes the liturgy of the word which moves immediately into the liturgy of the eucharist, whereby the church commemorates the great paschal mystery of the last supper instituted by Christ himself:

72 Kunzler, Michael: The Church’s Liturgy, New York: Continuum 2001 (= AMATECA Handbooks of Catholic Theology), 169.
73 Bobrinskoy, Worship and the Ascension of Christ, 119.
74 IGMR, 46.
75 Ibid., 55.
For Christ took the bread and the chalice and gave thanks; he broke the bread and gave it to his disciples, saying, ‘Take, eat, and drink: this is my Body; this is the cup of my Blood. Do this in memory of me’. Accordingly, the Church has arranged the entire celebration of the Liturgy of the Eucharist in parts corresponding to precisely these words and actions of Christ:

1. At the Preparation of the Gifts, the bread and the wine with water are brought to the altar, the same elements that Christ took into his hands.
2. In the Eucharistic Prayer, thanks is given to God for the whole work of salvation, and the offerings become the Body and Blood of Christ.
3. Through the fraction and through Communion, the faithful, though they are many, receive from the one bread the Lord’s Body and from the one chalice the Lord’s Blood in the same way the Apostles received them from Christ’s own hands.76

We notice here that by its position the eucharistic prayer proper forms the centre and summit of the entire celebration. The mystery of Christian life and of the divine worship itself are expressed through this prayer which in fact is:

the prayer of thanksgiving and sanctification. The priest invites the people to lift up their hearts to the Lord in prayer and thanksgiving; he unites the congregation with himself in the Prayer that he addresses in the name of the entire community to God the Father through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the meaning of the Prayer is that the entire congregation of the faithful should join itself with Christ in confessing the great deeds of God and in the offering of Sacrifice.77

Moreover, the eucharistic prayer is also an expression as well as a testimony of the single and common activity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in the work of redemption and now in realizing the eucharist – the mystery of this redemption. So that the catholic church with her doctrine of the Holy Trinity, also finds expression of her faith through this prayer that the Father is the source of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in his self communication or revelation to humankind.78 And in the present eucharist the Holy Spirit is the one who evokes the memorial and establishes this communication as well as in whom the words of Christ at the last supper spoken by the priest are made effective now in the Mass. Then:

Unsere Menschennatur ist hineingenommen in die große Lebensbewegung des dreifaltigen Gottes: vom Vater zum Sohn, vom Sohn zum Vater, in der Glut des heiligen Geistes.79

76 Ibid., 72.
77 Ibid., 78.
Conscious of this divine act of the Trinity the church in her members now lifts up her heart and offers her prayer of thanksgiving and praise forming the framework within which the eucharistic prayer begins and ends. Other form of this great prayer prominent in the church is the Exsultet of the Easter night vigil. 80 Indeed the eucharistic prayer actually begins with this joyful lifting up of hearts in worship which is expressed in the following exultation presided by the priest:

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them up to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give him thanks and praise. 81

After the exultation the celebrating priest continues alone with the hymn of praise and thanksgiving.

2.1. Thanksgiving

The thanksgiving is usually expressed in the preface “in which the priest, in the name of the entire holy people, glorifies God the Father and gives thanks for the whole work of salvation or for some special aspect of it that corresponds to the day, festivity, or season”. 82 For example, the preface of Easter II reads as follows:

Father, all-powerful and ever-living God,
we do well always and everywhere to give you thanks
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
We praise you with greater joy than ever in this Easter season,
when Christ became our paschal sacrifice.
He has made us children of the light,
rising to new and everlasting life.
He has opened the gates of heaven
to receive his faithful people.
His death is our ransom from death;

80 Cf. Kunzler, The Church’s Liturgy, 224.
81 TA, 4.
82 IGMR, 79a.
his resurrection is our rising to life.
The joy of the resurrection renews the whole world,
while the choirs of heaven sing for ever to your glory:
Holy, holy, holy…

We see here that the preface itself is a hymn of thanks proclaiming with joy this thanksgiving before the celebrating community which we already witness in the eucharistic prayer of TA above. It stands in the benediction tradition of the Jews which Jesus Christ himself may have adopted and “transformed it so as to make it ‘his’ Supper”. By the active presence of the Holy Spirit, this hymn of thanks and praise addressed to God the Father joins that of Jesus Christ with the whole church in all time on earth and with that of the heavenly assembly in the present liturgical action.

2.2. Acclamation

Another element of the eucharistic prayer is the acclamation “in which the whole congregation, joining with the heavenly powers, sings the Sanctus. This acclamation, which is part of the Eucharistic Prayer itself, is sung or said by all the people with the priest” as an expression of “the common consent of the assembly with the praise and petition of the presiding celebrant”. Kunzler notes that the Sanctus “goes back to the vision of Isaiah’s call; in the Jewish synagogical liturgy of the 2nd century it was part of the morning prayer and is attested in the context of the eucharistic prayer in the East at the end of the 4th century, from where only at the beginning of the 5th century it came into the liturgy of the West”.

However, the text of Isaiah reads: “The whole earth is full of his glory”. In our present eucharistic liturgy it is substituted with “heaven and earth are full of your glory” which enlarges the perspective indicating at this moment that all creation in heaven and on earth, angels and humankind, unite their voices in a common exultation for the eternal celebration in praise of the Trinity. Here and now in this liturgical event eternity is fused into time and space which transforms them in the fullness of God’s glory.

84 Mazza, The Eucharistic Prayers of the Roman Rite, 17.
85 IGMR, 79b.
86 Kunzler, The Church’s Liturgy, 224.
88 Isa 6, 3.
Moreover, the Sanctus has another aspect which is the Benedictus. The Christians may have, probably, created it out of Psalm 118 to form the second part of the acclamation. And this is “attested in the Roman Mass in the 7th century, not till a century later however in the East”.89 Both, however, form a unity that concludes with the “Hosanna in the highest”.90

The Sanctus is situated at this point of the eucharistic liturgical action which allows the whole congregation together with the celebrating priest to sing this song of praise. It echoes the foregoing hymn of praise and thanks of the celebrating priest of the preface. It is the most important acclamation of the eucharistic prayer itself and of the whole eucharistic action. After the Sanctus, the celebrating priest resumes the hymn of praise in a Post-Sanctus,91 this time alone, which now leads up to the invocation of the Holy Spirit in the consecratory prayer of epiclesis. We witness the Post-Sanctus only in the second and third eucharistic prayers of the Roman Missal of 1970, whereby the celebrating priest begins with “You are holy indeed” which links the Sanctus to the epiclesis proper. The first eucharistic prayer does not have a Post-Sanctus, rather it “begins immediately with an epicletic part”92 after the Sanctus. The fourth eucharistic prayer continues the hymn of praise and thanksgiving of the preface recounting once again the history of salvation leading up to the sending of the Holy Spirit in the church at pentecost. The epiclesis is then connected with the mention of the Holy Spirit at this point.

2.3. Epiclesis

At the heart of the eucharistic celebration is the epiclesis which is the expression of the eucharistic pentecost. The biblical testimony of the epiclesis is seen in the command of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit to the apostles to wait for the promise of the same Spirit from the Father. He is the Spirit of power who makes them bold to bear witness of the gospel of Christ.93 The epiclesis,

in which, by means of particular invocations, the Church implores the power of the Holy Spirit that the gifts offered by human hands be consecrated, that is, become Christ’s Body and Blood,

89 Ibid.
90 Matt 21, 9; Mark 11, 10.
91 Cf. Bouyer, Eucharist, 449. He notes that „its substance was taken from the Post-Sanctus of the Missale Gothicum for the Easter Vigil“.
92 Kunzler, The Church’s Liturgy, 227.
93 See Acts 1, 2, 4, 8. Also see Joh 20, 22. The Spirit later manifested himself at pentecost. Cf., Acts 2, 2-4.
and that the spotless Victim to be received in Communion be for the salvation of those who will partake of it.  

Until the liturgical reform of the second council of Vatican the epiclesis, as expression of the role of the Holy Spirit, was in the opinion of many scholars as not really a concern of the West. Although it seems that before now in the sacraments and in the liturgies of the catholic church the Holy Spirit was rarely invoked, however, Berger notes that his role was taken for granted. It was not made explicit in the liturgical texts. She maintains that:

The fact that the Western tradition lacks prayers addressed to the Holy Spirit does not mean that the Third Person of the Trinity is not invoked in prayers, only that no prayer is addressed to the Spirit. In fact a good number of prayers in which the Holy Spirit is named exist – albeit not as the one addressed. Moreover, the Holy Spirit is addressed in prayers other than those of the presider, e.g., in hymns, sequences, acclamations, antiphons, and responsories.

Besides this point we noted above that with an increasing understanding of theologians of the fact that the Spirit active presence should be emphasized in the liturgy, the catholic teaching authority equally saw the need to articulate this fact after the second council of Vatican. In the catechism, for example, the KKK states that:

In der Liturgie wirkt der Heilige Geist auf das Engste mit der Kirche zusammen. Er bereitet die Kirche auf die Begegnung mit ihrem Herrn vor. Er ruft Christus den Glauben der Versammlung in Erinnerung und bezeugt ihn. Er vergegenwärtigt und aktualisiert das Mysterium Christi. Er vereint die Kirche mit dem Leben und der Sendung Christi und lässt die Gabe der Gemeinschaft in ihr Frucht bringen.

Therefore, the previous exclusive emphasis on the words of institution whereby Christ is seen as the consecrator of the eucharist in the person of the priest, is now moderated and complemented with the idea that Christ consecrates and offers himself to the Father by the power of the Spirit. In fact, Cipriano Vagaggini, a leading liturgist who exerted much influence on the composition of the new liturgical texts maintained that:

The action of Christ and the action of the Holy Spirit are not two diverse actions, but a single action of Christ in the Holy Spirit or through the Holy Spirit.

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94 IGMR, 79c.
95 Berger, Veni Creator Spiritus. The Elusive Real Presence of the Spirit in the Catholic Tradition, 151.
96 KKK, 223.
Theoretically speaking, therefore, it is possible to emphasize quite well that which is, so to speak, the role of the Holy Spirit in the Mass without thereby abandoning the idea that Christ, our High Priest, now in heaven at the right of the Father, is the principal minister of the Eucharistic sacrifice.\textsuperscript{97}

Hence, every liturgical action is regarded as the work of the Holy Spirit in an event that is not only trinitarian in nature, but also expresses the communion of the three divine persons. This is the wisdom behind the split epiclesis\textsuperscript{98} of the eucharistic prayer that depicts the consecration of not only the eucharistic elements of bread and wine so that they may become the body and blood of Christ, but the consecration of the people in worship as well, thus bringing them through a communion epiclesis into the communion of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and with one another.\textsuperscript{99}

2.4. Institution narrative and consecration

While the epiclesis is at the heart of the entire eucharistic celebration, the institution narrative and consecration forms the heart of the eucharistic prayer and it is situated between the two epiclesis in the Eucharistic Prayers II, III and IV – after the consecratory epiclesis and before the anamnesis which follows the consecration of the elements. The communion epiclesis, by way of offering of the faithful themselves, is placed then after the anamnesis before the intercessions. The first Eucharistic Prayer does not present this feature.

The institution narrative and consecration,

\begin{flushright}
\textit{in which, by means of words and actions of Christ, the Sacrifice is carried out which Christ himself instituted at the Last Supper, when he offered his Body and Blood under the species of bread and wine, gave them to his Apostles to eat and drink, and left them the command to perpetuate this same mystery.}\textsuperscript{100}
\end{flushright}

It should be noted at this point that the words of the institution of the eucharist have biblical origin. The account of institution itself reaches out and actualizes the word of God in the bible. There is a testimony of this in two main versions of the tradition as recorded in the New

\textsuperscript{98} See ibid., 84.
\textsuperscript{99} This point is discussed in detail in the next chapter of this study.
\textsuperscript{100} IGMR, 79d.
Testament texts: the first version is that of St. Paul in the first letter to the Corinthians and that of the gospel of St. Luke.\textsuperscript{101} The second version contains the account given by St. Matthew and St. Mark in their gospels.\textsuperscript{102} These are the words which Christ himself “must have entrusted to the church”\textsuperscript{103} through the act of institution of the sacrament of the eucharist at the last supper. The model liturgical texts continue to promote this tradition which tends to emphasize the centrality of the institution narrative concerning the anamnesis of the last supper.\textsuperscript{104} And, as we have seen above, the council of Trent regarded these dominical words principally as the substance that forms the eucharist.\textsuperscript{105} The Eucharistic Prayer I as the revised Roman Canon still attest to this feature while the Eucharistic Prayers II, III and IV are conditioned with a prayer of epiclesis placed before the words of the institution indicating a reference to the action of the Holy Spirit in the eucharist.

Moreover, an important feature of the eucharistic prayer is the proclamation of the mystery of faith “mysterium fidei” which the priest at the end of the institution narrative invites the faithful in worship to say. It signifies their consent that the eucharistic elements of bread and wine now offered at the altar through the present liturgical action and words have been transformed by the act of God into the body and blood of Christ, thereby making present in this eucharistic celebration the work of Christ’s redemption. So that with one voice the faithful in worship proclaim the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ till he comes again in glory. It shows that, in some way, the faithful are actively participating in the whole of the eucharistic action of consecration with the presiding priest as with the case of the Sanctus noted above.\textsuperscript{106} Again, Kunzler notes that “one fruit of the liturgical renewal is the anamnetic acclamation [Mysterium fidei] by the congregation”.\textsuperscript{107} This proclamation is then linked to the anamnesis which leads into the communion epiclesis.

\textsuperscript{101} Cf. 1 Cor 11, 23-25; Lk 22, 19-20.
\textsuperscript{102} Cf. Matt 26, 26-28; Mk 14, 22-24.
\textsuperscript{103} Schillebeeckx, Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God, 112.
\textsuperscript{104} It should be noted at this point that the Eucharist of Addai and Mari does not have the institution narrative. See Bouyer, Eucharist, 146-157.
\textsuperscript{105} Cf. DH, 1640.
\textsuperscript{106} Cf. SC, 48.
\textsuperscript{107} Kunzler, The Church’s Liturgy, 228.
2.5. Anamnesis

The main theme of the anamnesis in praise of the Trinity is the memorial of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ which the church proclaims till he comes again in glory. Through the working of the Holy Spirit, the church as the bride of Christ makes the saving work of her Lord ever present in her life by this memory:

in which the Church, fulfilling the command that she received from Christ the Lord through the Apostles, keeps the memorial of Christ, recalling especially his blessed Passion, glorious Resurrection and Ascension into heaven.108

Indeed, what we celebrate in the liturgy of the eucharist as commanded by Christ himself “do this in memory of me” is the commemoration of the same last supper he had with the apostles before his passion and death in fulfilment of the work of redemption. That was the highpoint of Jesus’ life in total obedience to the will of the Father who gave his only-begotten Son for the salvation of the world.109 And Jesus mindful of the Father’s will “lay down his life for his friends”.110 Hence,

Jesus feiert mit den Seinen also nicht lediglich ein letztes Mahl, um seinem Leben den gebührenden Schlußpunkt zu setzen, sondern übergibt ihnen das, was dieses Leben ausgemacht hat, das Geheimnis seiner Person, zu treuen Händen: nicht, um es für sich zu behalten, als nostalgische Erinnerung, die über den Tod des Geliebten hinwegtröstet, sondern im Vertrauen darauf, dass der Meister und Freund siegen und leben wird.111

So that

In den Gaben von Brot und Wein wird sichtbar, dass Jesus sich selbst als Gabe des Lebens, als Spender des Segens und als Mittler der Erlösung gibt.112

108 IGMR, 79e.
110 Joh 15, 13.
111 Stuflesser & Winter, Geladen zum Tisch des Herrn. Die Feier der Eucharistie, 35.
Actually, the anamnesis begins already as the celebrating priest introduces that we proclaim the mystery of our faith which the faithful in worship rightfully answer by recalling the death and resurrection of Christ and proclaim his return in glory.

The priest then takes up this answer – actually the anamnesis of the faithful – developing it further with his anamnesis which he says alone leading up to the prayer of offering and thanksgiving. The text of the Eucharistic Prayer IV, for example, offers the following anamnesis:

Father, we now celebrate this memorial of our redemption.
We recall Christ’s death, his descent among the dead,
his resurrection, and his ascension to your right hand;
and, looking forward to his coming in glory,
we offer you his body and blood,
the acceptable sacrifice
which brings salvation to the whole world.\(^{113}\)

Moreover, one can say that the anamnesis is the memorial prayer prompted by the Holy Spirit\(^{114}\) who, through the ages, causes the church to remember the great mystery of the salvation of the world through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The anamnesis is the hymn of praise of the Trinity intoned in the hearts of the faithful at every eucharistic celebration by the Holy Spirit.\(^{115}\) And God the Father is now asked in the following prayer of offering to send this same Holy Spirit upon the faithful and indeed the whole church on earth to make them one body in Christ.

2.6. Offering

Another important element of the eucharistic prayer placed at this point is the prayer of offering of the faithful themselves which speaks of the communion epiclesis; whereby God the Father is asked to send his Holy Spirit upon the church, especially the faithful in worship so that they may have a share in the fruits of Christ’s work of redemption now really present in the eucharist. The graces which the church asks for are the gathering in unity of the members of the body of Christ so that they may become just like her Saviour an eternal sacrifice of praise to the glory of the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit.

\(^{114}\) Cf. Joh 14, 26.
\(^{115}\) See for example the text of the liturgy of the 8th book of the Apostolic Constitutions.
Here we recognize immediately that the life of the church on earth, indeed the whole of Christian life, is the work of the Holy Spirit. Even, according to Stuflesser and Winter, “Gottes Geist durchdringt unsere Lebenswelt und vor allem unsere zwischenmenschlichen Beziehungen, [d.h. diabatische Dimension der Liturgie]”.  

Therefore, the offering:

by which, in this very memorial, the Church – and in particular the Church here and now gathered – offers in the Holy Spirit the spotless Victim to the Father. The Church’s intention, however, is that the faithful not only offer this spotless Victim but also learn to offer themselves, and so day by day to be consummated, through Christ the Mediator, into unity with God and with each other, so that at last God may be all in all.  

Again, Kunzler notes that

… the Church brings to God the Father, what she received as a gift from him: the Only – begotten Son and his saving deeds. Through him as the Head and her Mediator she is united to the Father as the mystical Body of Christ… The Church enters into Christ’s movement of offering, in which he raised human nature to the Father’s glory, by presenting to the Father his unique sacrifice of the cross, now an actual presence in the liturgical celebration…  

In this prayerful attitude of praise, thanksgiving and offering, awakened by the invocation and a sense of expectation of the Holy Spirit, the faithful in worship now go to receive the body and blood of the Saviour in Holy Communion. Through the communion epiclesis and the gesture of the reception of Communion, the faithful demonstrate their love-union with Jesus and with each other, so that in this very moment “its members are to become one in the Holy Spirit and so participate fruitfully in the eucharistic gifts”. This is the reason why many modern scholars point to the eucharistic epiclesis as the eternal renewal of the pentecost.

2.7. Intercessions

The form of the prayer of intercessions placed here and forming the concluding part of the eucharistic prayer is different from that of the prayer of the faithful that concludes the liturgy of the word. This prayer is modelled along the structure of the Jewish meal prayer of blessing,

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117 IGMR, 79f.
118 Kunzler, The Church’s Liturgy, 229. See also the introductory part of this study on this point.
119 Ibid.
120 Cf. Bobrinskoy, Worship and the Ascension of Christ, 120.
thanksgiving, and request, whereby God is asked to remember with love his people and grant them deliverance from the evil one.\textsuperscript{121} And, moreover, the prayer of intercessions is characteristic of the early christians especially during the period of the early christian persecution. So that one regards the intercessions at this point of the eucharistic celebration as a christian creation out of the jewish model and composed with the elements of Jesus Christ’s prayer to his Father at the end of his ministry.\textsuperscript{122} Now mindful of her communion with the Lord in the eucharist the church makes her intercessions for all of humanity:

By which expression is given to the fact that the Eucharist is celebrated in communion with the entire Church, of heaven as well as of earth, and that the offering is made for her and for all her members, living and dead, who have been called to participate in the redemption and the salvation purchased by Christ’s Body and Blood.\textsuperscript{123}

Noteworthy, therefore, in the words of Kunzler:

The intercessions are the consequence of the entry of the mystical Body into Christ’s movement of offering, even though as petitions they constitute a secondary element after praise and thanksgiving. The unity of the mystical Body finds expression in the “petitions” for individual members because through Christ the Head the celebrating community is in union with the Church in heaven, with the absent on earth and with the dead. The intercessions therefore are not a duplication of the bidding prayers, but an expression of the fellowship of those who are celebrating the great prayer with other members of the Mystical Body.\textsuperscript{124}

This, however, demonstrates the fact that Christ is really present and active in the church, not only in the eucharistic celebration, but also in the world and for all humanity whom he never ceases to give his body and blood – indeed his whole life – as spiritual nourishment for the journey of her earthly life. And this he does by means of the Holy Spirit given to the church at pentecost and at every eucharist which continues this work of salvation till his return in glory.

\textsuperscript{121} Cf. Bouyer, Eucharistie, 106-118.
\textsuperscript{122} Cf. Joh 17, 9-26, „…dass das Kreuzesopfer Frucht bringe, ist das zentrale Anliegen dieses Gebets“. Der Große Sonntags – Schott, 315.
\textsuperscript{123} IGMR, 79g.
\textsuperscript{124} Kunzler, The Church’s Liturgy, 229-230.
2.8. Final doxology

The whole eucharistic prayer is a trinitarian event which has at the same time the character of a doxology, i.e. great word of praise to God through his Son in the unity of the Holy Spirit. In fact this doxology summarizes and completes the eucharistic prayer with a solemn elevation of the eucharistic gifts of bread and wine that are transformed into the sacramental body and blood of Christ. So that the fullness of this praise to the glory of the almighty Father throughout the whole eucharistic celebration reaches its summit here and brought to bear in the final doxology at the end of the eucharistic prayer:

Through him, with him, in him,
In the unity of the Holy Spirit,
All glory and honour is yours,
Almighty Father,
for ever and ever. Amen.125

A notable liturgical scholar remarks that:

Not only is the doxology the high point of the anaphora insofar as the latter is a proclamation and profession of faith, it also climaxes the sanctificatory movement of the anaphora, since in it the divine name is formally proclaimed in its fullest and most explicit form.126

And with the “Amen” of the faithful in worship, the whole eucharistic prayer finds its fulfilment. It is, so to say, ratified, concluded and parcelled to the Holy Trinity, hence:

Final doxology: by which the glorification of God is expressed and which is confirmed and concluded by the people’s acclamation: Amen.127

The church, in the doxology presents back to God in a gesture of an upward movement this great offering of praise and thanksgiving – Jesus Christ, whom she has received from him and now transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit into the mystical body of Christ – the holy church.

126 Mazza, The Eucharistic Prayers of the Roman Rite, 3.
127 IGMR, 79h.
In conclusion, therefore, one can say that the structure and elements of the eucharistic prayer conform to the basic elements of the early tradition of the eucharist attested to by the early liturgical texts. They are so carefully positioned in the entire eucharistic liturgy that they depict the theological reflections of the commemoration of the work of redemption done for us by God, through his Son Jesus Christ with the active participation of the Holy Spirit. The arrangement of the liturgical elements is done in such a way that they bring out the beauty of the whole eucharistic celebration, while at the same time serving as a mystagogical catechism through which the faithful in worship are enabled to gain “the plenary sense of the eucharist”. Thus, through their active participation in the eucharistic liturgy, they are able to experience, in a wonderful way, the powerful presence of the Lord in their midst as well as the communion with the Holy Trinity and with each other.

We see the harmony of the whole celebration already beginning with the introductory rites leading up to the liturgy of the word and progressing into the liturgy of the eucharist proper with its individual elements as it is attested to by the early christian eucharistic celebration. So that the eucharistic prayer becomes the centre of the whole eucharistic celebration in the life of the church. Every other prayer of thanksgiving, praise, invocation, acclamations, and intercessions is so harmonized and incorporated into it. Hence, one appreciates in this drama of liturgical event and worship that, the whole history of redemption and the work of salvation which God fulfilled through his Son Jesus Christ and which he continues to actualize, by the power of the Holy Spirit working in the church, till its eternal fulfilment when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory, is made present.

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128 Bouyer, Eucharist, 447.
129 Cf. TA.
Chapter Three

Invocation of the Holy Spirit “Epiclesis” as the sign of God’s self-communication

In the course of this discussion as in the foregoing two chapters, we come to understand epiclesis as a form of ritual expression of God’s self-communication and self-revelation through his Spirit to his people who are in worship. This liturgical manifestation of the important role of the Spirit of God working together with the Son Jesus Christ for the salvation of humanity after the fall of mankind is actually a representation of what the church professes as her faith in the three divine persons in one God. In the Apostles’ Creed the church proclaims that in the events that make up the history of the economy of salvation the Holy Spirit had always accompanied the Son in his mission throughout the stages of his earthly life. Such events, as those starting with the incarnation through his passion, death, resurrection, and the sending at the pentecost, the full presence of the Spirit in the church to carry on the work of salvation till Christ comes again in glory, demonstrate the indispensable action of the Holy Spirit. So that an intimate and mutual relation exists between the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit both coming from the Father.

In the light of this, we see that the prayer of epiclesis, in its words and gestures, is actually formulated as an invocation addressed to God the Father that he sends the Holy Spirit to transform the eucharistic gifts of bread and wine which the church brings before him together with the words of command of Christ into the body and blood of his Son Jesus Christ who eternally offers himself for humanity.130 And that those who receive the body and blood of the risen Christ now present in the church be filled also with the Holy Spirit so that they too be transformed in the truth, be restored in the grace and be brought together in unity and in communion with God and with one another. The realization of this state of affairs is the aim and the ultimate purpose of the whole eucharistic celebration with respect to the salvation obtained for us by God through his Son Jesus Christ in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.131 Indeed, “all classical Eucharistic Prayers reflect this theology of sanctification by including a

130 Cf. Schillebeeckx, Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God, 127-133. The view that the sacramental event is a personal encounter with the living God and so with Christ himself enables one to regard the epiclesis and the words of institution as two parts of a whole that are intimately related in the eucharist. It also agrees with the understanding of this study that the three divine persons on the basis of their intervention in saving history participate together in realizing the eucharist.

131 Cf. 2 Cor 13, 14: „The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all“.
twofold invocation: for the sanctification of the bread and wine, and the communicants”. It is a transformation in a transformation as seen with the examples of the four eucharistic prayers of the Roman Missal of 1970.

3.1. Epiclesis as a part of prayer for consecration

In order to begin with the description of the vital aspects of the epiclesis as well as the epicletic content of the individual eucharistic prayers, it is important at this point, to recall that the eucharistic prayers of the Traditio Apostolica and the Apostolic Constitutions, among other early prayer formularies, in a shape special to each one of them, ask that God the Father sends his Spirit to make manifest the bread as the body of Christ and the wine as the blood of Christ. It is a call upon the Father to transform the eucharistic gifts by the power of his Spirit into the “sacrament of salvation”. And that the prayer appealing for this transformation of bread and wine into the body and blood of his divine Son Jesus Christ is made always with reference to the communicating faithful in worship as a sacrificial food for them. The roman rite makes this appeal in two epicleses. The texts of the prayer of epiclesis found in the Eucharistic Prayer I, II, III and IV of the 1970 Roman Missal continue to have this invocation, however, comparatively the first eucharistic prayer has a somewhat different tradition as the other remaining three new eucharistic prayers.

Though, the divergent opinions among scholars of theology and liturgists with regard to the necessity of epiclesis as having consecratory value apart from the narrative words of institution still pervade the literature, we note that a satisfactory resolution of the problem in the wake of the current theological discussion is yet to be found. By a limited treatment of the views expressed on the issue we noted that an invocation of God or the proclamation of his name is a necessary element of any liturgical action and that such an action is communal in nature which is based on the fact that by faith God is always present among his people when he is called upon in prayer. This is always hoped for and expected and we wait and count on it. Therefore, both the epiclesis invoking the Spirit of God and the words of command of Christ his eternal Son now present in the Mass are moments of these sovereign acts of God’s presence among his people. So that a distinction between the two can be made.

133 See above the first chapter of this study on the section dealing with the patristic era.
134 Mazza, The Eucharistic Prayers of the Roman Rite, 2.
135 Ibid.
stressing their different features, but that their complementary effects can not be separated from the whole eucharistic prayer viewed as consecratory in its nature following the tradition of the fathers in the patristic era. Of course, within the whole eucharistic prayer itself, the epiclesis together with the words of institution form the highpoint and summit of the eucharistic celebration. This seems to be the understanding of the second council of Vatican in its liturgical reform.\textsuperscript{137} Hence, this section of the study will generally regard the symbolic act of the prayer of epiclesis of the Mass together with the narrative words of institution as forming part of the consecratory prayer which invokes in a special way the presence of God. The liturgical texts testify that in every eucharistic action God is communicating himself through his Son whose body is given to the faithful in worship as salvation food and whose blood as salvation drink by the power of the Holy Spirit. The following, therefore, is an attempt to describe the texts of these prayers comparatively with respect to their individual epicletic content and the meaning which they signify in the whole eucharistic celebration.

3.1.1. Eucharistic Prayer I

The epicletic text of the first eucharistic prayer retains in many respects the features of the old roman canon. Although, it does not specifically mention the Holy Spirit\textsuperscript{138}, it contains, however, an implicit prayer of epiclesis for consecration that come before the words of institution and it is interwoven with the account of the institution itself as seen in the following text used for the Easter Vigil to the Second Sunday of Easter:

\begin{quote}
Father, accept this offering
from your whole family
and from those born into the new life
of water and the Holy Spirit,
with all their sins forgiven.
Grant us your peace in this life,
save us from final damnation,
and count us among those you have chosen.
[Through Christ our Lord. Amen.]
Bless and approve our offering;
make it acceptable to you,
an offering in spirit and in truth.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{137} See above the first chapter of this study on the section dealing with the second council of Vatican.
\textsuperscript{138} Cf. Kunzler, The Church’s Liturgy, 231. The analysis that follows, however, will assume the action of the Holy Spirit which is interpreted into the text.
Let it become for us
the body and blood of Jesus Christ,
your only Son, our Lord.\textsuperscript{139}

This prayer asks for the acceptance of the offering of bread and wine brought by the church in the Mass. That God the Father may bless and approve them, meaning in effect, to consecrate them in the sense that his Spirit may fill them so that they may become the body and blood of Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord. It indicates, in a very special symbolic way, what the whole eucharistic celebration is all about, that is, to signify the presence of God, especially that of the body and blood of his glorified Son\textsuperscript{140} in the midst of the faithful. This is exactly what every explicit epiclesis wants to express – the manifestation of God through his Son Jesus Christ – an objective transformation that is brought about by God.\textsuperscript{141} As soon as this communication is established by the power of the Spirit of God, the account of institution then follows as the part of the eucharistic prayer in which God’s mighty deeds and his initiative to redeem mankind through his Son are commemorated in the Mass.

Another feature noticeable in this prayer is that it is directed upwards in an appeal to God to accept the offering. The prayer seems to interpret the eucharistic action of the Mass in words and gestures that imply an ascent of the eucharistic elements or gifts of bread and wine to be united and to be made as one entity with the risen Christ who dwells in heaven as the true host and eternal high priest of God. And that the church, which is now represented by the faithful in worship, also ascends to the presence of the Father through the act of this devotional commemoration of Christ’s death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, and so equally share the fellowship of the apostles, saints and martyrs of the church in heaven in this act of praise and worship in glory of the blessed Trinity.\textsuperscript{142} Supporting this view, although without specifically commenting on the roman canon, but following his study of the writings of St. Irenaeus, de Jong noted that in every eucharist God takes our gift offerings of bread and wine and unites them to the eternal offering of Christ made present in the sacrament of the

\textsuperscript{139} St. Paul Sunday Missal 2002, 28.
\textsuperscript{140} See Schillebeeckx, Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God, 128-130. With respect to consecration proper, the official position of the church lays more emphasis on the words of Christ. This, notwithstanding, it should be noted, however, that God is sovereign and has the freedom to realize the eucharistic presence of Christ at a moment he determines. And this he does in collaboration with the Holy Spirit. The priest humbly prays the prayer „as the direct representative of the Church and as indirectly the representative of Christ who is the Head, in all his activities, including that of the Eucharistic Prayer“. See Maloney & Kilmartin, Art. Epiclesis, in: Carson & Cerrito (eds.), New Catholic Encyclopedia 5, 281.
\textsuperscript{141} Cf. The epicletic texts of the Eucharistic Prayers II, III and IV below are more clear on this dimension.
eucharist and accepted same because it is truly Christ’s offering. Only so can one understand that the sense of the first eucharistic prayer is about bringing our gifts and looking upwards to God in heaven with our offerings, rather than asking him to specifically send his Spirit on them. Moreover, this prayer request for acceptance and offering is repeated in another different but significant way after the account of the institution and the anamnesis that follow it. Hence, one can say that the doxological attitude, i.e., praise and offering to God expressed in an upward movement of the first eucharist prayer best testifies the consecration than its implied epiclesis. Of course, this should always be viewed together with the account of the institution and words of Christ’s command that immediately follow it as seen below:

The day before he suffered
he took bread in his sacred hands
and looking up to heaven,
to you, his almighty Father,
he gave you thanks and praise.
He broke the bread,
gave it to his disciples, and said:
TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND EAT:
THIS IS MY BODY WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP FOR YOU.
When supper was ended,
he took the cup.
Again he gave you thanks and praise,
gave the cup to his disciples, and said:
TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND DRINK FROM IT:
THIS IS THE CUP OF MY BLOOD,
THE BLOOD OF THE NEW AND EVERLASTING CONVENANT,
IT WILL BE SHED FOR YOU AND FOR ALL
SO THAT SINS MAY BE FORGIVEN.
DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME.  

After this account comes the proclamation of the mystery of faith which is followed immediately by the anamnesis that further leads to another epicletic prayer of offering which is very special in its formulation here:

… and from the many gifts you have given us
we offer to you, God of glory and majesty,

143 Ibid.
this holy and perfect sacrifice:
the bread of life
and the cup of eternal salvation.
Look with favour on these offerings
and accept them as once you accepted
the gifts of your servant Abel,
the sacrifice of Abraham, our father in faith,
and the bread and wine offered by your priest Melchisedech.
 Almighty God, we pray that your angel may take this sacrifice
to your altar in heaven...  

And so this prayer naturally passes on to the prayer for communion and unity of the faithful,
i.e. the communion epiclesis which is examined in the second part of this chapter.

3.1.2. Eucharistic Prayer II

The prayer of epiclesis for consecration of the second eucharistic prayer like that of the other
eucharistic prayers is placed right before the institution narrative account. This prayer which
has many of the features of the eucharist of the Traditio Apostolica is addressed to the Father
making a petition which asks that he lets his Spirit come upon the eucharistic gifts of bread
and wine offered to him by the church in this Mass. And, moreover, it asks that the Spirit
makes the offering holy in order that they may become for us the body and blood of our Lord
Jesus Christ. The respective text of the invocation of the Spirit reads as follows:

Let your Spirit come upon these gifts to make them holy,
so that they may become for us
the body + and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ. 

Another important feature to be noted in this simple prayer is that the coming of the Holy
Spirit which is now sought for at this point in the Mass will bring the effects of the
sanctification and the transformation of the gifts which will be distributed to the faithful as
divine nourishment. This is the first step towards the pentecostal eucharistic community, i.e.
the Spirit is also expected to communicate the divine life of Christ to the faithful now
participating in the eucharist and equally bring about their own transformation into the one

145 Ibid., 29.
146 Ibid., 31.
mystical body in Christ.\footnote{The roman eucharistic prayers have a „split epiclesis“ so that the epicletic prayer for communion is placed after the account of the institution.} However, Bradshaw has noted that some scholars have criticized the retention of the split epiclesis for this transformation in the roman rite:

on the grounds that it artificially divides the working of the Spirit and destroys its essential unity: the Spirit is invoked on the elements in order that all who partake of them may become united in the Body of Christ. It is thus argued these are not two separate requests but two aspects of the same request, and this theology is better articulated when they are conjoined in the prayer.\footnote{Bradshaw, The Rediscovery of the Holy Spirit in Modern Eucharistic Theology and Practice, 88.}

Anyway, whatever the merits of this criticism may be, as in the epicletic texts of the other two eucharistic prayers below, this transformation expresses in a very solemn symbolic act the infinite power of God at work in the eucharistic celebration of the Mass. Thereby making present the christian mystery of the word incarnation and the work of redemption as well as the continued outpouring of the Spirit which consecrates and constitutes the church in every age and in every generation. That is exactly the point which such a prayer of epiclesis wishes to emphasize in a very powerful way. So that the epicletic rite expressing the sign of the Holy Spirit’s communication of God to the faithful together with the words of institution makes the faithful to recognize the presence of the risen Christ in those real symbols when they break the bread and when they drink from the cup during the Mass.\footnote{Cf. Joh 20, 19-23; 1 Cor 11, 23-25. Also Cf. Joh 21, 7 „It is the Lord“, but in another context.} By so doing the church fulfils through her sacraments the commandment of Christ which he gave to the Apostles and which through them is handed down to us. Hence, according to Stuflesser and Winter:

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}
Many modern scholars, among them Bouyer, continue to insist that this eschatological fulfilment of the mystery in the present celebration of the eucharist, and indeed in every eucharistic celebration, is the essence of the epiclesis in the new eucharistic prayers after the Vatican II.\textsuperscript{151} But, Kavanagh, another leading scholar is not pleased with the fact that such a pneumatic epiclesis should be placed before the account of institution because according to him it “not only welds both sections into a unit that is longer and more strongly consecratory than before: it also interrupts the flow of sequence in narrating the divine mercies for which eucharistic prayer is made and sets the institution narrative off from this cursus”.\textsuperscript{152} This point is understandable when the epiclesis is viewed as forming the link between the proclamation of the wonderful deeds of God through his divine Word the Son in the anamnesis and the faithful response of the church to those wonders of salvation.\textsuperscript{153} Thus evoking a logical sequence of the salvation history as well as the goal of communion which the present eucharistic celebration intends to achieve by such sanctification, consecration and transformation. Even, Bouyer agreed that “the sanctifying work of the Spirit similarly is always here in correlation with the redemptive work of the Son”.\textsuperscript{154} He, however, sees the split epiclesis in the new prayers “as recognition of the underlying harmony in the two traditions [east and west] which up to now have seemed separate”.\textsuperscript{155} In spite of these considerations, it is more agreeable to view the whole eucharistic prayer as a consecratory dynamic which effects the desired transformation into the body and blood of Christ that bring us to the divine fellowship with God and with one another through the power of the Holy Spirit.

3.1.3. Eucharistic Prayer III

While not totally different in their theology, the texts of the third eucharistic prayer are modelled in their composition and content on the old roman canon.\textsuperscript{156} However, this eucharist is said to have borrowed “the schema for its prayers and its most characteristic expressions as well from the best Gallican and Hispanic tradition”.\textsuperscript{157} Besides some divergent viewpoints among liturgical scholars evidence of some parallel features from other traditions is

\textsuperscript{151} Cf. Bouyer, Eucharist, 176-177.
\textsuperscript{153} Cf. Bouyer, Eucharist, 446.
\textsuperscript{154} Bouyer, Eucharist, 460.
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., 461.
\textsuperscript{156} Kunzler, The Church’s Liturgy, 232.
\textsuperscript{157} Bouyer, Eucharist, 451.
noticeable, although the prayer remains “characteristically Roman”. Its prayer of epiclesis for consecration demonstrates the significance which the church, after Vatican II, attaches to the epiclesis as the expression of the work of the Holy Spirit. A catholic priest who is experienced in the use of the old roman canon acknowledged the fact of the co-operative work of the Holy Spirit in the whole transformation process as articulated in the canon. Seen from a different perspective he noted that:

Es ist ein Sinnbild dessen, dass wir die Schöpfung dem Herrn zubringen. Das ungesäuerte Brot ist Bild der christlichen Lauterkeit. Einmal war es das Brot der Not in der Wüste mit dem das Volk Israel sich genährt hat. Aber ohne Feuer gibt es kein Brot. Das Feuer ist das Chrisam, denn das Öl unseres Feuers ist das Sakrament des Heiligen Geistes. Durch die eucharistische Verwandlung erhält dann das Brot seine höchste und heiligste Bedeutung, weil das Weizenkorn sterben muss um Frucht zu bringen... [das Brot trägt in sich schon die Passion Christi]. Auch die Weintraube wird in der Kelter getreten, wenn es zum Blut unseres Herrn Jesus Christus werden soll. Anschließend erfolgt das Dankgebet, die Preisung, der Segen und so vom Herrn Jesus Christus her Verwandlung: Gegenwart seiner “Stunde”... in der die Liebe gegen seine brutale Vernichtung am Kreuz gesiegt hat. So werden wir durch die Feier der Eucharistie in diesen Prozess hineingezogen.159

Actually the gifts of bread and wine to be transformed into the body and blood of Christ are the gifts which the church has brought before the altar as the produce of nature and work of human hands.160 The actual people celebrating this eucharist bring also their very bodies with which they toil in life as well as their very stories of life by identifying themselves with the gifts to be transformed. By so doing they too are going to be transformed into the body and blood of Christ. Mindful of this anthropological and sociological phenomenon we come to understand the devotional attitude of the church when the epicletic text for consecration of her third eucharistic prayer so reads:

And so, Father, we bring you these gifts.  
We ask you to make them holy by the power of your Spirit,  
that they may become the body + and blood  
of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,  
at whose command we celebrate this eucharist.161

158 Mazza, The Eucharistic Prayers of the Roman Rite, 125.  
161 Ibid., 33.
Again we notice that this prayer parallels the “Quam oblationem” of the old roman canon whereby the church prays: “We pray you, O God” – expressing the attitude of offering at this point of the celebration. And even with the revision of the canon in the first eucharistic prayer its theme of offering and praise is significantly maintained and which we also recognize here in the third eucharistic prayer. We recall this theme at the beginning of the first eucharistic prayer which reads as follows:

We come to you, Father,
with praise and thanksgiving,
through Jesus Christ your Son.
Through him we ask you to accept and bless +
these gifts we offer you in sacrifice.162

It expresses in a wonderful way the mission of the church which she also celebrates in the eucharist, i.e. to bring everyone of her members, but also all creation to the eucharistic altar of God joining them to the eternal offering of Christ for transformation in order to draw them for participation in the divine life of the Triune God whom the church in her doctrine professes and acclaims in the paschal mystery and whom her members seek to imitate in their everyday life and praxis. No wonder Bouyer insists that:

The bringing together in this text of the acceptance of our offering joined to that of Christ, and of which he himself remains the unique offerer in us as in himself, along with our incorporation in his body and our participation in the Spirit, stresses even more the ecumenical character of this whole prayer.163

More comment on this point will be taken up later in the section dealing with the prayer of epiclesis for communion and unity. However, the points made above with respect to the epicletic texts for consecration of the gifts of the first and second eucharistic prayers in their devotional component for the working of the Holy Spirit in the Mass also hold true for the third. In all these prayers God the Father is asked to send his Holy Spirit so that the gifts of bread and wine brought before him by the church of Christ may be transformed or sanctified. This petition serves as the first step of the split epiclesis which has its goal in the transformation in grace and truth of the communicants.

162 Ibid., 26.
163 Bouyer, Eucharist, 454.
3.1.4. Eucharistic Prayer IV

The texts of the fourth eucharistic prayer bring out in a moderate way the biblical aspects that are involved in a eucharistic liturgy. While tracing the history of salvation, the early part of the prayer exalted and thanked God for his care of the whole of creation and his relentless works of mercy to bring humankind into the wisdom and vision of his light as the “eschatological completion”\(^{164}\) of his redemptive work at the end of time. Modelled on the eastern anaphoras of the antiochene liturgical traditions, especially that of St. Basil,\(^ {165}\) this prayer recounts the graces of God, in an elegant way, and in the manner of a hymn of praise characteristic of the eucharist of the Apostolic Constitutions. Commenting on the rich scriptural language used in this prayer, Bouyer, a leading liturgical scholar noted that:

> It makes explicit everything that it implies… It ought to open to all the faithful of today the way toward deepening their awareness of all the traditional riches of the Christian eucharist, placed within their grasp in a language which they can perfectly understand.\(^ {166}\)

This point is noteworthy when we consider the full import of the second part of its prayers of thanksgiving after the Sanctus praising God’s greatness, his wisdom and his love as seen in the following text:

> Father, we acknowledge your greatness;  
> all your actions show your wisdom and love.  
> You formed man in your own likeness  
> and set him over the whole world  
> to serve you, his creator,  
> and to rule over all creatures.  
> Even when he disobeyed you and lost your friendship  
> you did not abandon him to the power of death,  
> but helped all men to seek and find you.  
> Again and again you offered a covenant to man,  
> and through the prophets taught him to hope for salvation.  
> Father, you so loved the world

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\(^{164}\) Kunzler, The Church’s Liturgy, 232.  
\(^{165}\) Cf. Bouyer, Eucharist, 455; Mazza, The Eucharistic Prayers of the Roman Rite, 1; Kunzler, The Church’s Liturgy, 232.  
\(^{166}\) Bouyer, Eucharist, 455.
that in the fullness of time you sent your only Son to be our Saviour.\footnote{St Paul. Sunday Missal 2002, 36.}

We notice in this prayer also that the graces are viewed as embodied in the Spirit who spoke in “the law and through the prophets”\footnote{Mazza, The Eucharistic Prayers of the Roman Rite, 11.} as well as their fulfilment in Christ the incarnate Word conceived of the Virgin Mary through the power of the Holy Spirit. The exaltation progresses and includes the theme of the mission of the Son, his death and resurrection and the sending of the Holy Spirit which finally culminate in the second coming of Christ.

Naturally, the elements forming the second part of this eucharistic prayer strongly centre on Christ and so have an intense anamnetic character. Moreover, Mazza provides us with a more informative summary of the prayer which explains the fact that:

> God himself is thus the protagonist in the first of the three parts that give the anaphora a trinitarian structure. The second part consists of a description of the works which the Son has done and especially of his death and resurrection, this brings us to the anamnesis. This section includes the account of institution, which is the high point of the part of the anaphora devoted to the Son. The third part begins with the epiclesis asking that the Holy Spirit might come and sanctify the bread and wine. Such a prayer celebrates the work of the Spirit, which is precisely the work of sanctification.\footnote{Ibid.}

The work of the Holy Spirit as witnessed in the text of the prayer of epiclesis of this eucharist is unique in that it asks the Spirit to sanctify the offerings of the church:

> Father, may this Holy Spirit sanctify these offerings. Let them become the body + and blood of Jesus Christ our Lord as we celebrate the great mystery which he left us as an everlasting convenant.\footnote{St. Paul Sunday Missal 2002, 37.}

Remarkably, this prayer is not addressed directly to the Holy Spirit as such. It is clearly a petition made on God the Father which at the same time reveals the Holy Spirit as the sanctifier of God’s creation. This work of sanctification of the Spirit is more appreciated when we consider shortly the second part of the prayer of epiclesis asking for the unity and the
communion of the faithful which in effect is the goal desired in the petitions of all the four eucharistic prayers.

In summary, therefore one can see that the consecration of the gifts of bread and wine finds its expression in the prayer of epiclesis which invokes God’s Spirit to come upon the eucharistic gifts of bread and wine presented by the church and together with the divine words of institution of the eucharist they are changed into the divine body and blood of Christ as the sacrament of salvation for humankind. This dynamic underscores that God is at work here, although this divine action is always prayed for, expected and acknowledged by the church through her profession and proclamation of faith. However, the reason for this transformation ritual is the ever present love of God expressed by the fact that:

Apart from the first eucharistic prayer which has an implicit epiclesis, the other three new eucharistic prayers have explicit prayers of invocation addressed to God the Father to send his Spirit or to let his Spirit consecrate and sanctify the eucharistic gifts of the church. This petition for consecration is always the first part of the epiclesis placed before the account of institution. It is the ritual signification and/or the expression of the communication of the divine presence of God among the faithful in worship. At all times, this transformation of the gifts of bread and wine to become the sacramental body and blood of Christ has as its goal and purpose the equally desired transformation of the faithful in unity, in the confirmation of the faith in the Spirit of truth and the communion with each other, thus making it possible for them to participate in the divine life of God through Christ in the Holy Spirit. This is then the symbolic act through which we make present the mystery of our faith in the redemptive works

171 Stuflesser & Winter, Geladen zum Tisch des Herrn. Die Feier der Eucharistie, 128-129.
of God in our time as proclaimed by generation of christians since the time of the apostles
who first received this command to celebrate the eucharist in memorial of the Lord.

To conclude, Bouyer’s views on what the church intended in this great prayer of invocation
are worthy of note:

   In other words, the consecrator of all these eucharists is always Christ alone, the Word made flesh,
insofar as he is ever the dispenser of the Spirit because he handed himself over to death and then
rose from the dead by the power of this same Spirit. But in the indivisible totality of the eucharist,
this Word, evoked by the Church, and her own prayer calling for the fulfilment of the Word
through the power of the Spirit come together for the mysterious fulfilment of the divine
promises.\textsuperscript{172}

The point is well made although Bouyer, as a matter of fact, adopted a more Christocentric
view of the consecration which can be fully understood by recourse to the dynamic of God’s
self-revelation in his Son and in his Spirit in the course of salvation history. In this dynamic
we recognize that in giving his Son as the “Word made flesh”\textsuperscript{173} God the Father gives himself
to the world through the action and power of his Spirit which enabled the incarnation as well
as the resurrection of Christ from the dead. The church always prays and awaits that this same
Holy Spirit may fill and remain in her members through the journey of their earthly existence
and that the Spirit may continue to perform in cooperation with the church the wonders of
God’s promises. It is to this prayer asking for the Spirit of unity and communion that we now
attempt to describe in the following section.

\textbf{3.2. Epiclesis as a prayer for unity and communion}

The actual effect hoped for and expressed symbolically in the first part of the prayer of
epiclesis is the realization of the mystical body of Christ that enjoys the fullness of the Holy
Spirit to share in the divine life of the Holy Trinity. The second part of this prayer, i.e. the
communion epiclesis requests directly for the transformation of the faithful in worship and it
finds further expression in the communion rite of the Mass. This prayer is also called a prayer
of offering for the fact that it also seeks to offer the faithful to God so that the Spirit of God
which at the same time is the Spirit of Christ may fill and transform them.

\textsuperscript{172} Bouyer, Eucharist, 467.
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid.
We recall that the Holy Spirit comes in order to fill and to sanctify the gifts as well as to change them into the body and blood of Christ thus becoming a sacrament of salvation for those who receive them in communion. This prayer of invocation on the gifts is actually a later development in the sacramental theology which interpreted the eucharistic elements of bread and wine as the symbol of union of the faithful in Christ and with one another, indeed, as the sign of “Christ’s redemptive act in its actual grasp of a particular individual”.\footnote{Schillebeeckx, Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter, 81; Cf. Nocke, Sakramententheologie, 159-170; TA, 4; Taft, From logos to spirit. On the early history of the epiclesis, 499.} It is, therefore, a means to realize the eucharist proper, that is, the reconciliation and communion of the faithful not only with God but also with one another.\footnote{Cf. Matt 5, 23-24.} And this is illustrated by the fact that those who partake in the eucharistic gifts receive the Holy Spirit to become one blood and one body in Christ and so could participate in the divine life of God.\footnote{Cf. 1 Cor 10, 16-17} It is precisely because of this point that the church in the eucharist is said to be constituted as the body of Christ. For as Nocke rightly puts it:


With this in mind we understand why the early fathers had their focus on the unity and communion of the faithful – the actual body of Christ, as they formulated the prayer of epiclesis even though they made petitions for the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the offerings of the church.
The 1970 eucharistic prayers of the roman rite place this prayer of epiclesis for communion after the account of institution and directly following the anamnesis and before the various intercessions of the church. In comparison, the texts of the respective prayers bear witness of this tradition since the patristic. For example, that of the first eucharistic prayer simply requests as follows:

Almighty God,
we pray that your angel may take this sacrifice
to your altar in heaven.
Then, as we receive from this altar
the sacred body and blood of your Son,
let us be filled with every grace and blessing.
[Through Christ our Lord. Amen.]\(^\text{178}\)

The petition of the second eucharistic prayer is interwoven with the anamnesis and reads in part as follows:

We thank you for counting us worthy
to stand in your presence and serve you.
May all of us who share in the body and blood of Christ
be brought together in unity by the Holy Spirit.\(^\text{179}\)

In this same manner, but with a different formulation which expresses exactly the intention of the church making this request of the third eucharistic prayer:

Look with favour on your Church’s offering,
and see the Victim whose death has reconciled us to yourself.
Grant that we, who are nourished by his body and blood,
may be filled with his Holy Spirit,
and become one body, one spirit in Christ.\(^\text{180}\)

And, finally connecting the anamnesis with the communion epiclesis, the fourth eucharistic prayer offers and pleads with the following words:

\(^\text{179}\) Ibid., 32.
\(^\text{180}\) Ibid., 34.
… we offer you his body and blood,
the acceptable sacrifice
which brings salvation to the whole world.
Lord, look upon this sacrifice which you have given to your Church;
and by your Holy Spirit, gather all who share this one bread and one cup
into the one body of Christ, a living sacrifice of praise.181

Not only making us “a living sacrifice of praise” but also, in the spirit of the third eucharistic prayer, that we may indeed become an everlasting gift to God the Father through his Son so that this living sacrifice “which has made our peace with you”, may “advance the peace and salvation of all the world”.182 In praying in this manner, the church of Christ on earth is conscious of her mission in the world which she attempts to fulfil by the power of the Spirit of God. It is the mission and at the same time the work of salvation that God is doing through his Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. The direction of the two epiclesis, therefore, goes to stress this transformation of the gifts into the body and blood of Christ, in view of the change in spirit by the faithful when they receive Christ in communion.

As a summary, therefore, one can view the relationship between the first prayer of epiclesis for consecration and the second for unity and communion as forming a complementary bond for the fact that the first is a symbolic act which brings out the meaning of the sacrament, i.e. the koinonia-communion with reference to the faithful in worship and indeed the church as a whole. The eucharistic gifts are, therefore, firstly sanctified and changed into the body of Christ which then becomes for the faithful a sacramental or rather a divine food which nourishes and transforms them into the body of Christ the Saviour of humankind. In this sense we come to understand the church as a communion of people of faith and hope and love,183 a mystical body of Christ in the world,184 called into being by the triune God and making its earthly journey through the time back to him the creator and origin of all things. Hence, this real ecclesial communion – a people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit – is the very mystery which the church celebrates in the liturgy of the eucharist. And this is the work of the Holy Spirit which is sent upon the church on the day of pentecost.185

181 Ibid., 38.
182 Ibid., 34-35.
183 Cf. 1 Cor 13, 13.
184 Cf. LG, 7.
185 Cf. LG, 4.
186 Cf. LG, 1, 8.
of the church as communion rediscovers the pneumatological aspect of the eucharist and in the wake of the liturgical reform approved the three new eucharistic prayers with explicit epiclesis that express ritually the ultimate purpose and desire of the church in celebrating the eucharist. However, all the four eucharistic prayers of the 1970 Roman Missal have split epiclesis stressing the two-directional character of this dynamic. The first epiclesis for consecration of the gifts is placed before the account of institution and the second epiclesis for unity and communion of the faithful come directly after the anamnesis and linked to the various intercessions of the church.
Chapter Four

The Eucharistic Prayer and the Church: lex orandi – lex credendi

The eucharistic prayer is a prayer of the church and its importance lies in the fact that this prayer is a confession of faith in the redeeming mystery of the eucharistic trinitarian event. Hence, the dynamic relationship between the celebration of the eucharist and the articulation of the church’s doctrine of faith in the Trinity is best appreciated in the notion that what the church prays for she believes in the hope and trust that God will grant the request. This is the mystery of her faith.\(^{187}\) The efficacy of the whole eucharistic prayer is also best understood as a pneumatic event in that it flows from the prompting of the Holy Spirit which evokes and guarantees the faith of the church. Therefore, the church lives in a devotional attitude of invocation and expectation motivating her always to praise and thank God for the received graces and favours, in this case, the gift of redemption of the humankind through Christ his only-begotten Son. In all this, we notice the working of the Spirit of God who accompanies the Son in his mission, fills the church and cooperates with her and continues to accomplish the work of salvation of Christ in the concrete particular individuals who are the faithful in worship – the eucharistic community of God’s people. It is the faith in this God, who is the source of our life and salvation, and from whom everything that is church comes from, and who continues to draw all men and women of all generations to his divine trinitarian life, which the church professes to the world. So that the very personal divine presence of this triune God among us underscores the meaning which the church attaches to the words and gestures that form the eucharistic epiclesis in this liturgical action. Seen within the context of the whole eucharistic prayer as a prayer for sanctification of God’s people assembled in his name giving thanks and praise to his glory for the work of salvation, it becomes natural to view the church herself as a mystery and a sacrament to be communicated to the whole world because the risen Christ is present as the head of this church and at the same time as the High Priest who reigns eternally at the right hand of God.\(^{188}\) Hence, the social mission of christians, who participate in the eucharist as the eucharistic community and are the recipients of its sanctifying grace, is to give testimony to the gradual transformation of all things through the Spirit of God who leads them to the Son and, along with him, to the Father.

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\(^{187}\) Cf. Bouyer, Eucharist, 469.

\(^{188}\) Cf. LG, 1; SC, 5.
When the church prays the Apostles Creed, she is always conscious of the fact that it is the creator Spirit of God\footnote{Berger, Veni Creator Spiritus, 141.} which constantly renews and constitutes the church instituted by Christ. In the eucharist, the Spirit does this by filling the faithful and gathering them through “ad confirmationem fidei in veritate”\footnote{TA, 4.} works to bring about the actual communion with the same risen Christ which further enables them to obtain communion with God and with one another and with the saints in heaven and the Mother of God – a mystery that catholics celebrate at Mass. Indeed, it is this fact of a deeper theological understanding of the christian mystery that moved the bishops’ synod on the Eucharist in June 2006 to view it as the sacrament of love and situated it within the dynamic of our faith in this paschal mystery. This view is reflected in the Apostolic Letter of Pope Benedict XVI, “Sacramentum Caritatis”, informing that:

This explains the point that the faith of the church always plays an important role in the way the church formulated her eucharistic prayers maintaining the basic form or shape as transmitted to us since after the end of the compositional period of the patristic. All these prayers, either that of the eastern anaphora or the western roman canon, express the Church’s believing response to the mighty works of God in the daily personal encounter we have with Christ in the sacrament of the eucharist\footnote{Papst Benedikt XVI: Nachsynodales Apostolisches Schreiben Sacramentum Caritatis (22. Februar 2007), Vatican: Libreria Editrice 2007 (= Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz), 53.}, and also in the community of believers which at the same time is the symbol of our faith expressed in our obedience to Christ’s message, belief in his redemptive work and equally take personal responsibility to proclaim and to live this gospel message of our salvation. It is this faith and belief in the divine action of God that

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{Cf. Schillebeeckx, Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God, 13-17.}
\end{footnotes}
the eucharistic prayer of the church symbolically wishes to express and deepen. So that the whole eucharistic prayer reaches its highest point when the words of the epiclesis together with the words of institution narrative are spoken and accompanied by gestures in a symbolic eucharistic action that possesses in an immense spiritual meaning and value marking it out as the:

Mitte und Höhepunkt der ganzen Feier… uns von der lebendigen Überlieferung der Kirche übergeben worden; sie zeichnen sich aus durch einen unerschöpflichen theologischen und spirituellen Reichtum… Die eucharistische Spiritualität und die theologische Reflexion werden besonders erheilt, wenn man die tiefe Einheit in der Anaphora zwischen der Anrufung des Heiligen Geistes und dem Einsetzungsbericht betrachtet, worin “das Opfer vollzogen” [wird], das Christus selber beim Letzten Abendmahl eingesetzt hat. Tatsächlich “erfeht die Kirche durch besondere Anrufungen die Kraft des Heiligen Geistes, damit die von Menschen dargebrachten Gaben konsekrirt, das heißt Leib und Blut Christi werden und damit die makellose Opfergabe, die in der Kommunion empfangen wird, denen zum Heil gereiche, die daran Anteil erhalten.”

In this sense it becomes important for the church to stress the need for the faithful to appreciate and value the sacrament of the eucharistic in its fullest form, especially by also partaking in the reception of the communion in the Mass. For:

Die Eucharistie ist die zentrale Feier der Kirche. Zwar feiert die Kirche nicht sich selbst, sondern die Geschichte, der sie sich verdankt, die Hoffnung, welche sie bewegt, das Kommen des Herrn, durch das sie sich verwandeln läßt; aber in dieser Feier stellt sie zugleich dar, was sie ist oder was sie sein soll: eine Gemeinschaft, die Zeugnis gibt von Jesus Christus und dem von ihm verkündeten Reich Gottes, dieses Zeugnis zu leben versucht im Dienst am Nächsten und beides, das Zeugnis des Wortes und das Zeugnis des Handelns, zeichenhaft darstellt in der Feier der Liturgie… Damit zeigt sich eine Grundstruktur von Kirche: Kirche ist Zusammenkunft, Gemeinschaft.

Indeed Christ instituted the church as a mysterious eucharistic community that lives the life of the triune God. That is the reason why he sent the Spirit from the Father [pneuma of the Logos] to the church – his mystical body. And since the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of pentecost, the church has never ceased to proclaim the wonderful deeds of God and to profess her trinitarian faith in the eucharist as profoundly expressed in her eucharistic prayers, thereby making the eucharist a prophetic and visible sign of salvation which Christ gave as a

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193 Papst Benedikt XVI, Sacramentum Caritatis, 67-68.
New Testament to his church before his Passion. Ever since the church is the true custodian of this new covenant in her saving mission to the world.

It then follows that since the church owes its origin through the action of Christ and that of the Spirit who continues to constitute her by evoking the memory and faith of the church to celebrate the eucharist in obedience to Christ’s command at the Last Supper: “Do this in memory of me”\textsuperscript{195}, it becomes necessary for the church to develop officially a form of this eucharistic worship as well as the shape of the prayers of invocation and supplication which expresses the presence of God in his Son and in his Spirit in the Mass thus making it a sacramental action of salvation. Therefore, the shape and the form of this sacramental rite usually and always include regulations regarding how the eucharist is celebrated and who is qualified, by virtue of an ordination to the “apostolic office”\textsuperscript{196}, to preside over the celebration thereby acting according to the intention of the church and saying the eucharistic prayer on her behalf. This further means that the eucharistic prayer, as the presidential prayer of faith of the church, is said only by a person ordained by an act of the church, and so an act of Christ himself, through a proper rite to represent the faithful before God as well as to represent the risen Christ who is the actual High Priest of God.\textsuperscript{197} And this person is usually the bishop, or a priest acting on his behalf, who symbolically embodies Christ and the church in himself. In other words, both the bishop and the priest as ordained ministers of the church personify and symbolize both Christ as the High Priest and the priestly character of all the faithful in worship – the visible eucharistic communion in grace.\textsuperscript{198} This means that the power which the bishop or the priest has is the power to ask the Father for the Spirit in the name of Christ and on behalf of the faithful. It underscores the point that:

\begin{quote}
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\textsuperscript{195} Cf. Mazza, The Eucharistic Prayers of the Roman Rite, 17.
\textsuperscript{196} Schillebeeckx, Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God, 49.
\textsuperscript{198} Cf. Schillebeeckx, Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God, 47-52; Nocke, Sakramententheologie, 181.
He says this prayer in full confidence that God the Father will do what is asked because of the new covenant between God and his people whom he has redeemed through Christ his Son. However, as already noted above, the action of the bishop and/or the celebrating priest and the prayers they say on behalf of the “community of the faithful”, being themselves part of this community, are always accompanied by the “Amen” of the faithful ratifying these their actions and prayers. And all this is done through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit which, acting as the primary cause of God’s self-communication of salvation, makes possible the whole liturgical celebration, the teaching of the church with regard to its form and enables the church to celebrate this memorial paschal mystery in glory of the Trinity. So that what is experienced by the faithful in worship during the eucharistic prayer becomes the guide to how they live the values and intentions of Christ in their everyday social interactions in society. Hence the lex orandi of the liturgy of the church is not only related to and articulated in the lex credendi of the church, but is also related to the intended eucharistic fruits which are equally seen as its effects on the lives of the faithful [lex vivendi] in their social relationships.

This further means that a personal encounter with God in the eucharistic worship promotes a radical change of heart and attitude which enables the community of the faithful to realize that the eucharist is a true sacrament of unity and it is supposed to take form in the lives of the individual members. The faithful experience daily in the eucharistic liturgy a new form of life. It is a life whereby God, through the eucharistic action, acts on their lives and equally invites them to work with him in acting on the lives of other of his creatures. And all creatures of God have a radical relationship with him. They are all sustained in existence by God’s love, in other words, by the love of the Holy Trinity and God, by the power of his Spirit, brings them into communion with him and with one another in Christ. Indeed, the third eucharistic prayer in its first part acknowledges the fact that God is the source of all life. The import of this prayer makes it clear that God’s active presence in our lives and his loving care for all his creatures are necessary for the sustenance of human life. Hence the epicletic prayers asking

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199 Kongregation für den Klerus, Direktorium für Dienst und Leben der Priester, 16.
200 Cf. Joh 15, 7-17
201 Schillebeeckx, Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God, 48.
202 Cf. Eucharistic Prayer III, „All life, all holiness comes from you through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, by the working of the Holy Spirit“. 
for the gift of his Spirit that the humankind may be filled with the full and active presence of God in every situation.

The Holy Spirit’s action which brings us into union with Christ enables us to respond in faith to do the will of God the Father. And God’s will is that all people should be saved and come to his divine knowledge of truth and to reflect in their lives the pattern of the eucharistic communion in worship of praise and the glory of his name. This is the reality which catholics and indeed all christians, are called upon to proclaim and to manifest in our human world. They can do this by transforming the situation in which they find themselves into a means of bringing all creatures to God’s divine life of communion with Christ and with one another and by so doing become themselves a means of communicating the salvation to others who share the same situation with them. That is the reason why the church is viewed as a mystery that both conceals and reveals the presence of God in our lives. Because of this point, roman catholics cannot be indifferent to calls for unity among different denominations of the one church of Christ spread throughout the world. In the light of this, one can see that the prayer of epiclesis also provides a theological understanding that will encourage a meaningful ecumenical dialogue for unity among the churches. We recognize this fact in the pneumatological impulse of the Vatican II.

The council fathers of the Second Vatican firmly stated that the church is actually manifested in her mission through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of pentecost. On this day Christ mystically instituted the church by communicating his Spirit which he breathed on the apostles after his resurrection and since then the Holy Spirit continues to constitute the church by gathering her members together from every nation and race. This event marked the beginning of the ministry of the church in the world. The council fathers acknowledged the indispensable action of the Holy Spirit in the mission of Christ which is now being fulfilled in his mystical body – the church. And one visible sign of the fruits of this ministry is the liturgical renewal of the Vatican II which has influenced other christian churches to formulate a number of their eucharistic prayers on the model of the new eucharistic prayers of the 1970 Roman Missal. It further shows the work of the Holy Spirit in the sphere of charism found in these other christian churches. Already we noticed that the changes brought about by the

203 Cf. 1 Tim 2, 5.
204 Cf. LG, 5.
205 Cf. LG, 13.
206 Cf. LG, 1.
renewal gave rise to the explicit epiclesis of the three new eucharistic prayers thus paving the way towards a progressive reconciliation and communion between the East and the West. The theological gain, therefore, lies in the fact that both viewpoints represented in the respective traditions can be complementary and fruitful for a proper understanding of the eucharistic event.

In addition, the charismatic echoes of the liturgical reform have prompted the Church of England, which had hitherto made proposals for the inclusion of an explicit prayer of epiclesis in her eucharistic prayers used in many parts of the world, to restore the invocation of the Holy Spirit in her eucharistic prayer with a single or a split epiclesis. Other churches followed this move and began to make revisions of the liturgical texts which tended to adopt either a single or a split epiclesis. However, the prayers generally ask God to send the Holy Spirit both upon the people and upon the eucharistic gifts. Some of these churches, for example, the Old Catholic Church, tend to have a eucharistic epiclesis that is closer to the Greek Orthodox tradition or more closer to the Roman Catholic tradition. Even the Lutheran Book of Worship provides various examples of epiclesis in its eucharistic prayers. One prayer of epiclesis found in its fourth eucharistic prayer bears resemblance to that of the TA and the second eucharistic prayer of the Roman Missal. It reads as follows:

Send your Spirit upon these gifts of your Church, gather into one all who share this bread and wine, fill us with your Holy Spirit to establish our faith in truth, that we may praise and glorify you through your Son Jesus Christ.

This petition is actually asking for the sending of the Holy Spirit upon the gifts of the church. And in the same breath ask for the gathering into one of all who share the gifts and to fill them with the Holy Spirit. So that the effect of this prayer is measured by the fact of the unity established through faith in truth thus enabling those who share in this eucharist to give praise and glorify God. It is a single epicletic prayer. The roman rite has this as a split epiclesis. But, however, in both rites, the prayer conveys the same reality which it is hoped to realize – the unity and communion of all those who participate in the Lord’s Supper.

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207 Cf. Bradshaw, The Rediscovery of the Holy Spirit in Modern Eucharistic Theology and Practice, 89.
208 Cf. Ibid.
210 Ibid., 226.
Another prayer of epiclesis found in the third eucharistic prayer of the Lutheran Book of Worship is significantly different and reads as follows:

And we implore you mercifully to accept our praise and thanksgiving, and, with your Word and Holy Spirit, to bless us, your servants, and these your own gifts of bread and wine; that we and all who share in the body and blood of your Son may be filled with heavenly peace and joy, and, receiving the forgiveness of sin, may be sanctified in soul and body, and have our portion with all your saints. 211

This prayer is seen more as a request for the acceptance of praise and thanksgiving offered by the church, which further asks for the blessing of God with his “Word and Spirit” on both the faithful and the gifts. The effect of this prayer is seen more in the eschatological benefits to be enjoyed by those who share in this eucharist rather than in the transformation of both the eucharistic gifts and the faithful. It further shows a significant variation which may be found only in the prayer for intercessions of the roman rite.

In summary therefore, one can say that the eucharist is a memorial gift of Christ himself to God the Father as a sacrifice of worship in praise and thanksgiving which he entrusted to the apostles at the Last Supper as a memorial gift of himself before his redeeming passion and commanded them to celebrate the mystery as a new covenant in memory of him. In order to perpetuate and actualize this paschal mystery he sent down the Holy Spirit from the Father on the church – his mystical body – after his resurrection and ascension into heaven on the day of pentecost. The Spirit which guarantees through the apostolic office that the church in obedience to her Lord trustfully enacts this memorial and professes her faith in the wonderful redemptive work of God as well as making her capable to live the life expected of it so that its fruits may be visible for the whole world till the return in glory of Christ who finally draws all men and women in the Spirit to the divine life of the Holy Trinity.

The church is through all generations the custodian of this gift of love from Christ her Saviour. And the church is always in a devotional developmental process through reflecting on the deeper implications of this sacrament for the salvation of her members and its proper application according to the command of Christ and thereby guided by the Holy Spirit at all times the church is able to respond in faith and in action to this sacrament of eternal sacrifice of Christ which makes our peace and reconciliation with God and with one another and

211 Ibid., 225.
“which brings salvation to the whole world”. So that we recognize in the eucharistic prayer, each time the eucharist is celebrated, the active response of faith of the whole church, especially that of the faithful in worship, hence it is a sublime communal prayer which the bishop or the presiding priest says on behalf of the presently gathered community of the faithful who, because this prayer involves them existentially, expresses their agreement by its “Amen” at the end of it.

Moreover, all believers have a radical relationship through the sacrament of baptism with Christ, and since the unity of the whole church of Christ is both signified and brought about by the sacrament of eucharist, the prospects for an ecclesial unity should therefore motivate all those baptised in Christ to a meaningful ecumenical dialogue. These sacraments are understood to manifest some reality which they equally realize, i.e. the communion in the body of Christ. So that all the children of God united in the eucharist of life by the power of the Holy Spirit may also share in the communion of the Holy Trinity when Christ later come in his glory. The prayer of epiclesis, as an expression of the active role of the Holy Spirit, should therefore provide a theological basis for a meaningful reconciliation, unity and communion among the churches. Hence, with the momentum of the reforms of the Vatican II there are calls urging “the churches of the Reformation to adopt an epiclesis as a means of fostering unity”. Giving thought to this Bradshaw, however, hopes that two documents that extensively developed the “theme of the Spirit’s relationship to the Eucharist” can be of great relevance for the ecumenical dialogue. These documents are the 1982 World Council of Churches’ Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry and “the text on the Holy Spirit produced by the Theological-Historical Commission of the Roman Catholic Church in preparation for the Jubilee Year 2000.” These documents contain important statements with respect to the active role of the Holy Spirit in making Christ present in the eucharist. One of such statements is best appreciated as seen in Section 14 of Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry:

The Spirit makes the crucified and risen Christ really present to us in the eucharistic meal, fulfilling the promise contained in the words institution. … The bond between the eucharistic celebration and the mystery of the Triune God reveals the role of the Holy Spirit as that of the One who makes the historical words of Jesus present and alive. Being assured by Jesus’ promise in the

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212 Eucharistic Prayer IV.
214 Bradshaw, The Rediscovery of the Holy Spirit in Modern Eucharistic Theology and Practice, 92.
215 Ibid., 93.
216 Ibid., 93-94.
words of institution that it will be answered, the Church prays to the Father for the gift of the Holy Spirit in order that the eucharistic event may be a reality: the real presence of the crucified and risen Christ giving his life for all humanity.  

The realization of this hope will surely go a long way in bringing about genuine cooperation among christian churches for the transformation of our human world with the Word of God made flesh in Christ. And such transformation will work to bring unity, peace and justice in a world torn apart with injustice, violence and wars which Christ came to redeem by giving his life for all humanity.

217 Cited in ibid., 93.
Conclusion

The eucharist is the gift of love which God the Father has given to humanity through his Son Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit which is the bond of love between the Father and the Son. The life of the Holy Trinity is the life of love in communion. This is the message of Christ, i.e. the Word of God about his Kingdom which took human flesh and which is revealed in Christ his Son to the world. Because God loves the world and the humanity he has created in his own image he eternally offers his divine life through his Son to us so that we may participate in it by the power of his Spirit who raised the Son from the dead. It is in praise of God for this wonderful work of salvation that moved Christ to institute the eucharist as a worship of his praise and thanksgiving in Spirit to the Father. In the Jewish tradition this kind of worship found its ritual expression in the liturgical character of the meals which Jesus himself may have taken over and transformed it at the Last Supper to be his eternal sacrifice of praise to the Father. Jesus regarded this Last Supper not only as a eucharistic meal in his memory but also as a new covenant of his love. With the institution and command of Christ to celebrate this mystery of love which he entrusted to the care of the apostles, began the christians through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to assemble in worship and enact this memorial sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to God. And the presence of God in Christ is communicated and guaranteed by the Holy Spirit every time the apostles and so the community of the faithful are gathered in worship. Hence the faith of the church in the eucharistic presence of God through his Son and in the Holy Spirit whenever the eucharist is celebrated finds its ritual expression by the words and gestures of the eucharistic prayer of the church. So that the actual relationship between the eucharistic prayer as a prayer of faith of the church and the role of the Holy Spirit which is both the medium of God’s self-communication in Christ and the power that evokes and inspires the church to respond to this communication in the eucharist is expressed by the eucharistic action of the prayer of epiclesis.

Therefore, this study has attempted to describe this relationship by analysing the content of the prayer of epiclesis in order to bring out its theological and devotional values with respect to the whole eucharistic prayer and its effects on the faithful during the worship of the Mass. It commenced by our treatment of its historical context and examined some early liturgical

218 Cf. Rom 8, 11.
texts which provide some information about the early eucharistic tradition. Starting with the patristic era we noted that the later development of the sacramental theology of the eucharist in the early scholastic era influenced the official teaching authority of the church regarding the consecratory value of the epiclesis which lasted till the modern era when the scholars of theology and liturgy began to devote attention with a renewed interest on the role of the Holy Spirit in the eucharist. We saw that before this time the early fathers of the church did not focus their attention on such issues since they regarded the whole eucharistic prayer as a consecratory trinitarian epiclesis that confesses the faith in the divine presence of God the Father in his Son through the power of his Spirit in a worship of praise and thanksgiving offered by the church to the glory of the Holy Trinity. Moreover, that the church is viewed as the earthly mystical body of Christ drawn into the life of the Trinity, the function of the eucharistic epiclesis was considered to be in respect of the spiritual transformation of the community of the faithful presently and personally welcoming and encountering its risen Lord Jesus Christ in this worship, hence the “saving reality which is Christ”.220

During the early scholastic period a problem arose regarding the precise moment of the actual presence of this reality in the eucharistic elements of bread and wine and which words and actions are necessary components to realize its form or its substance as a sacrament of the church’s sacrifice in accordance with the pattern which Christ himself has given. The efforts to determine these issues resulted in the confusion about who is acting in the eucharist; is it the activity of Christ or is it the activity of the Holy Spirit, in other words, is it through the power of the divine Word of institution or through the power of the Spirit that brings about the change in the elements making them body and blood of Christ. So that a concentration on the physical change of the elements after consecration took priority over the meaning which they symbolize, hence the doctrine of the transubstantiation of the eucharist through the words of institution. The implication is that the magisterium since the scholastic era opted for the exclusive consecratory value of the words of institution narrative as the form and substance of the sacrament which resulted in the controversy between the East and the West.

A change in this one-sided perspective occurred during the theological discussions of the modern era when the theologians and liturgists began to bring together the christological, pneumatological and anthropological dynamics experienced in the celebration of the

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220 Schillebeeckx, Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God, 40.
eucharist. Bouyer, among other modern theologians, expressed this new theological understanding in the following words:

In the eucharistic celebration of this memorial, the bread and the wine of our community meal, of the agape banquet, become sacrificial to the extent that they become for our faith what they represent, through the power of the divine Word and Spirit. And insofar as we ourselves, in this faith, are thus associated with the unique salvific oblation, we become one sole offering with Christ. Thus we can offer our own bodies, with his and in his, as a living and true sacrifice, giving to the Father, through the grace of the Son and in the communication of his Spirit, the “reasonable” worship which he expects from us… In the eucharist, we therefore become one Body with him through the power of his Spirit.221

With this understanding one began to view the eucharistic epiclesis as an expression of the eucharistic pentecost which informed the initiation of liturgical reforms of the second council of Vatican and the adoption of the four basic eucharistic prayers of the 1970 Roman Missal with a split epiclesis that bear witness to the dynamic relationship between Christ, his Spirit and the community of the faithful in the Mass. The complementary explicit epiclesis of the three new eucharistic prayers bear resemblance to the Eastern liturgies.

As a prayer of praise, thanksgiving and supplication to God for his saving work on humanity, we examined the liturgical texts of the four eucharistic prayers and found that they all conform to the structure of a eucharistic prayer while containing the basic elements that emphasize the aspects of the eucharist transmitted to us through the early apostolic church. Each eucharistic prayer is made of units of prayers arranged as prayer of thanksgiving; acclamation; epiclesis [consecration]; institution narrative and consecration; anamnèsis; offering [communion epiclesis]; intercessions and doxology. So that with the unity of its arrangement and its position in the whole celebration the eucharistic prayer becomes the centre and the heart of the celebration proper which reaches its highest point with the prayer of epiclesis and the account of institution.

By analysing the epicletic content of the texts of the four eucharistic prayers we observed that the epiclesis itself, as a prayer of invocation of the Holy Spirit which is addressed to God the Father, is actually a signification of God’s self-communication through his divine presence in Christ his Son by the power of his Spirit. The texts testify that in every eucharistic action

221 Bouyer, Eucharist, 465-466; 468.
whereby this petition is made, God manifests himself concretely by his personal presence in the Son in the transformed eucharistic bread and wine through the Holy Spirit. So that the prayer of epiclesis itself becomes a ritual expression of the dynamic role of the Spirit in the economy of salvation thereby revealing the presence of Christ as eucharistic food of salvation for the faithful. The effects, therefore, of this mystical presence are further seen and appreciated in the transformation for unity of the community of the faithful which is confirmed in the Spirit of truth concerning the faith in the gospel Word of God now made flesh [Jesus Christ] who calls them to proclaim and fulfil this Word in their lives. Hence the four eucharistic prayers can be seen as forms of liturgical action in words and gestures which articulate the doctrinal faith of the church in the Holy Trinity as well as representing the inspired self-revelation of God in the scriptures of the New Testament.

Finally, the study examined the relationship between the eucharistic prayer and the church indicating the dynamic of the lex orandi and the lex credendi in the eucharistic celebration. Noting the complementary activity of Christ and that of the Holy Spirit, we reflected on the fact that Christ instituted the church and so the sacrament of the eucharist as a memorial gift of love and worship of praise which he entrusted to the care of the apostles and through them to the church. And that it is the Holy Spirit which constitutes and renews the church in her celebration in faith of this mystery trusting the promise of the abiding presence of the Lord in her midst. So that the efficacy of the eucharistic prayer itself is best understood as a pneumatic event in that it flows from the active working of the Holy Spirit present in the church. Therefore, it becomes logical and meaningful to regard the organization of the church into the community of the faithful – the mystical body of Christ and those of her members who are chosen, through the rite of ordination, to represent both Christ the High Priest and the community of the faithful in the eucharistic worship as the work of the Holy Spirit. Ordination to the apostolic office as a criterion for presiding over the eucharistic celebration of the community of the faithful has its merits for the fact that the eucharistic prayer is not only a sublime communal prayer of faith of the church but also a presidential prayer of the church which personally involves the risen Christ who is the actual High Priest as well as equally and existentially involving the faithful which bear the marks of Christ in the world.

Furthermore, since all believers are called to share the divine life of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit through their radical relationship with Christ in the sacrament of Baptism, it becomes a spiritual and moral challenge for all christians of whatever denomination to
realize in their lives the eucharistic communion as the fruits of being in Christ. The gathering together of the one church of Christ spread throughout the world where God’s active presence and loving care for his creation is experienced can only be accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit. The council fathers of Vatican II realized that the unity of christians has its origin in the unity and communion of the Holy Trinity. And that through the working of the Holy Spirit, the eucharist becomes a sacrament that signifies as well as realizes this unity among christians. So that the pneumatological impulse given by the Second Vatican and the consequent liturgical renewal which brought about explicit eucharistic epiclesis in the roman rite had acted to improve the ecumenical understanding of the eucharist as a sacrament of unity and communion in Christ with God and with one another. The union with Christ is not only a divine gift of God but also a task which affects the totality of christian life in every situation. Hence all christians are called upon to proclaim the message of Christ, to live the pattern of the eucharistic communion in their lives and to make efforts towards the transformation of the human world in the image of the divine life of God. This is the mission of Christ, this is the mission of the Holy Spirit and it is also the mission of the whole church of Christ by the working of the Holy Spirit so that the will of God the Father may be fulfilled in our lives in praise and glory of his name.
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Appendix I

**Split epiclesis of the Eucharistic Prayers: MR 1970**

Consecration: Father as addressee; the church asks for the Holy Spirit upon the gifts

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<td>Father, accept this offering from your whole family. Grant us your peace in this life, save us from final damnation, and count us among those you have chosen. [Through Christ our Lord. Amen.]</td>
<td>Let your Spirit come upon these gifts to make them holy, so that they may become for us the body + and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ.</td>
<td>And so, Father, we bring you these gifts. We ask you to make them holy by the power of your Spirit, that they may become the body + and blood of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at whose command we celebrate this eucharist.</td>
<td>Father may this Holy Spirit sanctify these offerings. Let them become the body + and blood of Jesus Christ our Lord as we celebrate the great mystery which he left us as an everlasting covenant.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bless and approve our offering; make it acceptable to you, an offering in spirit and in truth. Let it become for us the body and blood of Jesus Christ, your only Son, our Lord.</td>
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**INSTITUTION NARRATIVE**

Communion: Father as addressee; the church asks for the Spirit of unity and communion

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<td>Almighty God, we pray that your angel may take this sacrifice to your altar in heaven. Then, as we receive from this altar the sacred body and blood of your Son, let us be filled with every grace and blessing. [Through Christ our Lord. Amen.]</td>
<td>We thank you for counting us worthy to stand in your presence and serve you. May all of us who share in the body and blood of Christ be brought together in unity by the Holy Spirit.</td>
<td>Look with favour on your Church’s offering, and see the Victim whose death has reconciled us to yourself. Grant that we, who are nourished by his body and blood, may be filled with his Holy Spirit, and become one body, one spirit in Christ.</td>
<td>Lord, look upon this sacrifice which you have given to your Church; and by your Holy Spirit, gather all who share this one bread and one cup into the one body of Christ, a living sacrifice of praise.</td>
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Appendix II

Geteilte Epiklese des eucharistischen Hochgebets: MR 1970
Wandlung: Gott Vater als Adressat; die Kirche bittet um Herabkunft des Hl. Geistes auf die Gaben

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Schenke, o Gott, diesen Gaben Segen in Fülle und nimm sie zu eigen an. Mache sie uns zum wahren Opfer im Geiste, das dir wohlgefällt: zum Leib und Blut deines geliebten Sohnes, unseres Herrn Jesus Christus. |

Sende deinen Geist auf diese Gaben herab und heilige sie, damit sie uns werden Leib + und Blut deines Sohnes, unseres Herrn Jesus Christus. |

Heilige unsere Gaben durch deinen Geist, damit sie uns werden Leib + und Blut deines Sohnes, unseres Herrn Jesus Christus, der uns aufgetragen hat, dieses Geheimnis zu feiern. |

So bitten wir dich, Vater: der Geist heilige diese Gaben, damit sie uns werden Leib + und Blut unseres Herrn Jesus Christus, der uns die Feier dieses Geheimnisses aufgetragen hat als Zeichen des ewigen Bundes. |

EINSETZUNGSBERICHT
Gemeinschaft: Gott Vater als Adressat; die Kirche bittet um den Geist der Einheit und der Gemeinschaft

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Zusammenfassung


Diese Studie analysiert den Inhalt der Epiklese der eucharistischen Gebete um die theologischen und religiösen Dimensionen im Hinblick auf ihre Auswirkungen auf die Gläubigen während der hl. Messe zu beschreiben. Es wird festgestellt, dass die Epiklese für sich selbst, als Gebet der Anrufung des Heiligen Geistes, das an Gott, den Vater, gerichtet ist, tatsächlich ihre Bedeutung in Gottes Selbstmitteilung und Selbstoffenbarung durch seine göttliche Gegenwart in Christus, seinem Sohn, und in der Kraft seines Geistes, hat.