**Why We Do What We Do VI: The Liturgy of the Eucharist, Part 2**

*“In the year King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, with the train of his garment filling the temple. Seraphim were stationed above; each of them had six wings: with two they veiled their faces, with two they veiled their feet, and with two they hovered aloft. "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts!" they cried one to the other. "All the earth is filled with his glory!”*

Isaiah 6:1-3

*“Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.”*

*(Sanctus* from the Order of Mass)

We continue to reflect on the Holy Mass that we celebrate. Today, we continue to look at the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Last week, we looked at the offertory rites, and today we come to the beginning of the Eucharistic prayer. The Eucharistic prayer begins with the preface dialogue. This dialogue is so familiar to us, but I sometimes wonder if the wording doesn’t give us some pause:

*V. The Lord be with you.*

*R. And with your spirit.*

*V. Lift up your hearts.*

*R. We lift them up to the Lord.*

*V. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.*

*R. It is right and just.*

These words are closer to the Latin than the previous translation, but more than that, I think they may be closer to our hearts. It is nice to say “and also with you” as we do so often in conversation. Kind of like “have a nice day” … “You too.” But these words - “and with your spirit” imply something a little deeper: may the Lord be with you into the very fiber of your being.

The action continues with the preface itself. This preface is either said or sung by the priest celebrant alone. There are many prefaces that can be used, and the particular Sunday or feast day usually determines which one the priest uses. The preface goes on to tell us just exactly why it is “right and just” that we would “give thanks to the Lord our God.”

We follow that with the song of the angels from the Isaiah passage quoted up at the top of the column: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts.” “Hosts” in biblical language refer to the various heavenly beings that surround our God. These include cherubim, seraphim, archangels and angels. So “Lord God of hosts” is a little more descriptive and accurate than “God of power and might,” which the previous translation mentioned, although power and might are implicitly present in the heavenly host. This heavenly host cries out and paves the way, pointing to Jesus Christ, the One who “comes in the name of the Lord.”

From there, we continue into the Eucharistic prayer itself, upon which we will reflect next week.