



**Step-by-Step Walk Through the Mass  
Do This in Remembrance of Me, Part 54,  
Intercessions  
by FR. LUKE SPANNAGEL**



After the Consecration, Memorial Acclamation, and our offering of Jesus to the Father along with ourselves, the Eucharistic Prayer also includes some **Intercessions**. The Diocese of Peoria teaches, “The Eucharistic prayer also intercedes or prays for various members of the Church. We always pray for the pope, the bishop and all the clergy. Intercession is also made for the Church suffering in purgatory, as we pray for the faithful departed. We pray that they soon be taken into Heaven and live in the presence of God. Intercession is also made for the entire Church, both those who are present at the Mass and those throughout the world. We pray God hears our prayers as we offer them through the Mass, we ask for His mercy and we also pray we be united so we may worship as one body as our Lord Himself desired” (*A Study of the Mass*, p. 16).

### **The Three Types of Intercessions**

Diving deeper, this part of the Eucharistic Prayer brings to the forefront our unity with one another through Christ. We recall here in the presence of Christ that we are all in this together. We pray through the fruits of the Mass that each person can receive what is needed to fulfill our faithful life in Christ. What is great about the intercessions, according to Charles Belmonte, is that “the Intercessions make it clear that we celebrate the Mass in communion with the entire Church in heaven and on earth; and that we make the offering for the Church and for all her members, living and dead.” Belmonte continues, “The Intercessions are usually divided into three sections: for living Christians, for the dead, and in relation to the saints in heaven” (*Understanding the Mass*, p. 152–53).

### **Interceding for Church Leaders**

Regarding our prayer for living Christians, part of our prayer is for the pope and for the bishop or archbishop of our local diocese. From Eucharistic Prayer II: “Remember, Lord, your Church, spread throughout the world, and bring her to the fullness of charity, together with N. our Pope and N. our Bishop and all the clergy.” Our leaders in the clergy are part of the visible sign of unity we have together in Christ: we pray for and with our leaders who help organize and unite us. Belmonte refers to the Second Vatican Council when he says, “To be legitimate, each Mass presupposes union among the faithful, and of the faithful with their bishop, the pope, and the universal Church. Moreover, that solid union is made stronger with the celebration of the Eucharist and is a consequence of it” (*Understanding the Mass*, p. 154, cf. LG, 3).

### **Interceding for the Faithful Departed**

After prayers for the living, we then pray for those who have died. From Eucharistic Prayer IV: “Remember also those who have died in the peace of your Christ and all the dead, whose faith you alone have known.” Eucharistic Prayers II and III have special sections that can be used for Masses for the Dead, where the name of the person for whom the Mass is offered could be prayed. As Belmonte continues, “In all Masses, the Church prays for the dead, so that on the basis of the communion existing among all of us as Christ’s members, our petition for spiritual help may bring comforting hope for our faithful departed” (*Understanding the Mass*, p. 155). For me as a priest, this is one of my favorite moments of the Eucharistic Prayer, especially when there is a moment of quiet in Eucharistic Prayer I: “Remember also, Lord, your servants N. and N., who have gone before us with the sign of faith and rest in the sleep of peace.” Following these words, there is a brief silence where I think of different family members, priests who helped me through the years, and people who recently died in my parishes. If you haven’t done it before, I invite you to use that moment to think of those you love who have died in Christ. It truly is a great gift to feel united with them through the Mass!

### **Asking for the Intercession of the Saints**

After prayers for the dead, we ask for the help of those already in the presence of God in heaven. This is the part of the Eucharistic Prayer where we might hear different saint names. From Eucharistic Prayer III: “May He make of us an eternal offering to you, so that we may obtain an inheritance with your elect, especially with the most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, with Blessed Joseph her Spouse, with your blessed Apostles and glorious Martyrs, (with Saint N) and with all the Saints, on whose constant intercession in your presence we rely for unflinching help.” A couple of the Eucharistic prayers have the Blessed Mother and a general reference to the martyrs and other saints. Eucharistic Prayer III (as we just saw) has an option for inserting saint’s names, such as the saint of the day or a saint important to a particular parish. Of course, Eucharistic Prayer I has those two long lists of special saints... more on them to come!