**Liturgy Matters Lesson #27**

**The Epiclesis – The Calling Down of the Holy Spirit**

**By Bishop Chad Zielinski**

I am Bishop Chad Zielinski, serving the Diocese of New Ulm. Thank you for joining me and asking the Holy Spirit to guide us as we continue our lessons on "What Happens at Mass."

The priest now turns towards the Epiclesis, the technical liturgical term referring in a strict sense to the invocation to the Father that He sends the Holy Spirit on the Church's gifts. Literally, in Greek, it means “Calling down upon.” Perhaps the Latin for this expresses more clearly what is actually happening; it begins, S*upplices ergo te, Domine, deprecamur*, which means, “Therefore, O Lord, Pleading we beg you. . .” What we are about to ask for in this movement is based on what God has shown His plan to be, namely, that a perfect offering be made to Him. Therefore, we now ask that the bread and wine on the altar become the body and blood of Christ. This is the petition of the Epiclesis. “Let it become for us the body and blood of Christ.”

The action of the Holy Spirit here in our liturgy exactly parallels the work of the Holy Spirit in the Incarnation of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit throughout the entire life of Jesus. We experience concretely the unveiling of the Trinitarian mystery in our very midst. Concretely, because the Spirit sent from the Father now works to transform our gifts into the body and blood of the Son.

It is important for us to pause for a moment on the Spirit’s role in the supper the night before Jesus died, for it is especially there that the action of the Holy Spirit in our liturgy exactly parallels the Spirit's role in the life of Jesus. When Jesus took bread and wine into his hands the night before he died, the moment and its possibilities had been long in preparation by the work of the Holy Spirit. “He spoke through the prophets,” as we say in the Creed. That is, the whole of Israel’s history had been formed in such a way that it could all converge in this moment and its meaning. He takes into his hands what the Spirit had prepared for him, and over it all, he pronounces the words that the Spirit with whom he is anointed moves him to utter, "This is my body, this is my blood.” Thus, together with the Spirit, he expresses his own understanding of his mission, which brings the history of Israel to fulfillment. Thus, together with the Spirit, he expresses his own willingness to pour out his life for the sake of the many.

Thank you for joining me today in this lesson on “The Epiclesis” - the Calling down of the Holy Spirit. I look forward to sharing Lesson #28 with you next week as we continue our lessons on the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Let us keep one another in prayer. May God bless you and your families.