**Liturgy Matters Lesson #31**

**“Do This in Memory of Me**

**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 as we continue our lessons on "What Happens at Mass."

So, we have heard the Lord's command, "Do this in memory of me." The prayer the priest now begins explicitly states before the Father that we are doing exactly that. In all four of the Eucharistic prayers, this part of the prayer begins with a "therefore," and it is as important as the "therefore" that introduced the epiclesis. In the epiclesis, we dared to ask for the Spirit to transform our gifts because it was God's own plan that a perfect offering be made to the glory of His name. Now we pray as we do because Jesus said, "Do this in memory of me." The "do this" refers to what we are doing now with bread and wine. The "in memory of me" refers to his death and Resurrection. The prayer the priest prays now presumes that this has been accomplished. And because it has been, while the Church remembers Jesus, she also offers to the Father his body and blood to which she has been joined. These are the two dimensions of the prayer: memorial and offering.

The next part of the Eucharistic prayer anticipates the ritual action of Christ’s sacrifice and makes an urgent plea that what it means comes to pass in us. Using now a strong cultic language of sacrifice, we ask the Father to “look with favor on your Church’s offering and see the Victim…” We stretch out, as it were, this moment of offering before the Father, knowing that the offering - Christ’s body and blood - will be the basis on which the petition that follows is made: “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.” This is the second epiclesis, a second request for the Holy Spirit, this time not that the gifts be transformed into the body and blood of Christ but that we who receive them be transformed into these. This is our communion with Christ’s sacrifice. It will be accomplished in our reception of his body and blood.

Thank you for joining me today in this lesson on “Do this in memory of me." I look forward to sharing Lesson #32 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.