

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER
PART THREE: THE HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

More Than an Acclamation of the Congregation:
The concluding words of the Preface give a clue to the true nature of this sung acclamation. Each Preface ends with a line which tells us that we, the people gathered for Mass here and now, do not sing this acclamation alone:

+ *And so, with the Angels and all the Saints we declare your glory, as with one voice we acclaim: [E.P. II]*

+ *And so, in your presence are countless hosts of Angels, who serve you day and night and, gazing upon the glory of your face, glorify you without ceasing. With them we, too, confess your name in exultation, giving voice to every creature under heaven as we acclaim: . . . [E.P. IV]*

This introduction to the *Holy, Holy, Holy*, is a reminder to us that, not only when we sing this acclamation, but during the whole of the Eucharist, we celebrate with the entire Church. All the baptized here on earth are joined with the saints, canonized and un-canonized (including those who fostered, nourished and sustained us in our faith), as well as with the angels and archangels, all of whom now share in the glory of heaven. Together we take part in this sacred action surpassing all others, this solemn act of praise, thanksgiving and sacrifice offered to God through Christ, in the Holy Spirit.

A Scriptural Acclamation:

This acclamation is similar to the *Glory to God*, for it, too, begins with praise of God taken from Scripture. In the *Holy, Holy, Holy* the words come from Isaiah, the song of the Seraphim: *Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts . . . All the earth is filled with his glory!* [Isaiah 6:2-4] Because the term hosts more accurately suggests the massed array of angels found in the text

from Isaiah, the phrase *God of hosts* is used in the new translation in place of *God of power and might*, which describes attributes of God rather than the hosts of angels who sing his praise.

The *glory* of God, which fills heaven and earth, is a sign of the “transcendence” of God, who is beyond our comprehension. God is a Mystery that, no matter how eloquent the words, no matter how profound the thoughts, cannot be comprehended or expressed by the limited human mind. We praise this transcendent God who, by his creative work, his constant love, fills both heaven and earth with his glory.

We add to our praise the words *Hosanna in the highest*, the acclamation of the crowd that accompanied Christ on his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Although originally, in its Synagogue origins, *Hosanna* was a cry for help: *Rescue us! Save us!*, it eventually developed into a cry of praise to the one who helps, the rescuer, the one who saves. This phrase and the following acclamation: *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord*, are taken directly from Matthew’s account of the entry into Jerusalem: *Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!* In the context of the Eucharistic Prayer, it is clear that the one whose coming we anticipate with our praise and blessing is Jesus, who will come to us, body and blood, soul and divinity in the consecrated bread and wine and whose saving action: passion, death, resurrection and ascension, will be made present to us, and offered again for our salvation.

The new translation of the *Holy, Holy . . .* reads:
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.