

Lift Up Thine Eyes

Session 4

Epiclesis: Invocation of the Holy Spirit (Calling Down the Spirit Upon the Offering)

“**Lift Up Thine Eyes**” is a series of six talks on the Holy Eucharist using paintings by Norman Rockwell as springboards to deeper reflection, especially on how the various components of the Eucharist have counterparts in ordinary daily life—vital components which elevate and enrich our lives in Christ. “*I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.*” (John 10:10).

Session 1 (May 31) will be an introduction and overview of the series. Sessions 2-6 will each explore a component of the Holy Eucharist:

June 7	<i>koinonia</i> (κοινωνία)--community, fellowship, gathering
June 14	<i>anamnesis</i> (ἀνάμνησις)--remembering, telling the story
July 12	<i>epiclesis</i> (ἐπίκλησις)--invocation of the Holy Spirit
July 19	<i>thusia</i> (θυσία)--offering, sacrifice, dedication
July 26	<i>eucharistia</i> (εὐχαριστία)--thanksgiving, gratitude.

The series title, “Lift Up Thine Eyes” is from a painting by Rockwell of the Fifth Avenue entrance to Saint Thomas Church. Sessions will include time for questions and responses.

In Session 4, on July 12, we will explore *epiclesis*, that is the invocation or calling down the Holy Spirit upon the gifts of bread and wine, as well as ourselves, as “a living sacrifice”. The *epiclesis* is a specific action in the Eucharistic prayer (“The Great Thanksgiving”). But, in a wider sense, all prayer is invocation, calling upon the Spirit. We can also say, with St Paul, that the impulse to pray is the Spirit working within us already, “*with sighs too deep for words*”. Jesus taught us to gather together to pray and also to have our times alone with God (“*go into your room and close the door and pray to your Father in secret...*”)

Image for today: “Saying Grace”, by Norman Rockwell

Painted for the cover of “The Saturday Evening Post” for the Thanksgiving issue, November 24, 1951. Readers of the magazine voted *Saying Grace* their favorite ever cover in 1955.

Hymns:

Come down, O Love divine

1 Come down, O Love divine,
seek thou this soul of mine,
and visit it with thine own ardor glowing;
O Comforter, draw near,
within my heart appear,
and kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.

2 O let it freely burn,
till earthly passions turn
to dust and ashes in its heat consuming;
and let thy glorious light
shine ever on my sight,
and clothe me round, the while my path illuming.

3 And so the yearning strong,
with which the soul will long,
shall far outpass the power of human telling;
for none can guess its grace,
till Love create a place
wherein the Holy Spirit makes a dwelling.

Breathe on me, Breath of God

1 Breathe on me, Breath of God,
fill me with life anew,
that I may love the way you love,
and do what you would do.

2 Breathe on me, Breath of God,
until my heart is pure,
until my will is one with yours,
to do and to endure.

3 Breathe on me, Breath of God,
so shall I never die,
but live with you the perfect life
for all eternity.

Quiz!

Below are excerpts from Eucharistic Prayer D from the 1979 Book of Common Prayer. The prayer is based on the **4th-century Divine Liturgy of St. Basil**, still in use in Eastern Orthodox worship. Which of the five main components is represented in each excerpt? (It could be more than one; English or Greek terms acceptable.)

koinonia (κοινωνία)--community, communion, fellowship, gathering,
anamnesis (ἀνάμνησις)--remembering, telling the story
epiclesis (ἐπίκλησις)--invocation of the Holy Spirit
thusia (θυσία)--offering, sacrifice, dedication
eucharistia (εὐχαριστία)--thanksgiving, gratitude.

- Father, you loved the world so much that in the fullness of time you sent your only Son to be our Savior. Incarnate by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, he lived as one of us, yet without sin. To the poor he proclaimed the good news of salvation; to prisoners, freedom; to the sorrowful, joy. To fulfill your purpose he gave himself up to death; and, rising from the grave, destroyed death, and made the whole creation new.
- Lord, we pray that in your goodness and mercy your Holy Spirit may descend upon us, and upon these gifts, sanctifying them and showing them to be holy gifts for your holy people, the bread of life and the cup of salvation, the Body and Blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
- Father, we now celebrate this memorial of our redemption. Recalling Christ's death and his descent among the dead, proclaiming his resurrection and ascension to your right hand, awaiting his coming in glory; and offering to you, from the gifts you have given us, this bread and this cup, we praise you and we bless you.
- It is truly right to glorify you, Father, and to give you thanks; for you alone are God, living and true, dwelling in light inaccessible from before time and for ever.
- Grant that all who share this bread and cup may become one body and one spirit, a living sacrifice in Christ, to the praise of your Name.

