

Kerr's Musings

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Invocations

The SSPX in its efforts to get Rome back on track finds itself up against a sort of politics. It is as though at Vatican II the Church leaders changed themselves into leaders of a political party. There are appeals for loyalty to the party line in a way comparable to those who treat a country as existing for a party rather than the other way round, personalities become more important than principles, nebulousities are issued rather than clear statements.

As regards accusations of schism, a short answer would be to ask why the SSPX has not joined the Orthodox. Since the 19th century there have been Western Rite Orthodox using versions of various old Western Rites. The Orthodox, among other matters, require that these Rites have an Epiclesis.

Epiclesis (sometimes with a K not a C) means 'invocation'. The Father or the Son or both Persons are asked to send the Holy Ghost (or sometimes the Son) to consecrate and produce fruitful communions. The Orthodox hold that either the Epiclesis alone effects the Consecration or that both the Words of Institution and Epiclesis are necessary.

From Fr. Casimir Kucharek's *The Byzantine-Slav Liturgy of St John Chrysostom*, leaving out the deacon and an interpolation from the Divine Office some variations of the Rite use, the Epiclesis runs:

Moreover, we offer You this bloodless sacrifice of the Word, and we pray and beseech and entreat you: send down Your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts set forth here. And make this bread +the precious body of Your Christ.

And that which is in the chalice +, the precious blood of Your Christ.

Having changed them + by your Holy Spirit.

So that for those who partake of them they may serve for a cleansing of the soul, the remission of sins, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, the fulfillment of the heavenly Kingdom, for confidence in You and not for judgement or damnation.

Now where is the Epiclesis in the Last Supper? Until the 4th century an Epiclesis was of the Word, not the Holy Ghost. It's a controverted question whether the old Roman Rite contains or contained an Epiclesis. The Orthodox position is confused. During the Words of Institution the priest and the deacon point to the *diskos* (paten) and chalice. The deacon may go behind the altar with face and body turned towards the *diskos* and chalice. As Father Kucharek remarks, the Orthodox '*found it necessary to attach notes to these texts denying the obvious significance of these gestures*'. Interestingly, in medieval Scottish Churches where coats of arms were displayed on the walls, those on the north wall had the helmets turned backwards to face the Blessed Sacrament.

After the Words of Institution, during the *Anamnesis* (calling to mind) the priest or deacon, with forearms crossed, makes the sign of the Cross with the *diskos* and Chalice over the altar. The significance of this double sign of the Cross is also obvious. It appears that the SSPX in spite of the wishes of some in Rome, will not be joining the Orthodox.

Some knowledge of other Rites as recommended by the Popes is always useful. At the Council of Florence in 1439, many Latin Bishops were shocked at the zeon ceremony. This

done by most Byzantines, consists of adding a small amount of hot water to the chalice just before Communion. This may have started in the mountains of Cappadocia to prevent the chalice freezing, or it may have been for symbolic reasons such as the fervour produced by the Holy Ghost and so on. The explanations of the Byzantine theologians completely satisfied the Latin Bishops in question as regards this ceremony going back to at least the 6th century. Knowledge of this would have ensured that a very good priest of last century would not have assured his readers that to add a drop of water to the chalice would cancel Transubstantiation.

As has been noted, the early forms of the Epiclesis were of the Word. Terms were not as fixed initially which can cause confusion. Early writers speaking of the 'Wisdom of God' meant Our Lord rather than the Holy Ghost. A relic of this is that the Hagia Sophia Basilica is dedicated to Our Lord as are the other Byzantine churches of that name.

The lectures attributed to St Cyril of Jerusalem have for the first time the claim that the Epiclesis produced the Consecration, and also that it was an Epiclesis of the Holy Ghost. This type of Epiclesis spread, but most in the East considered the Words of Institution consecrated. The Epiclesis claim only began to make real headway when it was endorsed by St John Damascene.

The solution of Florence was twofold. Fruitful Communion is one aspect of the Epiclesis. The other aspect is of course that anticipation and retrospection are commonplace liturgically. The prayers stress the work of God the Father before the Institution, the work of God the Son during the Institution, and the work of God the Holy Ghost during the Epiclesis. The priest of course can only say one prayer at a time.

At Florence, The Byzantine theologians argued that the '*Supplice te rogamus*' prayer was the Roman Epiclesis identifying the Angel as the Holy Ghost. Centuries later Father Adrian Fortescue said there was no Epiclesis in the Roman Rite. His contemporary Father Maurice de la Taille said that '*Supplices te rogamus*' was an Epiclesis of the Word, Our Lord being the Angel.

Liturgically, prayers can be like links in a chain. One Melkite missal puts the first prayer of the Epiclesis, 'Moreover we offer' in the *Anamnesis*. Sometimes in the ordinary, weekday Byzantine Mass two Psalms and the Beatitudes are recited, but usually it's three antiphons. One prayer is: 'O Son of God Who art wondrous in Thy Saints, save us who sing to Thee, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. There was a French phrase familiar to G K Chesterton, 'to fence in a wedding ring'. This seems highly applicable.

O Son of God = Act of Faith

Who art wondrous in thy Saints = Doxology

Save us who sing to Thee = Act of Hope and an Act of Charity

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia = Doxology

So if we run through the Byzantine Anamnesis and Epiclesis. The Anamnesis starts with recollection then offering. The Epiclesis starts with more offering and a plea for the Holy Ghost to be sent, that is for the offering to be accepted. The *diskos* and chalice are blessed and a plea for fruitful communion follows.

In the Roman Missal starting with the '*Unde et memores*' we get recollection and offering. In the '*Supra quae*' we get a plea for acceptance. In the '*Supplices te rogamus*' we get a plea that an Angel take that which is offered to the celestial altar, followed by a plea for fruitful communion.

First of all the 'Angel' would have to be sent before returning, secondly would such a task be delegated to an actual Angel? The priest blesses seven times in the sequence 'Unde...Amen'. After the commemorations in the Byzantine Mass there is a litany. These are the first three petitions:

Now that we have remembered all the saints, again and again in peace let us pray to the Lord.

Lord have mercy.

For the precious gifts here offered and consecrated, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord have mercy.

That our God Who loves mankind, having received them on His holy and mystical altar in heaven as a sweet spiritual fragrance, may send down upon us in return His Divine grace and the gift of the Holy Ghost, let us pray.

Lord have Mercy.

So as regards the question of whether there is an Epiclesis in the Roman Rite. In the first millennium there were a good few Eastern Popes. Since in the East the Epiclesis was considered liturgically necessary, surely one would have been introduced by an Eastern Pope had there not been one there already.

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