

The Doxology and the Great Amen

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Doxology means an account (-ology) of glory (doxa-). Doxologies appear in various liturgies of the Church. One of the most familiar is the doxology at the end of the Lord's Prayer: "For the kingdom, / the power and the glory are yours / now and for ever." During the Liturgy of the Hours, there are doxologies at the end of the psalms. The Rosary includes the "Glory be." Hymns, especially ancient ones, have a doxology as the final or part of the final, stanza. Finally, there is the doxology at the end of the Eucharistic Prayer: "Through him, and with him, and in him, / O God, almighty Father, / in the unity of the Holy Spirit, / all glory and honor is yours, / for ever and ever."

Doxologies are ancient and have been part of the Church's liturgies since the early centuries. Many of the early Church fathers used these doxologies to defend the doctrine of the Trinity. Those who held heretical views denied the divinity of Christ Jesus and/or the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Early theologians reminded those espousing heretical views that the Doxologies give glory and praise to the Triune God: Father Son, and Holy Spirit.

These, like our Creeds, have a Trinitarian structure. The doctrine of the Trinity states that God is One, yet three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We see this doctrine in the structure and theology of the doxology of the Eucharistic Prayer.

"Through him, and with him, and in him," though not apparent in the text itself, is not about Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, rather it is through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, that we worship, praise, and thank God the Father. Then, through the proclamation of these words by the priest, our glory and praise of God is offered: "O God,



almighty Father, / in the unity of the Holy Spirit, / all glory and honor is yours. . . ." We give glory and honor to the Triune God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Through the entire Eucharistic Prayer, we pray to God the Father, through Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit that moves us to pray in, with, and through Christ to God the Father. Christ is our mediator. Christ is the one who unites us to communion with God. This is beautifully prayed by the priest and the faithful in the Eucharistic Prayer for Reconciliation I: "But before his arms were outstretched between heaven and earth, / to become the lasting sign of your covenant, / he desired to celebrate the Passover with his disciples." Christ unites heaven with earth: Christ unites himself and God the Father with the entire cosmos in general and humanity in particular.

In the liturgy, words are united to actions or gestures or objects. The priest holds the Body and Blood of Christ throughout the chanting of this particular doxology. If there is a deacon present at the liturgy, the priest holds the Body of Christ and the deacon holds the Blood of Christ. This is when we offer our glory and honor to the God who becomes tangible in our midst: the Body and Blood of Christ. The faithful acclaim this proclamation, that is, they make it their own, with the singing of "Amen." Our "Amen" is our way of giving of, confirming, and believing what the priest chanted, not only in the doxology, but in the entire Eucharistic Prayer.

Doxologies are our way of praising, glorifying, and honoring the Triune God who seeks to unite us to himself. How can we not sing Amen?!