

The Memorial Acclamations

Kristopher W. Seaman

The Memorial Acclamations are part of the Eucharistic Prayer that the priest celebrant and the liturgical assembly pray together. This is important, because those in the liturgical assembly acclaim what the priest celebrant proclaimed in the Eucharistic Prayer. Liturgy is dialogical, that is, it is a dialogue. A proclamation is usually followed by an acclamation. This models our life as disciples. God moves in liturgy, God dwells in our lives and calls us, imperfect as we are, to grow in holiness that only God can give.

The Memorial Acclamation follows the Institution narrative—the words Jesus used at the Last Supper over bread and wine. This acclamation therefore, is our response to God’s coming to dwell among us, particularly in the transformation of bread and wine into Christ’s Body and Blood. In the revised edition of *The Roman Missal*, there will now only be three memorial acclamations; the previous edition had four. These there are as follows:

We proclaim your Death, O Lord,
and profess your Resurrection
until you come again.

When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup,
we proclaim your Death, O Lord,
until you come again.

Save us, Savior of the world,
for by your Cross and Resurrection
you have set us free.

All three of these acclamations mention death (in the third acclamation Cross is used that refers to Jesus’ death on the Cross) and Resurrection. This is *mysterium fidei*: “The mystery of faith.” We call this, technically, the Paschal Mystery.



In the face of death, God raised Christ Jesus from the dead to new life. The three acclamations above go one step further than simply stating the mystery of faith or the Paschal Mystery, they acknowledge that we too are called to life made new. In death, in sin, in pain and suffering, God will bring about life. For example, the third acclamation ends with “you have set us free.” As disciples, we are given the nourishment of Christ’s own Body and Blood that brings new life and trans-

formation. This transformation is God’s liberating self given to us through and in Eucharist.

Perhaps the most known Memorial Acclamation is not listed above. “Christ has died, / Christ is risen, / Christ will come again.” This particular acclamation was added some time ago by the English speaking bishops’ conferences to the Order of Mass. This acclamation is not found in the Latin texts of *The Roman Missal* and so it will not be included in the revised English translation of this ritual book. The three above are the three choices available.

“The mystery of faith” are the words the priest celebrant will now use in the revised edition of *The Roman Missal*; rather than “Let us proclaim the mystery of faith.” “The mystery of faith” translates quite closely to the Latin: *mysterium fidei*. Also, this now matches the other proclamations that call for an acclamation by the people. For instance, here are some of the many examples: “The Body of Christ,” “The Blood of Christ,” “The word of the Lord,” “The Gospel of the Lord,” and so forth. “The mystery of faith” is not only words that we proclaim, it is also the mystery that we acclaim through living in our daily lives. Transformation offered through liturgy ought to be lived daily in our lives as we die to all that is not of God, and live lives of holiness that builds life for us and for one another. “The mystery of faith.”