**Liturgy Matters Lesson #26**

**Sacrifice in the Eucharistic Prayer**

**By Bishop Chad Zielinski**

I am Bishop Chad Zielinski, serving the Diocese of New Ulm. Thank you for joining me and asking the Holy Spirit to guide us as we continue our lessons on "What Happens at Mass."

The poetic summary used at this point in the third Eucharistic prayer expresses the climax of God's plan for the world as being “so that from the rising of the sun to its setting a perfect offering may be made to the glory of your name.” This expression echoes *Malachi 1:11*, a phrase which the very first generations of Christians saw as a prophecy of the Eucharist. “From the rising of the sun, even to its setting, my name is great among the nations; and everywhere they bring sacrifice to my name and a pure offering.”

Understanding that the word “sacrifice” is essential for understanding what is happening now, we must take note of its occurrences throughout all four of the Eucharistic prayers. We must recall the words of St. Paul to indicate the particular understanding of sacrifice that we as Christians have: “I urge you, therefore, by the mercies of God to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship” (*Romans 12:1*) The sacrifice offered by Christians is the spiritual worship rather than the carnal worship of animals offered in the Temple. Our bodies are a living sacrifice, but we do not offer it up by ourselves; we can only do this through, with, and in Christ’s offering. We acknowledge this: “Through him we ask you, Father, to accept and bless these gifts we offer you in sacrifice," that is, the bread and wine we have brought as the sign of our whole lives. We cannot emphasize enough that, at this time, we are offering our entire selves. This includes our joys and sorrows, sins and weaknesses, pains and sufferings, loves and hates; it is all to be united with Christ's offering.

To be present at this time with our entire being helps each one of us to grasp the immensity of the gift that the Father gave us in the sacrifice of His son. Let us recognize just how fortunate we are to be able to join with Him on the altar.

Thank you for joining me today in this lesson on "Sacrifice in the Eucharistic Prayer. I look forward to sharing Lesson #27 with you next week as we continue our lessons on the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Let us keep one another in prayer. May God bless you and your families.