

EUCHARISTIC PRAYER D

The Anaphora of Saint Basil
Spirit-filled, Cosmic Orientation
a reflection by Rev. Robert Moses

Eucharistic Prayer D in the *Book of Common Prayer (1979)* is the most explicitly ancient, ecumenical, and cosmically oriented of the Rite II prayers, drawing heavily from the fourth-century Anaphora of Saint Basil and other Eastern liturgical traditions. Its inclusion reflects the twentieth-century liturgical movement's desire to recover early Christian Eucharistic theology—especially the expansive recounting of salvation history, the strong Trinitarian structure, and the sense that the Eucharist joins the worship of heaven and earth. Prayer D entered the *Book of Common Prayer (1979)* through the 1978 ecumenical Eucharistic liturgy of the Consultation on Church Union, making it a bridge between Anglican worship and broader Christian tradition.

Historically, Prayer D's structure mirrors the ancient pattern of blessing God for creation, covenant, prophets, and redemption before turning to the Institution Narrative. This sweeping preface situates the Eucharist within God's eternal purpose rather than within a narrow doctrinal frame. Its cosmic language—invoking angels, archangels, and all creation—echoes the visions of Isaiah and Revelation, placing the church's prayer within the unending praise of heaven. The Epiclesis follows naturally, invoking the Holy Spirit to sanctify both the gifts and the people, reflecting Eastern theology in which the Spirit completes the offering and forms the church into Christ's Body.

Theologically, Prayer D is distinctive for being the least tied to substitutionary atonement among the Book of Common Prayer's Eucharistic prayers. Rather than centering the Eucharist on Christ's death as a penal sacrifice, it frames redemption within the whole sweep of salvation history—creation, incarnation, teaching, healing, death, resurrection, and ascension. Atonement is present, but woven into a broader narrative of divine love, restoration, and cosmic reconciliation. This makes Prayer D especially resonant for congregations drawn to Christus Victor, recapitulation, or participatory understandings of salvation.

Its significance lies in its breadth: Prayer D is the most explicitly Trinitarian, the most cosmic, and the most historically rooted of the Book of Common Prayer prayers. It gathers creation, salvation history, and the church's mission into one majestic act of thanksgiving. For worshippers, it offers a vision of the Eucharist that is expansive, Spirit-filled, and deeply connected to the worship of the whole church across time and space.