



The Sanctus



The Sanctus is a rich burst of praise sung before the Lord's Supper. It continues the Preface. The Proper Preface concluded with the words, *"Therefore with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven we laud and magnify your glorious name, evermore praising you and saying:"* With that introduction, the Sanctus begins with the [cherubim's] praise found in Isaiah 6:3, *"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord, God of pow'r and might: Heaven and earth are full of your glory..."*

The church may be visibly separated by geography, language, false doctrine, time, death, etc., but we are in reality one body in Christ. In regard to the Lord's Supper Paul says, *"Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf"* (1 Cor. 10:17). Thus, we sing the angel's praise. We join with the angels and the whole church, for together we are one church.

The Sanctus continues with the Benedictus that says, *"Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest."* These words are drawn from Psalm 118:25-26 and St. Matthew 21:9. Hosanna means, "save now" and became an expression of praise. Historically, it was customary for the Jewish Passover to end with the singing of Psalms 115-118. And St. Mark tells us that Jesus and His disciples concluded the Passover by singing a hymn (cf. St. Mark 14:26). Most likely Jesus sang Psalm 118 that included the words of our Sanctus. These are also the same words that the crowds greeted Jesus with as He triumphantly entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. They are the words used to greet the promised Messiah. It is no accident that this triumphant greeting is combined with the words of praise heard in the heavenly Throne Room.

The combination of the "holy, holy, holy" and the same words that the crowds greeted Jesus with on Palm Sunday serves as a confession that this Jesus who now comes to us in, with, and under the bread and wine is the Triune God who Isaiah saw in the heavenly Throne Room.

Theologically, the last phrase of the Sanctus points us to the elements in The Lord's Supper. Our *"Hosanna...Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord"* finds its fulfillment in the reception of the Sacrament. In, with, and under the bread and wine, Jesus comes to us and gives us His very own Body and Blood for our forgiveness.

The Peace of the Lord be with you,

Pastor Jeff Patterson †