

Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions [FDLC]
Mystagogical Reflection on the Collects of the *Roman Missal*
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THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

March 3, 2013

Collect:

O God, author of every mercy and of all goodness,
who in fasting, prayer and almsgiving
have shown us a remedy for sin,
look graciously on this confession of our lowliness,
that we, who are bowed down by our conscience,
may always be lifted up by your mercy.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Reflection:

This Collect in the Third Edition of the Roman Missal is, in essence, the same prayer as in the previous edition of the missal. This ancient prayer, found in the *Gelasian Sacramentary* (8th century), was restored to the missal following the Second Vatican Council.

The new translation of this prayer, however, provides fresh insights into the meaning in the text. The praying Church, in the human condition, approaches God with sincere humility. The guilt we carry for our continual lapses into sinfulness is expressed by the poetic image of being “bowed down by our conscience.”

This prayer, however, also contains an extraordinary spirit of hopefulness for humanity. While there have been volumes written on ways to attune our lives to the penitential season, this succinct prescription or “remedy for sin” provides the threefold solution for our transgressions: fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. This text reminds us that it is only in our sure trust in God’s goodness and compassionate treatment of all sinners that we are assured we will be lifted up from our burden of sin.

Prayer:

Lord God, help us to nourish a humble spirit. Keep us mindful of the need for acts of sacrifice in our daily lives in order to bolster our resolve to turn away from sin.

Submitted by:
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