

**Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions [FDLC]**  
**Mystagogical Reflection on the Collects of the *Roman Missal***  
Link to Mystagogy Project on FDLC home page: <http://www.fdlc.org>.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME  
July 21, 2013

**Collect:**

Show favor, O Lord, to your servants  
and mercifully increase the gifts of your grace,  
that, made fervent in hope, faith and charity,  
they may be ever watchful in keeping your commands.  
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 has its origins in the Ambrosian Rite celebrated in Milan, Italy and the surrounding territories. Originating in the *Bergamo Sacramentary* (tenth or eleventh century), it was added to the Missal after the Second Vatican Council.

In these words we are reminded of our ongoing need for God’s grace and the gratuitous gifts we have been given by the Spirit to participate in the divine nature. Specifically, we pray for the gifts that are known as the theological virtues – faith, hope, and charity. By these gifts we are made “capable of acting as his children and of meriting eternal life” [*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1813]. These virtues empower the people of God to faithfully keep his commands by pursuing the good as the goal of their actions. And, as Saint Gregory of Nyssa reminds us, “The goal of a virtuous life is to become like God” [*De beatitudinibus*, no. 1].

One may also notice that hope is named first in the list of virtues, rather than faith. Why is this so? Perhaps it is to make a connection to the next line of the Collect where it speaks of being “ever watchful”. A people full of hope are a people ever watchful. A people full of hope recognize in the world around them the need of a life lived in service to God and the promise of eternal life that comes with it.

**Prayer:**

Merciful God, give us what we need to serve you – the faith to believe in you, the hope to desire life with you, and the love to respond to you who loved us first.

Submitted by:  
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