

Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions [FDLC]

Mystagogical Reflection on Texts of the *Roman Missal*

Link to Mystagogy Project on FDLC home page for free access and use: <http://www.fdlc.org>.

Mystagogical Reflections on the Collect & Prayer after Communion for Ordinary Time – 8-14

Table of Contents on the last page.

MYSTAGOGY ON THE MASS TEXTS FOR SUNDAYS, SOLEMNITIES, AND HOLYDAYS

"Mystagogy", simply put, is the study of mystery. For Christians, it focuses on the Paschal Mystery of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is an ancient and beloved Church method for reflecting on the experiences of worship, prayer, and the Christian life.

Collect or Opening Prayer	Prayer after Communion
<p>The Collect is introduced by the words "Let us pray" and followed by a few moments of silence to allow us to quietly compose our own prayers. These are then gathered or "collected" by the Priest and offered to God through Jesus Christ.</p> <p>Catherine Combier-Donovan Archdiocese of Baltimore</p>	<p>The single purpose of the Prayer after Communion is to recapitulate in prayer every word, action, and belief that has led us to (and will soon send us from) the Eucharist fashioned (by profound sacred words and actions) and received by those gathered. Although not words of our choosing, but rather those supplied by the Church, it attempts to verbally express what we have experienced and believe.</p> <p>Father Jim Bessert Diocese of Saginaw</p>



The Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions [FDLC] formed an Ad Hoc Committee for Mystagogical Reflection. The committee task is to provide help for reflecting on texts of the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*. The 2013 effort focused on the Collect or Opening Prayer for Sunday, Solemnity, and Holyday Masses. The 2014 work addressed the Prayer after Communion with implications for discipleship. This work is on the FDLC website in PDF: <http://www.fdlc.org> – click the Mystagogical Reflections button.

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EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Collect:

Grant us, O Lord, we pray,
that the course of our world
may be directed by your peaceful rule
and that your Church may rejoice,
untroubled in her devotion.
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:

Today's Collect gives us an image of God as ruler who governs so that his people may live undisturbed. In the *Benedictus* (Canticle of Zechariah, Luke 2:68-79) from the Liturgy of the Hours (this Collect originally was recommended for Morning or Evening Prayer), we remember the oath God made with Abraham: to free us from our enemies that we might worship God without fear. In the first letter to Timothy, we pray for all rulers so that "we may lead a quiet and tranquil life" (1 Tm 2:2 NAB).

No one likes to be ruled; but we all want to have peace. To have peace, we must have right-relationships. There is an image of "God as Architect," measuring out the distances between the stars and setting the planets on their right paths. Establishing order out of chaos is what God had done from the very beginning of creation. It is what we continue to do when we rearrange, rule, redirect a world gone awry and off course. Perhaps we can think of being ruled in this way, not as subjugated but as placed on our right courses and ordered in right-relationship with one another.

Prayer:

Set me on my right course, Lord, and lead me on the path of your laws,
that I may bring your peace to those troubled by fear and oppression.

Submitted by:
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EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Prayer after Communion:

Nourished by your saving gifts,
we beseech your mercy, Lord,
that by this same Sacrament
with which you feed us in the present age,
you may make us partakers of life eternal.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection:

The Liturgy presents our sanctification “by means of signs perceptible to the senses” [*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, no. 7]. In this case, the basic human experience of *hunger* is used to signify where the Lord’s saving work is leading us.

Having just been nourished by the Lord’s “saving gifts”, according to the prayer, one would think that we should be satisfied. Instead, we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good, and we beseech the Lord for more. And there is so much more to be had – life eternal!

Much like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, our hearts are left burning within us after Christ breaks open the word and breaks the bread. Our hearts are hungry for more. This hunger is fed in the “present age” by our participation in the Eucharist. While this strengthens us to be able to “go and announce the Gospel of the Lord” in the present, we are also given a glimpse of that which our hearts truly desire, “a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy celebrated in the holy city of Jerusalem, toward which we journey as pilgrims” [CSL, no. 8]. Only there, feasting with Christ at the right hand of God in the company of heaven, will our hungers be fully satisfied.

Prayer:

Merciful God, our hearts will hunger until they are nourished by you. May our participation in your Body and Blood here on earth increase our hunger for heaven and may our lives bring others to hunger for you as well.

Submitted by:
Matt Miller
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NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Collect:

O God, whose providence never fails in its design,
keep from us, we humbly beseech you,
all that might harm us
and grant all that works for our good.
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:

Does the fourth line of this prayer seem a little bold: “grant all that works for our good”? This prayer is found in the 8th century *Gelasian Sacramentary*. If we trust, as this prayer proclaims, that God’s providence is unfailingly trustworthy, then what have we to do but boldly ask for “all that works for our good”.

Jesus asked blind Bartimaeus, “What do you want me to do for you?” (see Mark 10:46-52 and the Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B). Does not Jesus ask us the same? Does not Jesus teach us to pray, “Give us this day, our daily bread”?

God knows what works for our good and bids us, in faith, to make our needs known. Like Bartimaeus, like everyone who prays the Lord’s Prayer, let us be bold and strong of faith!

Prayer:

Ask, seek, knock:
Lord, your gift of faith equips us to voice our needs to you in confidence.
When we ask, Lord, give us what we need.
When we seek, Lord, show us what we cannot find on our own.
And when we knock, begging to partake of your full and rich life, Lord Jesus:
Open the door!

Submitted by:
Kyle Lechtenberg
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NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Prayer after Communion:

Govern by your Spirit, we pray, O Lord,
those you feed with the Body and Blood of your Son,
that, professing you not just in word or in speech,
but also in works and in truth,
we may merit to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection:

This prayer, from the 14th century *Paris Missal*, was added to the *Roman Missal* during the reform of Vatican Council II (see Paul Turner, *Pastoral Companion to the Roman Missal*, © 2010, World Library Publications, p. 112)

As a pilgrim people of faith, we need our food and drink for the journey as nourishment to discern between the behaviors of the gods of the earthly kingdoms and those of our God of the Heavenly Kingdom. As we strive to choose the Godly words and works of the Kingdom of Heaven, we spread the virtues of truth in this earthly kingdom with the hope of transforming this kingdom into a people full of the transforming presence of Christ to last for ever.

Prayer:

O God, our world desperately needs transformation. Move us, as the embodied presence of Christ, to more fully understand Christ's mission and demonstrate the power of your initiating love for all people through our word and works. Bless this earthly kingdom that it will always reflect the beauty, peace, and love of your heavenly Kingdom.

Submitted by:
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TENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Collect:

O God, from whom all good things come,
grant that we, who call on you in our need,
may at your prompting discern what is right,
and by your guidance do it.
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 prayer reminds us that all good things come from God. And we pray that we are able to determine how to use the great things God gives us in life through discernment.

The first time this Collect appears is in the *Gelasian Sacramentary* and its source could be based upon James 1:17 that says God is the source of every perfect gift.

Some say that this Scripture from James as well as this Collect are the foundations of the text for the song, "All Good Gifts."

Prayer:

Almighty God, source of every gift, from you comes all that I am. Help me to distinguish how I am to use the many gifts you have showered upon me so that they will be of benefit to others, especially the poor, oppressed, and those in need. Allow me to bring light and life into the lives of others through this sharing of gifts.

Submitted by:
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TENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Prayer after Communion:

May your healing work, O Lord,
free us, we pray, from doing evil
and lead us to what is right.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection:

In the Prayer after Communion, we call on God to free us from doing evil and to lead us to what is right. We may wonder what is evil in the eyes of God and what is right in the eyes of God. Do we do evil acts and not know that they are evil? Do we always try to do what we think is right? In the Gospels, we see that Jesus chose those who were sinners. Their experience with Jesus changed their lives, transformed them to follow him and to love the Father. He revealed to them that the One who sent him was a merciful and loving God.

When we experience our Lord, can we continue to do the same as before? Are we open to transformation and gladly follow him as his disciples did? Because Jesus died to give us everlasting life, St. Paul tells us in the Letter to the Romans that we have “been freed from sin” (6:22) and “...must think of yourselves as being dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus” (6:11). Today we ask the Lord that, through his healing work, he transform us to do what is right and live for God.

Prayer:

Good and gracious God, we humbly ask that through the Body and Blood of Christ we have received, nourish and strengthen and lead us to you so that we may rejoice with you in the your heavenly kingdom. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Submitted by:
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ELEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Collect:

O God, strength of those who hope in you,
graciously hear our pleas,
and, since without you mortal frailty can do nothing,
grant us always the help of your grace,
that in following your commands
we may please you by our resolve and our deeds.
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:

“Grant us always the help of your grace.” Sometimes it is difficult for us to understand what it means to be granted the gift of grace. It is by God’s grace as Paul says, “That I am who I am....” Without God’s grace and mercy we have no life. God created us. God loves us. God sent his only Son to redeem us. Grace is God’s unmerited favor. Grace is God doing good for us that we do not deserve. Everything about our relationship with God depends upon us trusting him in faith, by resting in his grace. We are to come to him as a little child saying, “Daddy, pick me up”. And he does. Then he carries us.

Prayer:

Gracious and Almighty God, we thank you for your undeserving grace. We thank you for your light of love to share with one another; all created in your likeness. Give us the strength that we lack in our lives and help us to lighten the way and carry the load for the ever-changing problems of the world.

Submitted by:
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ELEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Prayer after Communion:

As this reception of your Holy Communion, O Lord,
foreshadows the union of the faithful in you,
so may it bring about unity in your Church.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection:

The theological concept of the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist, as foreshadows or foretastes of the heavenly realities, is often not articulated. Yet, mystically, in the celebration of the Eucharist, we join the heavenly hosts around God's throne, joining the hymn of the Angels, the *Sanctus*, and we are truly able to receive not only the Body and Blood of Christ, Holy Communion, but are also able to be one with the communion of Saints. This reception truly brings about our union with God and with all the Saints and Angels.

Yet, even more mystically, not only does the whole Church become one in every Eucharist, we also become one with every one present, and with the whole Church throughout time and space. It is a marvelous sign of unity which, while theologically true, can only be understood sacramentally as a foreshadowing of the life to come.

Prayer:

Echoing the Communion Antiphons, may we only seek to live in the house of the Lord all the days of our lives, a reality only understood in eternity. And may we be one with those in need, keeping in mind all the names of those we lift up in prayer.

Submitted by:
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TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Collect:

Grant, O Lord,
that we may always revere and love your holy name,
for you never deprive of your guidance
those you set firm on the foundation of your love.
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 for the Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time comes from the eighth century *Gelasian Sacramentary*. Like most ancient Collects it is both brief and profound.

The prayer begins with a request that we may always revere and love the holy name of the Lord. The word translated from the Latin text as “revere” is “fear”. The Latin joins the inseparable twins of fear and love. Moderns tend to be uncomfortable with the word fear because we tend to equate it with terror. But the *fear of the Lord* is more related to our fascination with the power and presence of the divinity to which we are inexorably drawn. Fear of the Lord, our attraction to the Lord, leads to love of the Lord.

This foundation of his love gives us the assurance that, as his children, he will always be with us to pilot us through the complexities of life.

Prayer:

Loving God, we long to see you in your holy place. Grant us the confidence to follow in your footsteps and to do your work and your will.

Submitted by:
Daniel McAfee
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Archdiocese of Detroit

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TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Prayer after Communion:

Renewed and nourished
by the Sacred Body and Precious Blood of your Son,
we ask of your mercy, O Lord,
that what we celebrate with constant devotion
may be our sure pledge of redemption.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection:

This prayer has all the earmarks of the life and thoughts of St. Augustine. Despite his wanderings into the seductive evils during his young adult life, Augustine made a mid-course correction and turned toward a life of goodness. Although he constantly struggled with sin and repentance, he was emotionally expressive of his unbounded love of God each time he received the Body and Blood of Christ. Augustine not only understood the spiritual nourishment that the Eucharist provides, he physically yearned for Eucharist in his later years.

Could we ever be that much in love with receiving the Body and Blood of Christ? Do we nurture a constant devotion? Do we understand that the effect of Eucharist is the joy of heaven? If we can become what we eat, then redemption and heaven are ours. Why do we make receiving the Body and Blood of Christ so complicated, when it is really one of the simplest gifts that God provides for our spiritual health? We must ask St. Augustine to intercede for us, as we beg God for the mercy that can sustain our faith.

Prayer:

Father God, you sent your Son to redeem us. In your love, you gave us the gift of God-self in bread blessed and broken, and wine poured out for all. Through the sustenance of the Body and Blood of Christ, may we become what we eat and gain the redemption that you have promised.

Submitted by:
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THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Collect:

O God, who through the grace of adoption
chose us to be children of light,
grant, we pray,
that we may not be wrapped in the darkness of error
but always be seen to stand in the bright light of truth.
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:

The oft recalled Scripture passage, “God is light; in him there is no darkness...” (1 Jn 1:5-7) may have inspired this 10th or 11th century Collect, which was added to the Roman Missal after the Second Vatican Council.

There is a certain Easter Vigil quality to this Collect, as we pray not to be wrapped in darkness, but rather to stand in the light of truth. To be wrapped in darkness of error is to reject God’s grace and goodness. To walk in the light means to live by the grace of God, according to his will for us, by loving our neighbor as Christ first loved us.

During these summer days when daylight lasts longer, perhaps we can ponder the ways that we walk in the light of Christ, the ways that we love the poor and vulnerable, the ways we bring the love of Christ to a world darkened by sin and corruption.

Prayer:

God of goodness and truth, teach us to live as children of the light. Give us the grace and courage to stand in the bright light of your truth in the midst of a world so very much in need of your grace and presence.

Submitted by:
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THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Prayer after Communion:

May this divine sacrifice we have offered and received
fill us with life, O Lord, we pray,
so that, bound to you in lasting charity,
we may bear fruit that lasts for ever.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection:

I'm always amused when my children use MY money to buy ME a gift. They are so proud to get something for me for Christmas or my birthday, and they think very carefully about what I might like. Of course, in this case – and in most cases – it's not the amount spent or even whose money was used: it's the thought that counts.

Our worship of God is just the same: the only gifts we can give to God are what he first gave us. We offer to God what we have first received. This Prayer after Communion invites us to contemplate this fact, which is at the heart of our sacramental theology. Simple bread and wine, to be sure, but also our very lives: this is all we can give back to God – not holocausts or sacrifices.

The prayer continues to ask that in our offering and receiving we might be filled with life and bound to God in love. These two dynamics are inseparable: the eternal life we share with Christ through Baptism is bound up in the *caritas* that flows from the very heart of God. Our sharing in the Eucharist must lead us to true love and care for others – this is the fruit that lasts forever.

Prayer:

O Source of divine life, through offering and receiving, may we be more closely conformed to the image of your Son, in whose Paschal love we were made and saved.

Submitted by:

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FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Collect:

O God, who in the abasement of your Son
have raised up a fallen world,
fill your faithful with holy joy,
for on those you have rescued from slavery to sin
you bestow eternal gladness.
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:

In this ancient text, an earlier version of which can be traced back to the *Gelasian Sacramentary*, we find a number of striking and contrasting images: the “falling” of Christ, the world raised up, the rescue of slaves, and holy joy leading to eternal gladness! The Paschal Mystery in one sentence!

In the first phrase, one might immediately think of Saint Paul’s great Philippian hymn, singing of how Christ “emptied himself and took the form of a slave” (Phil 2:7). It is the great mystery of God’s incomprehensible love that, out of the abasement of his Son, the fallen world might be redeemed, and like our Hebrew ancestors, he might *rescue* us, too, from slavery and certain death.

The phrases “holy joy” and “eternal gladness” are profound. It is a *holy* joy for which we ask – not that which is passing, temporary, shallow, incomplete; but rather, a joy that is unearned, that is gift, that is lasting, running to the very core of who we are as God’s sons and daughters – that is, holy. Our current world, culture, and society are incapable of providing us holy joy and eternal gladness. That can come only from God; and for that, we lift our hearts to the Lord, in praise and thanksgiving!

Prayer:

God of unending joy, help me to live in imitation of your Son, in whose image I have been remade. Like him, may I empty myself – to you, to my brothers and sisters, and to all whom I might meet today.

Submitted by:
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FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Prayer after Communion:

Grant, we pray, O Lord,
that, having been replenished by such great gifts,
we may gain the prize of salvation
and never cease to praise you.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection:

The text of this prayer comes from the *Gelasian Sacramentary* which dates from the early 8th century and combines texts from both the Roman and Gallican Rites.

The prayer complements the second Communion Antiphon which is taken from Matthew 11:28, the Gospel proclaimed in Year A: “Come to me, all who labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you, says the Lord.” The antiphon’s use of the future tense “I will refresh you,” is brought to fulfillment in the words of the Prayer after Communion, “having been replenished by such great gifts.” Our wait for refreshment is complete because of the gift we have received at the altar.

The Prayer after Communion goes on to ask that we may gain the prize echoing St. Paul’s letter to the Philippians, Chapter 3, where he presses onward to the goal for the prize of the upward possession of Christ Jesus. The main body of the prayer concludes with the hope that we may “never cease to praise” the Lord. This expresses our longing to be united with the Lord, eternally exalting him for everything that he has done for us.

We might ask ourselves, how are the labors and burdens of my life refreshed and replenished by the Sacrament we have received? Do the things of this world distract me from striving for the greatest prize?

Prayer:

Father, may the Sacrament we receive be food and medicine for us so we can bear the burdens of this world and be prepared for eternal life. Through Christ our Lord.

Submitted by:
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Over the course of the year
the Church celebrates the whole mystery of Christ,
from the Incarnation to Pentecost Day
and the days of waiting for the Advent of the Lord.

Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the General Roman Calendar [UNLYC], no. 17

Ordinary Time – 8-14

Apart from those seasons having their own distinctive character, thirty-three or thirty-four weeks remain in the yearly cycle that do not celebrate a specific aspect of the mystery of Christ. Rather, especially on the Sundays, they are devoted to the mystery of Christ in all its aspects. This period is known as Ordinary Time.

Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the General Roman Calendar [UNLYC], no. 43

Sundays	Date	Pages
EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME		02-03
NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME		04-05
TENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME		06-07
ELEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME		08-09
TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME		10-11
THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME		12-13
FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME		14-15