

Mystagological Reflections on the Collect & Prayer after Communion: 14th -23rd Sundays in Ordinary Time 2016

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 Mystagological 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 Mystagological Reflections button.

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Steve Erspamer,
Who is my neighbor?
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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 14-23

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

The Liturgical Day	Date	Page
FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	July 03, 2016	04-05
FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	July 10, 2016	06-07
SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	July 17, 2016	08-09
SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	July 24, 2016	10-11
EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	July 31, 2016	12-13
NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	August 07, 2016	14-15
TWENTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	August 14, 2016	16-17
THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, Solemnity	Sunday evening, August 14, 2016	18-19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the Vigil Mass • At the Mass during the Day 	Monday, not a day of obligation this year, August 15, 2016	20-21
TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	August 21, 2016	22-23
TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	August 28, 2016	24-25
TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	September 04, 2016	26-27

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Mystagogy Project on Texts of the *Roman Missal***

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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:
D. Todd Williamson
Director of the Office for Divine Worship
Archdiocese of Chicago

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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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FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Collect:

O God, who show the light of your truth
to those who go astray,
so that they may return to the right path,
give all who for the faith they profess
are accounted Christians
the grace to reject whatever is contrary to the name of Christ
and to strive after all that does it honor.
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:

Living our life professing the faith that we reaffirmed at Easter is not easy. We are not alone in living out the truth that we proclaim because here we have our sights set on the light that guides us to that truth. Unaccompanied we could do nothing that would enable us to be witnesses to the faith that we profess. Through the goodness of God, we are given the grace to make every effort to eliminate those things in our lives that would cause us to not give praise, honor, and glory to the name of Christ.

We are constantly moving on the path that leads to eternal life. We move on that path accompanied by our God and by all who profess their faith in him. God is ever with us to support, encourage, enliven, and pull us back when we wander off the path which brings us to eternal life.

Prayer:

O God, you are our guide as we profess our faith in you. We move through life proclaiming your presence in every moment and in everything we do. Continue to sustain us in the struggles of life and be our companion on the path we walk, conscious of our failures and successes in this world you created for us.

Submitted by:
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FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Prayer after Communion:

Having consumed these gifts, we pray, O Lord,
that, by our participation in this mystery,
its saving effects upon us may grow.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection:

Although this prayer dates from the seventh century and was used late in Easter Time, it serves us well on the Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time following the reform of Vatican Council II. It helps us recall the whole of the mystery of Christ.

In the same way we feed our children so they grow up in wisdom, age, and grace (mysterious, is it not?) the Church feeds the children of God. We, God's children, feed on Eucharistic bread and wine, feed on Body and Blood, feed on God.

This participation in Communion is our right because of new birth in Baptism. It is also our duty. For once out of the baptismal bath, we now dress like Christ and bear his light. We complete the "giving thanks" begun in the Eucharistic Prayer by dining at the Lord's table, by eating and drinking the Lord's meal, by participating in so great a mystery – Christ once dead, now risen for ever. By consuming Jesus the Christ, his saving life grows within us. We become like him – who became like us in all things but sin.

So great a mystery!

Prayer:

Oh Dead and Risen Lord,
feed us always with your very self
that we may grow week by week to be like you
– dead to sin and raised to life anew.

Submitted by:
Eliot Kapitan
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SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

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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SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Prayer after Communion:

Graciously be present to your people, we pray, O Lord,
and lead those you have imbued with heavenly mysteries
to pass from former ways to newness of life.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection:

Miriam-Webster's Dictionary defines the word *imbue* as "to cause (someone or something) to be deeply affected by a feeling or to have a certain quality." In this Prayer after Communion, not only do we ask God to graciously be present to us having just received the Body and Blood of Christ, we also ask to be imbued with the heavenly mysteries causing us to be transformed. Thus, by our very eating and drinking of the Body and Blood of Christ, we ask God to cause something powerful to happen within us – transformation.

This transformation happens because of God's graciousness. It is God who does the transforming. As the Holy Spirit is called down upon gifts of bread and wine to change them into the Body and Blood of Christ, so too, do we ask the grace of the Holy Spirit to change us.

St. Augustine said, "Be what you see; receive what you are." We are to be the Body of Christ in the world. We are to be poured out for others that they might have new life. When we say, "Amen" to the Body and Blood of Christ, we commit ourselves to be transformed into a new person, leaving behind our old ways of thinking and doing, and becoming Christ's Body in the world.

Prayer:

Lord, as we ponder the mystery of the Eucharist, change us that we might become your Body, your hands, and your feet in a world in great need of your love.

Submitted by:
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SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Collect:

O God, protector of those who hope in you,
without whom nothing has firm foundation, nothing is holy,
bestow in abundance your mercy upon us
and grant that, with you as our ruler and guide,
we may use the good things that pass
in such a way as to hold fast even now
to those that ever endure.
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 was composed following the Second Vatican Council using elements of various ancient liturgical texts. The prayer begins by naming God “protector”. Although not commonly found in our liturgical prayers, addressing God as protector has its origin in Scripture. We see this in the Gospel of Luke where Jesus answers the devil by quoting Psalm 91, “He will command his Angels . . . to guard you” [Lk 4:10-11]. For those who hope in God there is the sure promise of protection. The Collect reminds us that without God nothing has a firm foundation and nothing is holy.

The second half of the prayer asks for God’s mercy and affirms God as our ruler and guide. The prayer continues by asking that we may use the good things of this earth in such a way that they will aid us in achieving the “good things that ever endure”. What are these enduring things? They are love and eternal life. As we pray the Collect we are reminded that we are totally dependent on God for our very existence. We are reminded that God establishes and sanctifies creation thereby making all things holy. And we affirm that with God as our foundation we have hope for eternal life in the love of God who is Father, Son, and Spirit.

Prayer:

O God, embrace me in your loving arms and keep me from all harm. Give me the wisdom to recognize the work of your hand in all of creation and to long for the gift of eternal life.

Submitted by:
David J. Reilly
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SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Prayer after Communion:

We have consumed, O Lord, this divine Sacrament,
the perpetual memorial of the Passion of your Son;
grant, we pray, that this gift,
which he himself gave us with love beyond all telling,
may profit us for salvation.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection:

For any one of us who has done any in-depth studies in liturgy, there is constantly one central, one theological tenet that surfaces: *Paschal Mystery*. Regardless of how simply or profoundly we comprehend Paschal Mystery, this prayer seemingly captures its essence in what might be considered a strikingly poetic fashion.

That being said, the words that jumped off the page from this prayer is the phrase “which [Jesus] himself gave us with a love beyond all telling.” How does one describe such love; what wondrous love, what profound love, what unconditional love? It would appear that our lives of discipleship – as recipients of this gift and spiritual nourishment – just might be emboldened to bear witness to this “love beyond all telling.”

Prayer:

O God, source of all love, help us by our words and deeds to bear witness to the gift of your love which we have received in and through your Son, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray, now and for ever.
Amen.

Submitted by:
Reverend James Wm. Bessert
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EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Collect:

Draw near to your servants, O Lord,
and answer their prayers with unceasing kindness,
that, for those who glory in you as their Creator and guide,
you may restore what you have created
and keep safe what you have restored.
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 earliest version of this prayer is found in the *Verona Sacramentary*. It announced a fast, perhaps during a sixth century siege of Rome. A version also appeared in the 1985 Sacramentary among the Prayers over the People. The 2002 edition removed it. (Paul Turner, *A Pastoral Companion to the Roman Missal*, © 2010, World Library Publications, p.130).

Like most of our liturgical texts, the prayer finds its source in Scriptural roots. It shows similarities to Psalm 104:30 (NAB: “When you send forth your Spirit they are created and you renew the face of the earth”) and Romans 8:21 (“...that creation itself will be set free from slavery to corruption”).

We begin by asking God to “draw near”. This congers such a wonderful image of our Father, leaning in to better hear our prayers and answering them with “unceasing kindness”. And what are we asking God to do? This is, above all, a prayer of hope that God will restore all things to their rightful order and return all creation back to its purpose, that is, to give him glory.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father,
open my eyes that I may see the glory of your creation,
teach me to always be mindful of your will,
and give me strength to witness to your purpose.

Submitted by
Rita Thiron
[Former] Director, Office of Worship
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EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Prayer after Communion:

Accompany with constant protection, O Lord,
those you renew with these heavenly gifts
and, in your never-failing care for them,
make them worthy of eternal redemption.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection:

This particular Prayer after Communion comes from Mass in a monastery in the *Gelasian Sacramentary*. Examples abound in the Veronese and Gelasian Sacramentaries where the concise prayer for this part of the Roman tradition took shape.

I am often taken aback by our boldness and, in my opinion, our lack of manners when speaking with God. In today's Prayer after Communion, we almost demand that God accompany us, protect us, and make us worthy. Can I hear a "please"?

We are reminded, however, regardless of our human faults and failings, that our God will never fail to care for us. Our God loves us, protects us, and accompanies us in our daily lives. Our simple gifts of bread and wine have been transformed to heavenly gifts. Through our participation in the Sacrament, we have been transformed, too. We pray that through our participation, renewal, and transformation God will find us worthy of redemption.

Prayer:

Kind and ever-loving God, we come before you today, realizing that we have failed in what we have done and in what we have failed to do. Forgive us, Lord. We want to be in your presence always. Protect us, provide for us, be with us, care for us, and make us worthy. Please. Thank you. Amen.

Submitted by:
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NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Collect:

Almighty every-living God,
whom, taught by the Holy Spirit,
we dare to call our Father,
bring, we pray, to perfection in our hearts
the spirit of adoption as your sons and daughters,
that we may merit to enter into the inheritance
which you have promised.
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 has a rich liturgical history and is found in a handful of books for Mass from the seventh century to our own day.

These truths stand out: BEING DARING AND BOLD. For a child, a “double-dog-dare-you” was a challenge not to be ignored. The Mass reminds us of such boldness at the beginning of the Communion Rite. We cannot ignore the invitation by the Priest who dares us to say: Our Father.

BEING AN ADOPTED CHILD. Late in Lent, the Church lovingly entrusts to the elect the Lord’s Prayer. We do this, the rite says, to deepen an awareness of being an adopted child, one who calls God “Father”. We do this with them because we ourselves believe it. We are sons and daughters.

BEING IN THE WILL. Although there may be legal rights to an inheritance, it is ultimately a gift, even many gifts. God, by covenant, promises to keep us in the will, promises to share the divine inheritance with us. We in turn must promise to behave as worthy children.

Prayer:

God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, keep us coming back to the Sunday table of your Son. By eating his Body and drinking his Blood, we may become ever more perfect daughters and sons.

Submitted by:
Eliot Kapitan
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NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Prayer after Communion:

May the communion in your Sacrament
that we have consumed, save us, O Lord,
and confirm us in the light of your truth.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection:

This prayer, dating back to the eighth century, contains some rich elements. The word “consumed” is very strong. We have not merely “eaten and drunk” the Sacrament; we have consumed it, that is, taken it in wholly and entirely. The power of the word reminds us of the people of Israel who were to consume the daily portion of manna in the desert, the gift of God, in order to be saved. The power of the word reminds us of the prophet Ezekiel who was given the scroll of the word of God to eat.

What is this consumed “Sacrament”? The Latin word here is plural, and so we know that the reference is not to the Body and Blood of Christ only. In the celebration of the Eucharist that is completed with this post-communion prayer, we have consumed both the Word of God and the Sacrament of the altar. Beyond that, we have celebrated the Eucharist as a baptized people, alive and gathered in the Holy Spirit. Hence, the “Sacrament that we have consumed” is the whole Christ, indeed all the mysteries of Christ. As we consume and make Christ part of us, Christ is making us part of himself. Such is our communion in and with him.

Hence, we pray that our communion in Christ may “save us...and confirm us” in divine truth. The praying community, the Church, is asking to be open to receive the salvation offered to us in the sacrament of Christ and to be rooted in his truth completely.

Prayer:

Jesus our Savior, we thank you for giving yourself to us in such varied splendor. May we take you completely into our hearts as you take us completely into yours. Amen.

Submitted by:
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Chairperson, Diocesan Liturgical Commission
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TWENTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Collect:

O God, who have prepared for those who love you
good things which no eye can see,
fill our hearts, we pray, with the warmth of your love,
so that, loving you in all things and above all things,
we may attain your promises,
which surpass every human desire.
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:

St. Dimitri, Metropolitan of Rostov (1651-1709), taught in *The Inner Closet of the Heart*, “No unity with God is possible except by an exceedingly great love.” It is through the love of God that we exist and are called to dwell in his presence. It is because he loves us that we are offered the gift of eternal redemption, his ultimate covenant promise.

We all know that “Love is a two way street.” For the love that God has for us to be complete, we must love him in return. And how do we love him? By living in the spirit of his law; a law that calls us to love him and our neighbor while we set our own desires aside.

How do we merit the gift of God’s love? We certainly do not merit that gift by human desire. We merit the gift through the spiritual desire that enflames our heart.

Prayer:

Lord God, kindle within us the fire of your love. Let our hope in your promises keep us on the right path so that we may rejoice in your presence all the days of our life.

Submitted by:
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TWENTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Prayer after Communion:

Made partakers of Christ through these Sacraments,
we humbly implore your mercy, Lord,
that, conformed to his image on earth,
we may merit also to be his coheirs in heaven.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Reflection:

We ask God's mercy, then we eat the Body and drink the Blood of Christ – but why? Could it be that through this feast we actually will become what we eat? If this is true, then as disciples apprenticed to Christ, we will also know God's promise of the peace and joy of heaven.

When the Mass concludes, "Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord," we move from Sunday worship back into the world to try and do exactly what was asked of us. We have faith in our ability to go forth in mission, imaging Jesus to people we meet, work with, and live among.

How glorious to receive Communion and reflect the image of Christ!

Prayer:

God of mercy, apprentice us in your love, no matter where we may find ourselves this week. May our prayers echo *Kyrie* and our actions, words, and behaviors mirror the way you taught us to live. Make us master apprentices, guiding our hands, our hopes, and our hearts to serve others as you taught by your life on earth. And may we continue to become what we eat each time we receive Communion. Hold us in your mercy, for ever and ever. Amen.

Submitted by:
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August 15

THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, **Solemnity**

At the Vigil Mass

Collect:

O God, who, looking on the lowliness of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
raised her to this grace,
that your Only Begotten Son was born of her according to the flesh
and that she was crowned this day with surpassing glory,
grant through her prayers,
that, saved by the mystery of your redemption,
we may merit to be exalted by you on high.
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 has its roots in the Cantic of Mary as Mary responds to Elizabeth's greeting: "For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness; behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed" (Luke 1:48). Throughout the great mysteries of her life: the Immaculate Conception, the Annunciation, the Incarnation, the virgin birth, the resurrection of her Son, and the Assumption, Mary is ever the humble servant of God, ever the faithful believer, ever a woman of reflection as she "kept all these things in her heart" (Luke 2:51).

God favored Mary's humility and obedience and, and blessing her among women, God chose her to be the mother of his Son. Upon her death, God exalted Mary, body and soul, into eternal glory, crowning her Queen of Heaven, where she continues to watch over us and intercede for us.

Prayer:

God our Father, you give us the supreme model of faith and holiness in the Blessed Virgin Mary; help us to follow her example and magnify you in all we do.

Submitted by:
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August 15

THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, **Solemnity**

At the Vigil Mass

Prayer after Communion:

Having partaken of this heavenly table,
we beseech your mercy, Lord our God,
that we, who honor the Assumption of the Mother of God,
may be freed from every threat of harm.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection:

Pope Pius XII promulgated the dogma of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary with his apostolic constitution *Munificentissimus Deus* on November 1, 1950: “that the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory” (no. 44). Through the grace of her Son’s Resurrection, upon her death Mary’s body was reunited with her soul and she was assumed into heaven, an anticipation of the resurrection for all the faithful.

Mary’s title as *Theotokos*, Mother of God, dates to the Council of Ephesus in 431. This title is professed in the *Hail Mary*: “Holy Mary, Mother of God.” The key invocation of this prayer follows in that we ask Mary to “pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death.” We honor Mary, our heavenly Mother, and can always turn to her for comfort, protection, and gentle entreaty to her Son on our behalf.

Prayer:

God of All, who exalted Mary as Queen over all things, may she ever exercise her maternal role on behalf of the members of Christ.

Submitted by:
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August 15

THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, **Solemnity**

At Mass during the Day

Collect:

Almighty ever-living God,
who assumed the Immaculate Virgin Mary, the Mother of your Son,
body and soul into heavenly glory,
grant, we pray,
that, always attentive to the things that are above,
we may merit to be sharers of her glory.
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 Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary “body and soul into heavenly glory” was declared a dogma of the Church in the 1950 Apostolic Constitution of Pope Pius XII, *Munificentissimus Deus*. It has been found on liturgical calendars, however, since at least the fifth century. In the first three lines of the Collect we are reminded not only of Mary’s Assumption but also her Immaculate Conception, perpetual virginity, and, of course, her place as the Mother of God.

The heart of this Collect is also the heart of this Solemnity. Writing on the Church’s devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Pope Paul VI reminds us that “Mary is above all the example of that worship that consists in making one’s life an offering to God” (*Marialis cultus*, no. 21). From her *fiat* to the prophetic words Simeon spoke at our Lord’s presentation in the temple to her place at the foot of the cross, Mary lived “attentive to the things that are above,” placing God always in front of her. When we make our own lives an offering to God as Mary did, being “attentive” and “devoted to carrying out the heavenly Father’s will” (*Munificentissimus Deus*, no. 42), we demonstrate our own belief in the Resurrection and the hope of a place for us in glory with Mary, sharing the joy of good and faithful servants.

Prayer:

May all who meditate upon the glorious example Mary offers us this day, be more and more convinced of the value of a human life entirely devoted to carrying out the heavenly Father's will and to bringing good to others (see *Munificentissimus Deus*, no. 42).

Submitted by:
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August 15

THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, **Solemnity**

At Mass during the Day

Prayer after Communion:

Having received the Sacrament of salvation,
we ask you to grant, O Lord,
that, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
whom you assumed into heaven,
we may be brought to the glory of the resurrection.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection:

As we approach the end of the Mass and are about to be sent forth to glorify the Lord by our lives, we take this opportunity to ask God to listen to the intercession of the one whose “soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord” (Luke 1:46).

The Almighty has done good things for us in providing the “Sacrament of salvation,” which has “filled the hungry with good things” (Luke 1:53). We now make one last request – that the Lord remember “his promise of mercy” (Luke 1:54) of which the Blessed Virgin proclaims in the *Magnificat* (the canticle sung every day in Evening Prayer). She has gone where we hope to go, so we trust that the Lord will listen to her prayers, look with favor on us his lowly servants, and lead us to everlasting life.

Prayer:

Sub Tuum Praesidium

We fly to your patronage, O holy Mother of God; despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us always from all dangers, O glorious and blessed Virgin.

Submitted by:
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TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Collect:

O God, who cause the minds of the faithful
to unite in a single purpose,
grant your people to love what you command
and to desire what you promise,
that, amid the uncertainties of this world,
our hearts may be fixed on that place
where true gladness is found.
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:

One of the amazing things about the “collect” prayers we encounter weekly at Mass is that they are general enough to gather together the thoughts and prayers of the assembly of believers. This text has a variety of images that individuals can grab onto! Still, the persons in church next to us might find another equally appropriate avenue with which they may identify. Singleness of purpose, loving God’s commandments, desiring God’s promises: we strive for these things every day.

As we hear this prayer we are invited to think of our own personal hopes and desires, our own striving to conform to God’s will in Christ. Where will we encounter “the uncertainties of this world” in the coming week? What are the hopes and desires we bring to our prayer today? How will we be challenged to embrace the will of God in Christ in the week to come?

Prayer:

God of love, open our hearts to your will. Give us the grace and the resolve to love your commands in all we do.

Submitted by:
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TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Prayer after Communion:

Complete within us, O Lord, we pray,
the healing work of your mercy
and graciously perfect and sustain us,
so that in all things we may please you.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection:

Praying this prayer in conjunction with the readings of this day expands our understanding of the mystery of Christ and his Church. In Year A, we rehear themes of God’s justice and inscrutable wisdom that culminate in the words to Peter, “What you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” In Year B, we pledge not to forsake but serve the LORD and with Peter proclaim, we will not leave, we do believe in your words of eternal life. In Year C, while wrestling with who is first and who is last, all nations are drawn to the LORD to recline at table in the kingdom of God.

We are called to proclaim and share the mercy of God which this prayer says is a healing work among us. Our prayer here is asking God to “perfect and sustain us” in that effort to keep in our hearts this mercy of God so that we may please the Lord in all things.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, guide us in the understanding of your ways so that we may do more than proclaim you the divine Savior. Guide us to manifest to the world the goodness of your presence in the mercy we share with those around us.

Submitted by:
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TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Collect:

God of might, giver of every good gift,
put into our hearts the love of your name,
so that, by deepening our sense of reverence,
you may nurture in us what is good
and, by your watchful care,
keep safe what you have nurtured.
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 distinguished sacramental theologian Louis-Marie Chauvet based his theology on the notion that God comes to us as free gift. The only response we humans can offer is gratitude for God's gratuitous gift of self.

In this Collect, we prepare to hear God's Word by acclaiming God as the giver of gifts, especially the gift of "love of [God's] name". We pray that God may nurture goodness within us, and keep safe that goodness by "watchful care".

For those who revere and are illumined by the Church's liturgical and sacramental life, it is important to remember that love of God arises not only from what's in our head but, more importantly, from the Spirit who dwells in our heart.

In what ways do we love God's name? What does authentic reverence look like in our life? How do we respond to God's free gift of self in Word and in Sacrament?

Prayer:

Gracious God, grant to us a deepened sense of reverence, so that under your watchful care, we may love your name more fully and respond to you in prayerful gratitude.

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TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Prayer after Communion:

Renewed by this bread from the heavenly table,
we beseech you, Lord,
that, being the food of charity,
it may confirm our hearts
and stir us to serve you in our neighbor.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection:

We eat the bread of God, the bread from heaven and do not die, but live for ever. We are guests already dining at the great messianic banquet. Invited guests, yes, but ones who must participate as well, else we have no life within us. The bread of life strengthens us to be true followers of Christ. Where else can we go? We have found the Holy One of God who has the words of eternal life.

Petition, Eucharist, renewal, conversion, service, and back to petition – this is the life cycle of discipleship. Jesus tell us, “Just so, the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28). Jesus serves us the food of everlasting life that is his Body and his Blood. This spiritual food is not for our personal edification only, but for *metanoia* – transforming our hearts of stone into hearts burning within us. Hearts on fire propel us out into the world to be disciples of Christ to all we meet. We go and we serve by feeding, welcoming, clothing, healing, and visiting because we know that the Lord is with us always, until the end of the age.

Prayer:

Gracious God, you sent your Only Son to be your gift of life to the world. May we follow his example of selfless service until we dine with you in heaven.

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TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Collect:

O God, by whom we are redeemed and receive adoption,
look graciously upon your beloved sons and daughters,
that those who believe in Christ
may receive true freedom
and an everlasting inheritance.
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 the *Gelasian Sacramentary*, this was one of the evening prayers for the Easter season. In the second edition of the *Roman Missal*, we heard this prayer two other times, also in Easter. With its single appearance now in the liturgical cycle, it coincides with the time of year when many are returning from vacations and going back to school and work. Perhaps the Easter themes of adoption, freedom, and inheritance help to realign our daily concerns in these ordinary times as we return to our ordinary routines.

What gives us true freedom? Too often, our world conditions us to strive above all for the freedom from want, achieved by high grades that lead to the well-paying job, which ultimately results in a secure retirement, all meant to afford us the luxuries of life. Yet this freedom is born out of fear – of not having enough, of not being good enough, of being left behind. This isn't freedom at all but enslavement. True freedom comes only from God who chooses us as his own. No labor of ours can buy that freedom; no personal achievement secures our inheritance. Our response to true freedom is our total submission to Christ.

Prayer:

You alone, O God, free us from fear through your Son Jesus. Bind us to his will that we may work only for the treasure that lasts – a place in your kingdom for ever.

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TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Prayer after Communion:

Grant that your faithful, O Lord,
whom you nourish and endow with life
through the food of your Word and heavenly Sacrament,
may so benefit from your beloved Son's great gifts
that we may merit an eternal share in his life.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Reflection:

The Prayer after Communion reminds us of the important connection between Word and Sacrament. The two are so closely interconnected that the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* [GIRM] tells us that they form one act of worship. In fact, the ambo is often referred to as the table of God's Word. The mystery of this gift of Word and Sacrament is even further tied together by the GIRM as it teaches us that Christ is really present "...in his word, and indeed substantially and uninterruptedly under the Eucharistic species" (no. 28). So this Sunday, in the Prayer after Communion, we are reminded of this unity of Word and Sacrament that we have just experienced.

This great nourishment, this great gift of life is ours every time we celebrate the Eucharist. How might we find echoes of the Word and Sacrament from today's celebration coming to mind as we pray this prayer and as we remember it in the days that follow? Perhaps it is the refrain from the Responsorial Psalm or possibly a phrase from the Gospel that we might recall. Maybe it is an action from the Liturgy, such as one of the processions, or one of the liturgical texts.

The text of this prayer reminds us of the unity of the Eucharistic celebration with all its various parts. May our celebration today bring us a share in Christ's eternal life.

Prayer:

God of Word and Sacrament, you pour out your gift of life on those who gather together in your name. May we grow in our appreciation for your presence among us. And may we come to know you more deeply through the proclamation of your Word and the celebration of your Sacraments. We make our prayer in the name of Jesus, our Lord and our brother. Amen.

Submitted by:
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