

**Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions [FDLC]
Mystagogical Reflection on Texts of the *Roman Missal***

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THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 15, 2013

Prayer after Communion:

We implore your mercy, Lord,
that this divine sustenance may cleanse us of our faults
and prepare us for the coming feasts.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection:

Through the Prayer after Communion, we join hearts in a final plea, making a loving request of God before being sent forth.

As the People of God faithfully await and rejoice in the Lord's nearness, there is a thick thread of theological truth in the content of today's prayer. Recalling that a Sacrament effects what it signifies, the Communion that we have just received is the sacramental sign of Christ in his Death and Resurrection. Since Christ offered his life that we might live, a principle effect of this "divine sustenance" is a deepening of love and of community in the Church. What the prayer asks is what we believe but understand only obliquely: that the nourishing, deepening presence of God within us will replace our faults and failings with grace.

In Matthew 26:28, "for this is the blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins" [NAB], we know of the Eucharist as imparting forgiveness. The Council of Trent spoke of the Eucharist as "remedy" freeing us from sinfulness.

The key word today is "sustenance". The Eucharist intends food for life's journey. Through the Eucharist, we are fed and we build an abundance of grace, sharing more fully in the life of Christ. As we strive to "become what we eat", discipleship takes root within our lives. Our faults are rooted out by God's mercy.

Prayer:

Gracious and loving God, we give thanks for a rich measure of grace, mercy, and forgiveness through Holy Communion. May we rejoice in preparing for the Lord's Nativity, sustained by this Sacrament of Love, freely offered and gladly received.

Submitted by:
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