

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

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**Mystagological Reflections on the  
Collect &  
Prayer after Communion  
for  
PASCHAL TRIDUUM  
& EASTER TIME**

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.

<b>Collect or Opening Prayer</b>	<b>Prayer after Communion</b>
<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 Combiér-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> – scroll to the bottom of the home page.

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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*

## PASCHAL TRIDUUM

Since Christ accomplished his work of human redemption and of the perfect glorification of God principally through his Paschal Mystery, in which by dying he destroyed our death, and by rising restored our life, the sacred Paschal Triduum of the Passion and Resurrection of the Lord shines forth as the high point of the entire liturgical year. Therefore the preeminence that Sunday has in the week, the Solemnity of Easter has in the liturgical year.

*Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the General Roman Calendar [UNLYC], no. 18*

<b>The Liturgical Day</b>	<b>Date</b>
THURSDAY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER At the Evening Mass	
FRIDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD [GOOD FRIDAY] The Celebration of the Passion of the Lord	
THE EASTER VIGIL IN THE HOLY NIGHT	
EASTER SUNDAY At the Mass during the Day	

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*

## EASTER TIME

The fifty days from the Sunday of Resurrection to Pentecost Sunday are celebrated in joy and exultation as one feast day, indeed as one “great Sunday.”

*Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the General Roman Calendar [UNLYC], no. 22*

<b>The Liturgical Day</b>	<b>Date</b>
SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER (or of Divine Mercy)	
THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER	
FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER	
FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER	
SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER	
THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD, <i>Solemnity</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the Vigil Mass</li> </ul>	
THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD, <i>Solemnity</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the Mass during the Day</li> </ul>	
SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER	
PENTECOST SUNDAY, <i>Solemnity</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the Vigil Mass</li> </ul>	
PENTECOST SUNDAY, <i>Solemnity</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the Mass during the Day</li> </ul>	

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THURSDAY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER  
At the Evening Mass

**Collect:**

O God, who have called us to participate  
in this most sacred Supper,  
in which your Only Begotten Son,  
when about to hand himself over to death,  
entrusted to the Church a sacrifice new for all eternity,  
the banquet of his love,  
grant, we pray,  
that we may draw from so great a mystery,  
the fullness of charity and of life.  
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 newly composed following the Second Vatican Council. The rather complex text professes that Jesus, God's "Only Begotten Son", entrusted the Church with the Eucharist as he handed himself over to death and giving his Church the new and eternal sacrifice.

We petition God, asking that by our participation in this great mystery, we become the "fullness of charity and of life." And as Christ so loved the world and gave himself so that others may have eternal life, we, too, with the grace of this sacrament, can become the love of Christ for others, that "fullness of charity and of life".

God calls us to participate in this "most sacred Supper." In doing so, we encounter the Risen Lord in his Paschal Mystery. It is here that we die with Christ in order to become a new creation, the fullness of his love.

**Prayer:**

Loving God, we thank you for the gift of Jesus your Son in the sacred banquet of your love. May the grace of this Eucharist produce the abundant fruit of charity in us for your greater honor and glory.

Submitted by:  
David Reilly  
Director, Office of Christian Worship  
Diocese of Kalamazoo

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### THURSDAY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

At the Evening Mass

#### **Prayer after Communion**

Grant, almighty God,  
that, just as we are renewed  
by the Supper of your Son in this present age,  
so we may enjoy his banquet for all eternity.  
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

#### **Reflection:**

As the entire Church celebrates this most sacred meal, commemorating Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples, we are keenly aware of the power this meal has had over the centuries. For nearly two thousand years, we have gathered around the table of the Lord and have been renewed in faith. Through thanksgiving, remembering, breaking, and sharing of the one bread and the one cup, our hope in the Paschal Mystery is renewed. We know the sacrifice of Christ, his dying and his rising, has saved and set us free.

On this night, we celebrate the gift of the Eucharist in this time and place and, yet, we pray that we might have a share in the heavenly banquet for all eternity. Not only are we renewed for the work of the Gospel here on earth, we look forward to that day when we will gather around the table of the heavenly banquet, joining our brothers and sisters who have gone before us in a song of eternal praise.

#### **Prayer:**

Lord, ever grateful for the gift of the Eucharist, renew our hearts and minds that we may be confident in your saving love and proclaim your goodness to all the world. May we patiently await the day when we will see you face to face at your eternal banquet.

Submitted by:  
Karen Kane  
Director of the Worship Office  
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**FRIDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD [GOOD FRIDAY]**

The Celebration of the Passion of the Lord

**A**

**Prayer:**

Remember your mercies, O Lord,  
and with your eternal protection sanctify your servants,  
for whom Christ your Son,  
by the shedding of his Blood,  
established the Paschal Mystery.  
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

**Reflection:**

Part of this text may be found in a Lenten Entrance Antiphon in the Missal used prior to the Second Vatican Council. This Collect, however, is newly composed for the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*. Drawing from Psalm 25, the prayer begins with a plea for God's compassion on us.

On this day, when the particular focus is on the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus, the Son of God, on his Passion and Death, we feel most vulnerable. If this death on the cross can happen to God's own Son, what will we have to face? This fear is assuaged in this prayer by the reassurance of God's "eternal protection". With the intensity of this celebration, we express our faith that, by the blood of the Cross, we may indeed be sanctified and experience the fullness of the Paschal Mystery.

**Prayer:**

Merciful God, just as your Son Jesus gave himself over to death for our salvation, give us the courage to turn our very selves over to you for guidance and sanctification. Help us to know that in our darkest hours we will come to know your healing touch. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Submitted by:  
Judy Bullock, EdD  
Director of Worship  
Archdiocese of Louisville

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**FRIDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD [GOOD FRIDAY]**

The Celebration of the Passion of the Lord

**Or B:**

**Prayer:**

O God, who by the Passion of Christ your Son, our Lord,  
abolished the death inherited from ancient sin  
by every succeeding generation,  
grant that just as, being conformed to him,  
we have borne by the law of nature  
the image of the man of earth,  
so by the sanctification of grace  
we may bear the image of the Man of heaven.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**Reflection:**

This Collect has been part of the *Roman Missal* since the 7th century, appearing first in the *Gelasian Sacramentary*. At the onset of the Triduum on Holy Thursday, we are reminded that “We should glory in the Cross.” This focus is carried through in this prayer which emphasizes the “good” of “Good Friday”, which emphasizes what Christ accomplished with his Death on the Cross and subsequent Resurrection.

The depth of meaning within this prayer provides great assurance of God’s saving grace. The first part confirms that Jesus’ Death on the Cross freed all generations from the chains of sin, “abolishing death”. Then the prayer addresses the law of nature. By the mystery of the Incarnation, Christ shares our humanity, the “man of earth”. With this share of human nature, we pray for God’s grace to transform us so that we may also share eternal life with the “Man of heaven.”

**Prayer:**

O God, even on this day when we commemorate Christ’s crucifixion and Death on the Cross, we know the rest of the story – the empty grave. Lead us, O Lord, along the right path to holiness so that we may share in the eternal kingdom now open to us. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Submitted by:  
Judy Bullock, EdD  
Director of Worship  
Archdiocese of Louisville

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FRIDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD [GOOD FRIDAY]

The Celebration of the Passion of the Lord

### **Prayer after Communion**

Almighty ever-living God,  
who have restored us to life  
by the blessed Death and Resurrection of your Christ,  
preserve in us the work of your mercy,  
that, by partaking of this mystery,  
we may have a life unceasingly devoted to you.  
Through Christ our Lord.

### **Reflection:**

During the Sacred Paschal Triduum we embrace Christ's Death and Resurrection. The Liturgy constantly invites us into this Paschal Mystery and invites us to appreciate it as one event. In the Prayer after Communion today, there is mention of both Christ's Death and Resurrection, and so we who receive Holy Communion today do so with a full appreciation that Christ's Death on the Cross is the path to his Resurrection. And so it is for the Christian; we who receive Christ, share in his risen life even as we celebrate his Death.

This work that is accomplished in us by Christ's Death and Resurrection invites us to live in this mystery. We strive to unite our own dying and rising to his. What are the daily "deaths" that we experience? What are the daily "resurrections" that are part of our life? As we are nourished with the Body and Blood of Christ today, let us be sure to unite our own dying and rising to his.

### **Prayer:**

God of the Passover, help us to see your saving pattern of dying and rising in our own life today. Help us to remember to unite this to the saving action of Jesus Christ, your Son, this day.

Submitted by:  
Rev. Steven P. Walter  
Pastor, Saint John Fisher Parish  
Archdiocese of Cincinnati

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**EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD  
THE EASTER VIGIL IN THE HOLY NIGHT**

**Collect:**

O God, who make this most sacred night radiant  
with the glory of the Lord's Resurrection,  
stir up in your Church a spirit of adoption,  
so that, renewed in body and mind,  
we may render you undivided service.  
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:**

Unless you are the presider at the Easter Vigil, you likely wouldn't realize there is a Collect for this mother of all holy vigils. This prayer, handed down over the centuries almost unchanged from the *Gelasian Sacramentary*, could get lost amid all the other prayers of this night. Yet it is this very Collect that summarizes the purpose of what the Spirit stirs up this night when the Church gives birth to, anoints, and feeds "new Christs."

This Collect reminds us that the gift of adoption, freely given by the Father, is not simply about to whom we belong but to what we are called: the life-giving mission of Christ to the world. Whether we are many years from our Baptism or newly perfumed with the scent of Chrism, each one of us and together as one body are called to serve this mission of giving praise to the Father in heaven and continuing Christ's presence on earth.

**Prayer:**

Lord, stir up in me the Spirit of Christ you first placed in my heart on the day you called me your own. United with your people, may I give you my entire being as Christ gave himself for the life of the world.

Submitted by:  
Diana Macalintal  
Director of Worship  
Diocese of San Jose

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**EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD  
THE EASTER VIGIL IN THE HOLY NIGHT**

**Prayer after Communion:**

Pour out on us, O Lord, the Spirit of your love,  
and in your kindness make those you have nourished  
by this paschal Sacrament  
one in mind and heart.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**Reflection:**

*ALL* that we have done this night has led us to *this* point! All of it has led to here, to this moment.

We have heard, once again, of the great presence and action of our God in our midst, since the beginning of time, to claim us, to make us his own, to restore us and all creation to what he intended from the beginning. After the intense preparation of Lent, the Catechumens have died in the font and, after them, the baptized have renewed that death and new life. Those reborn in the water have been anointed with the fullness of the Spirit; and those of us who have been renewed in that Spirit have walked with them to the *culmination of it all* – the Eucharist.

THIS is what we have been praying, fasting, and giving alms for! THIS is what our self-denial has brought us to! THIS is what Lent has prepared us for: the renewal of Baptism and its first reception. But that Baptism and renewal are not the end. We baptize and renew Baptism *precisely in order* that we might approach with awe, on *this* night, the great Altar of the Lamb, and once again, fresh in the Spirit, stretch out our hands and receive the Bread of Life and the Cup of eternal salvation! THIS is the culmination of it all – the Paschal Eucharist.

So what do we do afterward, the air thick with Alleluia and the aroma of Chrism? We pause, we revel in it all, we savor what the Lord has done for us and, in faith and trust, we dare to ask one more time – we ask for *more* of what the Lord has *just done for us*: make us one! By all that we have witnessed this night and by all that you have done, Lord – may it *all* make us one. One in body; one in spirit; one in mind and heart; one in faith; one in death; and one in life! Through you, Lord. Always and only through you!

**Prayer:**

What more can I ask, Lord of all Creation, than in all that I do and in all that I say, may I be joined to you through the great Paschal Mystery of your Son. In his Death and Resurrection we have been reborn. For that, may I always and everywhere give you thanks and praise, through Christ our Lord.

Submitted by:  
Todd Williamson  
Director of Worship  
Archdiocese of Chicago

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**EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD**

At the Mass during the Day

**Collect:**

O God, who on this day,  
through your Only Begotten Son,  
have conquered death  
and unlocked for us the path to eternity,  
grant, we pray, that we who keep  
the solemnity of the Lord's Resurrection  
may, through the renewal brought by your Spirit,  
rise up in the light of life.  
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:**

We gather today after having celebrated with great joy the preceding days of the Paschal Triduum. The rituals of those days and especially the time spent at the Easter Vigil are still ringing in our ears and filling our hearts. The brightness of a new day dawning give us another image of Christ conquering death and rising to new life.

We have become witnesses to the conquering in our lives of the items that bring death to our souls. The light of this first day of the week enables us to renew with great exhortation our own Baptism and the rising of our lives into the glory of the Lord's Resurrection. Our path to eternity has been opened and we step upon it with feet prepared to walk stronger and braver into living out the way of life modeled for us by Christ and fortified by the Spirit. Our days of Lenten and Paschal Triduum experiences have been well spent. We rest in the risen Lord ready to be raised up into the light of life.

**Prayer:**

Risen Lord, pour into our hearts the joy of the vision of being with you for ever in eternity as we go walking strongly on the path leading us into the light of life.

Submitted by:  
Sister Sharon Marie Stola, OSB  
Director of the Office of Divine Worship and the Catechumenate  
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**EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD**

At the Mass during the Day

**Prayer after Communion:**

Look upon your Church, O God,  
with unfailing love and favor,  
so that, renewed by the paschal mysteries,  
she may come to the glory of the resurrection.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**Reflection:**

Apart from Easter Evening Prayer to be celebrated later in the day, this Prayer after Communion text becomes the final prayer of the Church's celebration of the Paschal Triduum.

The object of the prayer's concern is the Church. It is a Church which has held in sacred memory the paschal mysteries, welcomed new members into its company, and renewed baptismal vows after Lenten penance. As the climax of these works of God, which re-present God's "unfailing love and favor," the Church has now brought them to completion by sharing Holy Communion in the Easter Eucharist. It is also a Church about to be sent forth to witness to the Paschal Mystery of Christ in the way its members live each day.

The prayer summarizes concisely all the Church has celebrated and asks to be empowered with the unfailing love and favor contained in the Easter Sacrament of the Eucharist. We do not presume God's love and favor. The praying community asks that God's graciousness will continue with us until we come to all that is promised to us in the Death and Resurrection of Christ and in our communion with him.

**Prayer:**

Gracious God, who renews your Church in every age, may we live each day in the light and life of Easter until we come into their fullness with your risen Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Submitted by:

Father Robert J. Kennedy  
Pastor, Blessed Sacrament and Saint Boniface Parishes  
Chairperson, Diocesan Liturgical Commission  
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SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER (or of Divine Mercy)

**Collect:**

God of everlasting mercy,  
who in the very recurrence of the paschal feast  
kindle the faith of the people you have made your own,  
increase, we pray, the grace you have bestowed,  
that all may grasp and rightly understand  
in what font they have been washed,  
by whose Spirit they have been reborn,  
by whose Blood they have been redeemed.  
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:**

No other Sunday has so many different names associated with it. This Sunday is called “Low Sunday” in contrast with Easter Sunday’s exuberance. It is called “Quasimodo Sunday” recalling Victor Hugo’s hunchback named for the first two words of today’s introit. It is called “*Dominica in albis depositis*” for it is the last day the newly baptized traditionally wore their white garment. Finally, it has been designated as “Sunday of Divine Mercy.”

Two of the appellations for this Sunday connect us to today’s Collect which has its origins in the Gothic Missal. The opening words of the Entrance Antiphon (introit), *quasi modo geniti infants*, “like newborn infants”, relates directly to the Collect’s focus on the newly baptized. *Dominica in albis depositis* is also a reference to the neophytes wearing their baptismal garments for the last time.

While the Collect text emphasizes the powerful presence of the neophytes as living icons in our midst, it also recalls for us our own participation in the sacred mysteries of Baptism and encourages God to “fire us up” so that all who have been washed and reborn in the Spirit may continue to grow in faith and in grace. We are reminded that we must return again and again to share this feast in order to grasp this profound mystery.

**Prayer:**

Merciful God, each year we celebrate the Baptism of new faithful. May the gift of their presence help us to continue growing in faith. We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Submitted by:  
Daniel McAfee  
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SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER (or of Divine Mercy)

**Prayer after Communion:**

Grant, we pray, almighty God,  
that our reception of this paschal Sacrament  
may have a continuing effect  
in our minds and hearts.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**Reflection:**

With this prayer, the Church comes to the end of the first eight days of the celebration of the Lord's Resurrection from the dead. In April 2000, Pope John Paul II also named this Second Sunday as one of Divine Mercy – that all the faithful might contemplate the depth of Christ's merciful love after having prayerfully journeyed with him through Holy Week, the Paschal Three Days, and the Easter Octave.

This prayer asks God to constantly renew our salvation through our reception of the Eucharist, the enduring presence of Jesus his Son in the world. For those newly baptized and those who completed initiation a week earlier, this prayer might serve as a reminder that although the excitement of the celebration of their initiation rites has diminished, the even greater joy of a life with Christ has only just begun. Likewise, the prayer challenges the rest of us to recall the graces of the Paschal Mystery experienced in Lent and Easter rather than let them simply fade away.

**Prayer:**

Lord God,  
you send your light and your truth that we may find our way to you.  
Guide those who seek you,  
raise up those who have fallen  
that we may all rejoice in your kingdom for ever.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Submitted by:  
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Office of Religious Education  
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THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

**Collect:**

May your people exult for ever, O God,  
in renewed youthfulness of spirit,  
so that, rejoicing now in the restored glory of our adoption,  
we may look forward in confident hope  
to the rejoicing of the day of resurrection.  
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 is full of exuberance and confidence. It calls to mind the exuberance and confidence of the disciples as they focus on following God rather than the desires of the officials around them who are afraid.

We are renewed in our spirit to look forward to all that will come. Our youth and young adults bring a great deal of idealism to the Church and the world. They are adventurous and committed deeply to the ties of friendship that bind them together. They have no way of knowing what the future may hold, and yet they face it with hope each and every day.

We are reminded that we are the adopted sons and daughters of the Lord, an adoption that is glorified through the Resurrection of Christ. As adopted children, we are accepted by the Lord with all of our personal joys and challenges. Adoption brings us in this life the new hope and new life that the resurrection will bring us in the next life.

In this reality, we are called to be hopeful and idealistic in following the Lord each day. We should not worry about the future, but must trust in the ultimate joy of the resurrection. There are many fears that can hold us back from serving as God has called us to serve. Like the youth around us, we must believe in the presence of our risen Lord. We must face the future with idealism. We must exult in the Lord!

**Prayer:**

Loving Father, renew me each day for the joys and challenges that are ahead. Grant me eternal hope in your Resurrection that I may follow where you lead.

Submitted by:  
Virginia Meagher  
Director, Office for Worship  
Diocese of Stockton



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THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

**Prayer after Communion:**

Look with kindness upon your people, O Lord,  
and grant, we pray,  
that those you were pleased to renew by eternal mysteries  
may attain in their flesh  
the incorruptible glory of the resurrection.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**Reflection:**

This seemingly simple prayer encompasses the fullness and foundation of our Christian faith: our joy and hope and belief in the resurrection. The eternal mysteries of our faith include: the Trinity, the incarnation, the Paschal Mystery, salvation, transubstantiation, the Immaculate Conception, and more. All of these mysteries find their meaning and culmination in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

We are a resurrection people. We do, indeed, live for ever. This is more than belief that the soul will live for ever; we believe that at the general resurrection of Christ's second coming somehow our bodies will be united with our souls. We profess this belief in the Nicene Creed: "I believe in . . . the resurrection of the body."

Resurrection is a way of living, of witnessing to our belief that we already have something of the future in the present. We are already living new risen life because we have a relationship with God – we are children of the living God. Confidence in resurrection means that we live this life in a way that infuses it with the life that is to come. We forgive; we are peacemakers. We reach out to others in love and patience and charity. We share our resurrected life with others. This is how we live as a resurrection people.

**Prayer:**

Gracious God, you gift us with faith in the resurrection; may we be with you in glory for ever.

Submitted by:  
Dianne Rachal  
Director, Office of Worship  
Diocese of Shreveport

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FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

**Collect:**

Almighty ever-living God,  
lead us to a share in the joys of heaven,  
so that the humble flock may reach  
where the brave Shepherd has gone before.  
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

**Reflection:**

This prayer echoes the themes of the readings associated with the Fourth Sunday of Easter, those describing Jesus as the Good Shepherd. Found in the 8<sup>th</sup> century *Gelasian Sacramentary* and recovered for our current Missal, this Collect draws those who gather for Eastertide worship more deeply into the paschal themes of the season.

Jesus Christ – the Lamb of the new Passover, sacrificed for our salvation – is (paradoxically) also the Shepherd. It is Jesus who bravely leads us into eternal life by his own Death and Resurrection. Christ has opened the gates of paradise and leads his “humble flock” to the “joys of heaven.”

But sharing in the joys of heaven as one of Jesus’ flock requires humility. Do we have the humility to truly follow Christ, even unto death? Are we willing to set aside our own will so that we may hear our Shepherd’s voice and walk in his ways? This prayer invites us to share in Christ’s Resurrection by our humble submission to the Good Shepherd, as one of the humble flock reborn in Baptism.

**Prayer:**

O Lord who are both Lamb and Shepherd, grant me a humble heart so as to know your will, and the strength to bravely follow you from death into life.

Submitted by:  
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FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

**Prayer after Communion:**

Look upon your flock, kind Shepherd,  
and be pleased to settle in eternal pastures  
the sheep you have redeemed  
by the Precious Blood of your Son.  
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

**Reflection:**

This Sunday is also called Good Shepherd Sunday as both its readings and prayers have that theme. Because of this focus, it is also called World Day of Prayer for Vocations. Thus this Sunday has a rich mixture of great images.

The Gospel of the Good Shepherd was formerly assigned to the Third Sunday of Easter but, after the Second Vatican Council, it was given to the Fourth Sunday of Easter and new orations were composed.

This new Prayer after Communion states the obvious. Jesus is the Good Shepherd (*Pastor bone* in Latin) who is asked to look upon his flock. The rich mystagogical reality is we are that flock. We are the sheep who have been redeemed. We are the ones, who receive Communion, and, here the richer image, who are redeemed by the Precious Blood of Christ. Secondly, we pray that he would be pleased to settle us in the eternal pastures of heaven. This image echoes the eschatological reality that when we celebrate the Eucharist, we already participate in the heavenly life of those who have gone on before us and worship around the throne of the Lamb. He is also the active shepherd who leads us here on earth.

**Prayer:**

O God, may the Good Shepherd who willingly laid down his life for his sheep and who is now risen, lift us up, fed by this heavenly food, to be better sheep and better disciples of the one Shepherd.

Submitted by:  
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FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

**Collect:**

Almighty ever-living God,  
constantly accomplish the Paschal Mystery within us,  
that those you were pleased to make new in Holy Baptism  
may, under your protective care, bear much fruit  
and come to the joys of life eternal.  
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 sustains the focus of this Easter Time. At the Renewal of Baptismal Promises during the Easter Vigil we prayed, "... through the Paschal Mystery we have been buried with Christ in Baptism, so that we may walk with him in newness of life." We are united with Christ in the spiritual birth of Baptism and we are united with him every time we celebrate the Paschal Mystery of his Death and Resurrection.

Our unity with Christ motivates us to bear fruit. The Communion Antiphon for this day recalls it, "I am the true vine and you are the branches, says the Lord. Whoever remains in me, and I in him, bears fruit in plenty, alleluia" (cf. Jn. 15:1, 5).

In Lent we marked our repentance and prayed for those to be baptized. During this Easter Time, may we develop our ability to bear good fruit as signs of that repentance (Mt. 3:8). This is a season of transformation as we die and rise with Christ.

**Prayer:**

Lord, help me to live a fruitful life so that I may be transformed into new life in unity with you.

Submitted by:  
Karen L. Podd  
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FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

**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:**

This prayer seeks to request a particular kind of presence from our Lord. It does not imply that the Lord is ever absent from us, rather it asks that God be “graciously” present – that is, present with his mercy and compassion. The Latin actually might be better translated as “graciously draw near” than “graciously be present”.

Having received this Real Presence through the heavenly mysteries – the sacraments – especially in Body and Blood of Eucharist, the Body of Christ now asks to receive God’s grace in a permeating way. Filled with the “heavenly mysteries” and transformed through this grace, we pray to pass from our old life of sin to a new way of life in the image of Christ.

**Prayer:**

Draw ever nearer to us, O Lord, and fill us with your grace and compassion. Permeated with the grace of your heavenly mysteries, free us of our former selves and make us new beings created in your image.

Submitted by:  
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SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

**Collect:**

Grant, almighty God,  
that we may celebrate with heartfelt devotion these days of joy,  
which we keep in honor of the risen Lord,  
and that what we relive in remembrance  
we may always hold to in what we do.  
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:**

Each and every day of our lives we give example to the world of the power of God's transforming love. It is because of God's love that we face adversity with great hope and joy.

It is in these days of joy that we celebrate with fervent hearts Christ's victory over sin and death. As we live in this broken world amidst suffering, hardship, trials, violence, and even death, we never lose sight of what God has already done, what God is doing, and what God has promised for all of eternity – salvation.

This is why we celebrate!

Our celebrations lead us to renew our baptismal commitment to develop a deeper and more spiritual relationship with the Lord. The Lord whose Body and Blood satisfies our hunger and thirst has saved us from our sins. May our response be sung with great joy, Alleluia, Alleluia!

**Prayer:**

O, Most Holy and ever-living God, you alone are worthy of our praise. Pour forth your Spirit upon us so that we may never cease to praise and give you glory.

Submitted by:  
Rev. Mr. Royce Winters  
Director of African American Ministries  
Archdiocese of Cincinnati

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SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

**Prayer after Communion:**

Almighty ever-living God,  
who restore us to eternal life in the Resurrection of Christ,  
increase in us, we pray, the fruits of this paschal Sacrament  
and pour into our hearts the strength of this saving food.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**Reflection:**

The Prayer after Communion is rooted in the words Jesus imparted to his disciples at the Passover Meal, “This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me” [Luke 22:19 NAB]. Yes, it is the life, crucifixion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus that feeds and strengthens the weary soul!

Every time that we “do this”, our prayer is for God to increase in us the ability to love and care for one another as the Body of Christ, but also to love and care for the least of those amongst us. This saving food, the Body and Blood of Christ, strengthens in us the resolve to be credible witnesses of God’s mercy and grace.

It is our hope that as bread and wine are transformed into Holy Food, our hearts may be set afire to recognize the face of God in the people and in the culture in which we live.

**Prayer:**

O Most Holy One, you are food for the soul. As we feast on your Body and Blood, teach us to be servants among servants, so that all may come to know your love and mercy. You, Jesus, are our Lord and Savior. Amen. Alleluia, alleluia!

Submitted by:  
Rev. Mr. Royce Winters  
Director of African American Ministries  
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THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD, *Solemnity*  
At the Vigil Mass

**Collect:**

O God, whose Son today ascended to the heavens  
as the Apostles looked on,  
grant, we pray, that, in accordance with his promise,  
we may be worthy for him to live with us always on earth,  
and we with him in heaven.  
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

**Reflection:**

As People of God, we are our stories. A Christian's "story" begins at Baptism and ends with being reunited with God in heaven. The story of God's beloved Son ends with his Ascension into heaven – or so the Apostles think.

How wondrous that we, today, understand Jesus' reuniting with his Father as the beginning of the Apostles' public ministry on earth. Two thousand years later, we are the beneficiaries of their apostolic ministry. Jesus' Ascension is his promise to us: I will return to my Father and be with you for ever. Our ascension as Jesus' disciples happens on the Last Day.

May we become the best followers of Jesus that we possibly can be. May each of our stories reflect deep commitment and abundant kindness to all, as a lifelong disciple of Jesus.

**Prayer:**

O joyful day, gracious God, when your beloved Son returned to the majesty and wonder of the highest heaven. May we always remember that the heavenly gladness and peace await us, too. When you welcome us back, Lord, may your mercy be swift as you claim us again into abundant Love.

Submitted by:  
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THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD, **Solemnity**

At the Vigil Mass

**Prayer after Communion:**

May the gifts we have received from your altar, Lord,  
kindle in our hearts a longing for the heavenly home land  
and cause us to press forward, following in the Savior's footsteps,  
to the place where for our sake he entered before us.  
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

**Reflection:**

New to the *Roman Missal, Third Edition* are prayers assigned to the Vigil Mass, the evening Mass preceding the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord. We are now invited to vigil, as we do for Easter Sunday and the Nativity of the Lord and these other major solemnities: Epiphany of the Lord, Nativity of Saint John the Baptist, Saints Peter and Paul, and Pentecost

Our hearts burn with longing for the fullness of God, the "heavenly homeland", the "place" to which Jesus Christ ascended for our sake. In offering ourselves along with the bread and wine, we receive the gifts of the Body and Blood of Christ. The Sacrament give us the courage to press onward.

At the site of the Church of the Ascension in Jerusalem, there are two marks in the rock that the devout believe to be the footprints left by Jesus as he ascended. It is possible to physically place one's feet in them. It is much more difficult, however, to truly step in the footsteps of Jesus, for they lead through his Passion to Resurrection.

**Prayer:**

Lord, you invite us to follow in your footsteps and you give us food for the journey. May we always respond to you with courage and paschal joy.

Submitted by:  
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THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD, **Solemnity**  
At the Mass during the Day

**Collect:**

Gladden us with holy joys, almighty God,  
and make us rejoice with devout thanksgiving,  
for the Ascension of Christ your Son  
is our exaltation,  
and, where the Head has gone before in glory,  
the Body is called to follow in hope.  
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:**

Based on a sermon for the Ascension by Pope Leo the Great from the year 444, this Collect was added to the Missal as an option for the Ascension after the Second Vatican Council.

In these words we are reminded of a God who keeps his promises and asks nothing of his people that he has not already asked of his own Son. The same Christ who “humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:8) now sits at the right of God, victorious over sin and death. Christ has shown us the path we must take – passion and death, self-surrender and sacrifice – and also shows us where that path leads – resurrection, ascension, and a place in the presence of the Father.

If we as the mystical Body believe in God’s promises and truly follow in faith where our Head has gone before, then we should be filled with hope and thanksgiving at the thought of our destination even in the midst of our own crosses.

**Prayer:**

Heavenly Father, you always remain faithful to your promise. In our own joys and sorrows, happiness and pain, grant us the faith to remain fixed on your Son, who shows us the way and has prepared us a place with you.

Submitted by:  
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THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD, *Solemnity*  
At the Mass during the Day

**Prayer after Communion:**

Almighty ever-living God,  
who allow those on earth to celebrate divine mysteries,  
grant, we pray,  
that Christian hope may draw us onward  
to where our nature is united with you.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**Reflection:**

This Prayer after Communion follows the oldest formula found in the *Gelasian Sacramentary* (8<sup>th</sup> century). We pray that God, who does a wonderful thing, grant us something even greater: eternal life. And we ask it through Christ our Lord. Here the great gift is “Christian hope” and its power to draw us forward to be united with God.

For six weeks we have reveled in the Resurrection, and now we near the end of the Easter Time. We belong to the earth, but through the gift of the Incarnation we are allowed to touch the divine mysteries. Christian hope grounds us and gives us the courage to endure the difficulties of daily life and to remain faithful. It allows us to catch glimpses of God, to grab on to the garment of Jesus, and to hang on tight all the way to eternal life!

**Prayer:**

Lord Jesus, as we celebrate the Ascension, may we follow you in hope and be lifted up with you in glory.

Submitted by:  
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SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

**Collect:**

Graciously hear our supplications, O Lord,  
so that we, who believe that the Savior of the human race  
is with you in your glory,  
may experience, as he promised,  
until the end of the world,  
his abiding presence among us.  
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

**Reflection:**

This prayer is based on a Collect for the Ascension from the *Verona Sacramentary* (6<sup>th</sup> century). In it, we give voice to the Church's cry in the gap between the Ascension and Pentecost: Stay with us, Lord! Don't leave us alone!

Christ is faithful and does, indeed, abide with us through the gift of the Spirit. In that Spirit, we are able to "see" that Christ remains with us not only as Eucharistic food and drink but also in the gathered assembly, the word proclaimed, and the presiding minister at Liturgy. In that same Spirit, we are also able to see – with eyes opened through our celebration of the Liturgy – Christ present in the poor, hungry, and marginalized; in all who suffer. Eyes opened, and transformed by our encounter with Christ, we are called to move from the Eucharist celebrated to the Eucharist lived, to be bread broken and wine poured out for the sake of the world.

**Prayer:**

You are faithful to your promises, O God.  
Open our eyes and hearts to your abiding presence among us.  
And, having come face to face with you,  
break us and pour us out  
in the liturgy of the world.

Submitted by:  
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SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

**Prayer after Communion:**

Hear us, O God our Savior,  
and grant us confidence,  
that through these sacred mysteries  
there will be accomplished in the body of the whole Church  
what has already come to pass in Christ her Head.  
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

**Reflection:**

As with the Collect for this Sunday, this prayer comes to us from the *Verona Sacramentary* (6<sup>th</sup> century). The rich, liturgical image of the whole Christ, the whole Church – head and members – infuses this prayer.

As we approach the end of this baptismal season, we are reminded that we have been baptized into Christ's Body. It is as his Body, as a priestly people, that we gather to offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; to offer Eucharist through, with, and in Christ to the Father in the Holy Spirit. What we do here, in mystery, is a foretaste, a glimpse, of what we will do eternally before God's throne. We pray that we will one day share in that fullness.

**Prayer:**

Good and gracious God,  
help us to discern Christ's Body in this place and time;  
instill in us a deep faith and abiding hope  
that, joined to your Christ, we will sing your praises for ever  
in the heavenly liturgy.

Submitted by:

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PENTECOST SUNDAY, **Solemnity**

At the Vigil Mass

Extended form and Simple form

**A**

**Collect:**

Almighty ever-living God,  
who willed the Paschal Mystery  
to be encompassed as a sign in fifty days,  
grant that from out of the scattered nations  
the confusion of many tongues  
may be gathered by heavenly grace  
into one great confession of your name.  
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 gently reminds us that Pentecost is not an isolated feast day, but the culmination of the fifty-day celebration of the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ – his Passion, Death, Resurrection, Ascension, and sending of the Holy Spirit. This is mystery too great, too encompassing to be contained within a single day.

From the confusion of Babel in Genesis, to the Jews of many nations gathered in Jerusalem at the time of the apostles, to the global multiculturalism and nationalism of our time, many languages and many nations cloud our communication and our true identity. The great gift of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost is the fire of evangelization and proclamation of Jesus Christ. “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:3). The Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, outpoured at Pentecost is the same Holy Spirit each one of us receives at our Baptism, our Confirmation, and at every celebration of the Eucharist. The Holy Spirit makes us children of God, one people united in the single purpose of praising God, now and for all eternity.

**Prayer:**

Gracious God, grant us a Pentecost of the heart, that, filled with the Holy Spirit, we too are on fire to proclaim your holy name throughout the world.

Submitted by:  
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PENTECOST SUNDAY, **Solemnity**

At the Vigil Mass

Extended form and Simple form

**Or B:**

**Collect**

Grant, we pray, almighty God,  
that the splendor of your glory  
may shine forth upon us  
and that, by the bright rays of the Holy Spirit,  
the light of your light may confirm the hearts  
of those born again by your grace.  
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:**

“Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them” (Acts 2:2). Through the mystery and the power of the Incarnation, the Son of God took on our human form, thus making humankind, and all creation, holy. St. Paul reminds us that our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within us (1 Cor 6:19). Each of us carries a spark of the divine within. Thomas Merton calls this divine spark *le point vierge*. *Gaudium et Spes* (Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World) identifies conscience “as the most secret core and sanctuary of a man. There he is alone with God, Whose voice echoes in his depths” (GS, no. 16).

We have the light of life because Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, fulfilled his promise to send the Spirit of truth, the Lord, the giver of life. We cannot hide our spark, our light under a basket. We must let God’s light of love and faith radiate from our hearts to illumine and enlighten every place and everyone. “Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify you heavenly Father” (Mattew 5:16).

**Prayer:**

God of Light, fill us with the grace of your Spirit that we may proclaim your glory for ever.

Submitted by:

Dianne Rachal

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PENTECOST SUNDAY, **Solemnity**

At the Vigil Mass

Extended form and Simple form

**Prayer after Communion:**

May these gifts we have consumed  
benefit us, O Lord,  
that we may always be aflame with the same Spirit,  
whom you wondrously poured out on your Apostles.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**Reflection:**

At this same Mass, we pray in the Prayer over the Offerings and in the Eucharistic Prayer that the Holy Spirit would sanctify the gifts of bread and wine. In a sense, by consuming the Body and Blood of Christ, it is we who are consumed by the flames of the Holy Spirit. Through partaking of the Eucharist, we receive the same Spirit that Christ gave to the Apostles and are empowered with Pentecostal zeal.

The fact that the Spirit was poured out “wondrously” evokes the miracles of Pentecost – the tongues of fire and the great deeds then performed by the Apostles. And because the mission and lineage of the Apostles continues in the Church through the ages, we still benefit from and contribute to the work of the Holy Spirit today.

**Prayer:**

O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy divine consolation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Submitted by:

Brian MacMichael

Director, Office of Worship

Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend

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Mystagogical Reflection on Texts of the *Roman Missal***

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PENTECOST SUNDAY, **Solemnity**  
At the Mass during the Day

**Collect:**

O God, who by the mystery of today's great feast  
sanctify your whole Church in every people and nation,  
pour out, we pray, the gifts of the Holy Spirit  
across the face of the earth  
and, with the divine grace that was at work  
when the Gospel was first proclaimed,  
fill now once more the hearts of believers.  
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 from the *Gelasian Sacramentary* and recovered by the reforms of Vatican II intends to unite us across time and space through the one and same Spirit. In the first half of the Collect, we catch glimpses of the first reading and the psalm. Yet, what is most striking is the recollection of that moment when the "Gospel was first proclaimed." Exactly when was that moment? At Jesus' proclamation in the synagogue of the word fulfilled in our hearing? At his Incarnation in Bethlehem? In the beginning when the Word became flesh? When God spoke light into the void? When I first listened and believed?

The simple answer is yes. The Spirit that makes all the nations one is the same Spirit at work in every age from the first moment of creation to the fulfillment of its recreation on the last day. Here, the divine grace of Christmas and Easter, of all time and history marked by the work of the Spirit, is poured into our hearts that we too may proclaim the Gospel, ancient and ever-new, to all the nations in this time and in this place.

**Prayer:**

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful that by your divine grace we may embody the Gospel and proclaim it in every moment of our lives.

Submitted by:  
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PENTECOST SUNDAY, **Solemnity**

At the Mass during the Day

**Prayer after Communion:**

O God, who bestow heavenly gifts upon your Church,  
safeguard, we pray, the grace you have given,  
that the gift of the Holy Spirit poured out upon her  
may retain all its force  
and that this spiritual food  
may gain her abundance of eternal redemption.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**Reflection:**

At every Mass, we thank God for the gift of the Holy Eucharist. But in a special way at Pentecost, we offer thanks for the manifold gifts bestowed by the Holy Spirit. The Sequence we sing at Mass today (*Veni, Sancte Spiritus / Come, Holy Spirit*) speaks of these gifts and of the power of the Holy Spirit to transform our lives, making us to reflect the divine light.

We first receive the Holy Spirit when it is “poured out” at Baptism. Our participation in these gifts is then strengthened by Confirmation. And through the spiritual food of Holy Communion, we receive the sustenance whereby our transformation can “retain all its force.” This occurs both individually and communally – for the entire Church, which was born at Pentecost, is exhorted to share these gifts through the great mission of evangelization, winning an “abundance of redemption” throughout the world and all of time.

**Prayer:**

O Holy Spirit, illumine our minds, that we may see and understand the things that are for our eternal good. Strengthen our hearts and wills, that they may be conformed to your divine will, and be guided by your holy inspirations. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Submitted by:  
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