

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 ORDINARY TIME – 22-28

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 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*

## ORDINARY TIME

### 22-28

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*

<b>The Liturgical Day</b>	<b>Date</b>
TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	
TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	
TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	
TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	
TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	
TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	
TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	

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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.

Submitted by:  
Jeremy Helmes  
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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.

Submitted by:  
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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.

Submitted by:  
Diana Macalintal  
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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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TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

**Collect:**

Look upon us, O God,  
Creator and ruler of all things,  
and, that we may feel the working of your mercy,  
grant that we may serve you with all our heart.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

**Reflection:**

“Grant that we may serve you with all our heart.” The Collect reminds us that our God is merciful. It recalls the covenant which was made with the people of Israel, “I am your God and you are my people.”

As children of God, we are called to be not only disciples but also caretakers of all that God has created. As a disciple and a caretaker, Jesus is saying to us, “You are covered by the blood of Christ, therefore you have no reason to be afraid to serve God and care for all of God’s creations.” We know, however, that living in this 21<sup>st</sup> century with all of its distractions and lack of concerns for one another makes our task of loving and serving God difficult at best. Today’s prayer reminds us that God has the power to change our lives.

**Prayer:**

Thank you, O God, for recognizing our needs. Thank you for the gift of love through your Son, Jesus Christ. Thank you for watching over us each and every day. Help us to love you more and help us to see your love in each other.

Submitted by:  
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TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

**Prayer after Communion:**

May the working of this heavenly gift, O Lord, we pray,  
take possession of our minds and bodies,  
so that its effects, and not our own desires,  
may always prevail in us.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**Reflection:**

All too often, we receive Holy Communion in a perfunctory manner or by rote. In other words, we might not really think about it. Normally, we receive with grateful hearts the gift of Holy Communion, but we may not always be mindful of the implications of our “Amen.”

The Prayer after Communion for the Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time reminds us of the effect receiving this gift has on us. If we really pay attention, Holy Communion “works” in us and, as we consume Christ, Christ takes possession of us. The very act of eating and drinking his Body and Blood effects us, changes us. We pray that the effect empties us of human desires so that we may be drawn into the mystery of Christ, dying to our sinfulness and living the fullness of Christ every day of our lives.

Consequently, our lives are lived conformed to the mind and heart of Christ – in love, compassion, mercy, and humility.

**Prayer:**

Lord, may we always come to your table hungry, ready to receive the gift of the Body and Blood of your Son, Jesus Christ. May what we consume possess us so that we become what we eat for the life of the world.

Submitted by:  
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TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

**Collect:**

O God, who founded all the commands of your sacred Law upon love of you and of our neighbor, grant that, by keeping your precepts, we may merit to attain eternal 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:**

Although this prayer is partly stitched together with bits of other texts from as early as the sixth century, it is a new Collect for the post-Vatican II missal (see Paul Turner, *Pastoral Companion to the Roman Missal*, © 2010, World Library Publications, p. 144).

I remember only one sermon from my grade school years of the 1950's. It was this short: "Look to those on your right and on your left. Go ahead, do it. Now look to those both in front and behind. (Pause.) If they don't get to heaven, you probably will not either." There was quite a silence in the church as the priest sat down.

Since love is the summary of all law, since love must be more than only of self, then I must love God and must love others. The journey to heaven depends on it. Like our ancestors in faith, we are saved as a people. The question should not only be, "Am I saved?" It must be, "Are we being saved?" The suitable answer, "Every day. We are in this together."

**Prayer:**

Loving God, instill in me a love so deep and so wide that there is always room for one more, for many more. Fill this pathway to you with lovers and with those to be loved so that heaven will be filled with a great throng that is, best of all, loved by you.

Submitted by:  
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TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

**Prayer after Communion:**

Graciously raise up, O Lord,  
those you renew with this Sacrament,  
that we may come to possess your redemption  
both in mystery and in the manner of our life.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**Reflection:**

The whole dynamic of this prayer has been in play throughout many of the texts of this Liturgy. For example, the Opening Collect makes reference to God's commands that are founded on love of him and on love of neighbor, and asks that by keeping the Lord's precepts, we might then have eternal life. Similarly, the first option for the Communion Antiphon asks that one's ways (i.e., one's manner of behaving, of acting, of living) be in keeping with God's statutes (Psalm 119:4-5). Even the readings in all three years, touch upon the call for all of us to live our lives in a manner that is in keeping with the demands of the Gospel.

This prayer then echoes these other texts. As so often in the Prayers after Communion, there is the recognition of the renewing and the refreshing power of the Sacrament. Thus renewed – in faith, in conviction, in the call of discipleship, in fidelity to our Baptism – we are later sent out (in the dismissal rite) “to announce the Gospel of the Lord.” How? According to the Prayer after Communion, by the very “manner of our life” – that is, in how we live!

In the end, this prayer raises for us the intimate link between Eucharist (the “mystery” referred to in the prayer) and life; between worship and discipleship; between sacrament and service. It is the link between Mystery and Mission. We could not possibly fulfill that Mission without the renewing power of the Eucharist; and the Mission of being disciples in the world repeatedly calls us back to participate in the Eucharist, which is the great mystery of our redemption!

**Prayer:**

Gracious Lord, may all that I do be rooted in and flow out of the great praise and thanksgiving that is the Eucharist. Renewed each time I do so, may I be sustained in my life as a disciple – to announce your Gospel and to glorify you, Lord, by the way I live my life. Through Christ our Lord.

Submitted by:

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TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

**Collect:**

O God, who manifest your almighty power  
above all by pardoning and showing mercy,  
bestow, we pray, your grace abundantly upon us  
and make those hastening to attain your promises  
heirs to the treasures of heaven.  
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 a rich and varied use from the *Gelasian Sacramentary* forward (see Paul Turner, *Pastoral Companion to the Roman Missal*, © 2010, World Library Publications, p. 146). It tells of God's grace, manifested in mercy and pardon. It prompts us to ask: let us be children of the promise, heirs of heaven.

The well known song of John Newton played a part in the abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire in 1807. It declares that grace is amazing, is sweet sounding, is saving. Our theology tells us, first, it is a free and undeserved gift. Second, it gives us this list: sanctifying (a share in divine life), actual (a help to conform our lives to God's will), sacramental (proper to each of the Seven Sacraments), and special. These special graces or charisms are given to an individual to be used for the common good of the Church and the world.

Because God gives, and abundantly so, what spiritually given special graces, distinctive gifts (charisms that everyone has as kingdom treasure) must I show, exhibit, manifest, do?

**Prayer:**

Bountiful God, in you there is no scarcity; only abundance. Let each of us, your daughters and sons, manifest the living presence of your grace in every thought, word, and action.

Submitted by:  
Eliot Kapitan  
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TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

**Collect:**

O God, who manifest your almighty power  
above all by pardoning and showing mercy,  
bestow, we pray, your grace abundantly upon us  
and make those hastening to attain your promises  
heirs to the treasures of heaven.

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:**

As the liturgical year begins to draw to a close, the idea of the next life and our hope to join in the heavenly banquet rises to the surface. It is possible that this Collect is based upon the freely given gifts of God's mercy and forgiveness of our sins, thus allowing us, his sons and daughters, to "run the race" and obtain the great treasure God has in store for us.

**Prayer:**

Gracious God, as we journey through life on earth, help us to keep our sights on the great treasures you have in store for us in the next life. Inspire us to share the riches of this life with the less fortunate so as to enable us to obtain the inheritance you have for your sons and daughters who rely on you for all that is of value.

Submitted by:  
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TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

**Prayer after Communion:**

May this heavenly mystery, O Lord,  
restore us in mind and body,  
that we may be coheirs in glory with Christ,  
to whose suffering we are united  
whenever we proclaim his Death.  
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

**Reflection:**

Our gifts of bread and wine are changed, by God's action, into this heavenly mystery. In this mystery – Paschal and heavenly – we are united to Christ. In this mystery – Suffering, Death, and Resurrection of Christ – is living presence within us.

Sometimes in our suffering, our “yes” or “no” does not always mean yes or no. Through the Eucharist, we receive the grace that allows us to “change our minds” and be restored in mind and body so that we can always remain united to him and, thus united to him, coheirs in glory with him.

**Prayer:**

Heavenly Father, we pray that we always long for the food that nourishes and transforms us to do what is pleasing to you and brings us to everlasting life.

Submitted by:  
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TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

**Collect:**

Almighty ever-living God,  
who in the abundance of your kindness  
surpass the merits and the desires of those who entreat you,  
pour out your mercy upon us  
to pardon what conscience dreads  
and to give what prayer does not dare to ask.  
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 is from the ancient seventh century *Gelasian Sacramentary*. It begins with an eloquent reminder that God's kindness is far beyond our merits and prayers. There is no room for any Pelagian or semi-Pelagian theology (which lead the Church to clarify original sin and divine grace).

What little fruit our efforts have been able to bring about is eclipsed by the mercy of God which is poured upon us. This mercy will also forgive what our conscience fears. We often question our worthiness before God. It is he who assures us of his goodness. And what is more, he will give us what we do not presume to ask. What good news! God, in his mercy, not only forgives our sins, but returns to us the comfort of knowing we are worthy of fellowship with him and all the good things which we may need.

The Entrance Antiphon reminds us that "there is none that can resist your will." And the Communion Antiphon prays that "the Lord is good to those who hope in him, to the soul that seeks him."

**Prayer:**

God, we trust that your love and mercy is efficacious and never fatiguing. Let us but hope in your goodness to supply all we need.

Submitted by:  
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TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

**Prayer after Communion:**

Grant us, almighty God,  
that we may be refreshed and nourished  
by the Sacrament which we have received,  
so as to be transformed into what we consume.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**Reflection:**

We call on God to reinvigorate our lives and give us the sustenance that will nourish our body, mind, and spirit. Our prayer is offered in faith, with the hope of becoming, as St. Augustine tells us, that which we have received. “The prayer was newly composed for the post-Vatican II missal. It quotes the end of Leo the Great’s Sermon 63, where he says that we pass into the Communion we take, carrying the risen Christ with us” (Paul Turner, *Pastoral Companion to the Roman Missal*, © 2010, World Library Publications, p. 148).

We bring our whole selves to the Eucharist and place our joys and burdens on the altar of sacrifice. As Jesus offers them to the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit, we enter into and become the mystery that we celebrate by the power of the Risen Lord and the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus, we are restored and fed, not for our own sakes, but rather to become the hands and feet of Christ for the sake of others. Refreshed and nourished, we are sent forth to love more profoundly and to serve more intensely.

**Prayer:**

May we who gather at the table of God’s Word and feast around the altar of sacrifice, be restored to our innocence and strengthened by the Bread of Life so that we may become the Christ for those who are broken, poor, sick, and burdened.

Submitted by:  
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TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

**Collect:**

May your grace, O Lord, we pray,  
at all times go before us and follow after  
and make us always determined  
to carry out good works.  
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 is part of the 8<sup>th</sup> century collection from Pope Hadrian I. It was used for morning and evening (see Paul Turner, *Pastoral Companion to the Roman Missal*, © 2010, World Library Publications, p. 150).

Grace. It is the Virgin whom we acknowledge to be full of grace. Oh, to be bathed in and surrounded by grace. Oh, to be led and followed by grace. Oh, to be full of grace like her.

But that is what we are: full of grace. Bathed in God at Baptism. Then clothed in Christ. And illumined by him. So that we may look like him, act like him, and be like him. We know and we believe that Baptism is less for membership and more for mission.

We are full of grace at God's own choosing. After eating and drinking the Body and Blood of Christ, we are strengthened to put our hands and feet, our heads and hearts to kingdom work. That is why we are charged at Mass end: "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life."

**Prayer:**

Gracious God, fill us with your life and grace, that we may always be your good people doing good.

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

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TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

**Prayer after Communion:**

We entreat your majesty most humbly, O Lord,  
that, as you feed us with the nourishment  
which comes from the most holy Body and Blood of your Son,  
so you may make us sharers of his divine nature.  
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

**Reflection:**

The source of the text comes from one of the daily prayers in the *Verona Sacramentary*. The prayer captures the balance of God's transcendence and immanence that we strive to express in every celebration of the Liturgy. Beginning with a humble address, we may envision God enthroned, our heads bowed down in reverence. Yet we are speaking to the one who feeds us and takes care of our every need – quite an intimate and personal relationship.

This prayer calls to mind elements of the Eucharistic Prayer where we express our faith in the transformative power of the Holy Spirit. We call on God to send God's Spirit to transform bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. And when we receive this sacred meal, we then are united in Christ, truly sharers in Christ's divine nature. Once more in this post-Communion prayer we voice this hope.

**Prayer:**

Good and gracious God, as we are refreshed and renewed at each celebration of the Eucharist by the gift of your Son's Body and Blood, guide us to a deeper realization of your presence and the awesome reality that we, the Body of Christ, celebrate each Liturgy with Christ our Head.

Submitted by  
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