

Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions [FDLC]

Mystagological Reflection on Texts of the *Roman Missal*

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

Mystagological Reflections on the Collect & Prayer after Communion for SOLEMNITIES OF THE LORD IN ORDINARY 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.

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> – 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

SOLEMNITIES OF THE LORD IN ORDINARY TIME

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
First Sunday after Pentecost THE MOST HOLY TRINITY, Solemnity	
[In the Diocese of the United States] Sunday after the Most Holy Trinity THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST (CORPUS CHRISTI), Solemnity	
Friday after the Second Sunday after Pentecost THE MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS, Solemnity	
Last Sunday in Ordinary Time OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE, Solemnity	

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First Sunday after Pentecost
THE MOST HOLY TRINITY, **Solemnity**

Collect:

God our Father, who by sending into the world
the Word of truth and the Spirit of sanctification
made known to the human race your wondrous mystery,
grant us, we pray, that in professing the true faith,
we may acknowledge the Trinity of eternal glory
and adore your Unity, powerful in majesty.
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 the *Gelasian Sacramentary* had a preface in honor of the Trinity, this feast was not added to the universal calendar until 1334 by Pope John XXII while in Avignon. The present prayer is an amplification of the prayer found in the 1962 Missal.

It begins by addressing God as Father, the only Sunday Collect which addresses God as Father, a unique understanding of the Trinity as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Son is addressed as the Word of truth and the Spirit as the Spirit of sanctification, both sent into the world by the Father to make known to the human race the wondrous mystery of the essence of God as Trinity.

There is no mention of the Son being involved in the sending of the Spirit, no *filioque* controversy, which up until our time was a source of irritation to the Orthodox. The prayer continues by declaring that in professing the true faith, that of God as a marvelous trinity of persons, we might acknowledge both the eternal glory of the Trinity and adore its powerful unity.

Prayer:

May our prayer echo the Communion Antiphon: that we may be children of God who have in our hearts the Spirit of the Son who cries out Abba, Father. May we be a community of persons, united in the grace of the loving Trinity, a community of love and unity, who know that God is our Father and the Father of all.

Submitted by:
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First Sunday after Pentecost

THE MOST HOLY TRINITY, *Solemnity*

Prayer after Communion:

May receiving this Sacrament, O Lord our God,
bring us health of body and soul,
as we confess your eternal holy Trinity and undivided Unity.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection:

This brief prayer from our Roman tradition encapsulates the essence of what it means to participate in the Eucharist: that the Body and Blood of Christ we have shared heals the sin we carry and the divisions that keep us separated from one another. Therefore, we who have been reconciled to God and to one another are sent to announce to the world that the sin and enmity that continue to divide humankind are also healed in the unifying love of God.

Like the Trinity, health of body and soul is not a static, enclosed condition meant only for one's own benefit. God's healing is not an end in itself. Rather, healing is for the glory of God. Healing reunites us into the midst of the assembly that together we might confess and proclaim God's reconciling love for all and draw others into this union with God. That is what we witness in the undivided Unity of the Trinity – not a mathematical conundrum but an ever-giving, self-sacrificing offer of love for the Other.

If we listen carefully, these prayers after Communion in myriad ways remind us of this essential Christian mission. We who have been drawn into the healing love of the Trinity are sent to be that love for others that they too might be one with us in the eternal life of God.

Prayer:

Healer of body and soul, may we who have been reconciled by divine Love draw others by our word and deed into your life-giving Unity so that all may be eternally one in you. Amen.

Submitted by:
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[In the Diocese of the United States]

Sunday after the Most Holy Trinity

THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST (CORPUS CHRISTI), **Solemnity**

Collect:

O God, who in this wonderful Sacrament
have left us a memorial of your Passion,
grant us, we pray,
so to revere the sacred mysteries of your Body and Blood
that we may always experience in ourselves
the fruits of your redemption.
Who live and reign with God the Father
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Reflection:

Everything we are and believe as Christ's followers is defined by Eucharist. It is the dynamic action of God's grace and our gratitude that transforms us into the one Body that is Christ. This lovely prayer reminds us that we have gathered to remember and to revere, to experience the joy of Communion – each of us consuming Christ and becoming one with him.

And how are we to prepare ourselves for this great feast of becoming? St. Augustine declared that "Christ is the bread, awaiting hunger." He is telling us Christ is always there for us in the bread, a constant source of nourishment and healing. Our part is to show up hungry. We bring to the table all that is keeping us separate and divided – our pride, anger, fear, impatience. We bring whatever is broken in us, whatever pulls us away or down. We bring it eagerly and reverently, a gift for the table, hungry for what awaits us there. And we leave the table as "satisfied" as the crowds who gathered to hear Jesus speak, carrying Christ to the waiting world where God's abundant love will bear fruit.

Prayer:

Loving God, as we approach the table of your love for us, let us remember to bring the burdens of our lives, there to be transformed by the mysteries of your Body and Blood into the grace that redeems both us and the world.

Submitted by:
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[In the Diocese of the United States]

Sunday after the Most Holy Trinity

THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST (CORPUS CHRISTI), Solemnity

Prayer after Communion:

Grant, O Lord, we pray,
that we may delight for all eternity
in that share in your divine life,
which is foreshadowed in the present age
by our reception of your precious Body and Blood.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.

Reflection:

Those who pray this prayer have shared in the Body and Blood of the Lord at Communion from the Table of the Eucharist and have a foretaste of the heavenly banquet. Those praying are paying attention to the Holy Presence encountered in the entire Communion procession. It is the assembly walking together in *life-procession* seeking to satisfy the hungers which cannot be satisfied in any other way. There is more here than meets the eye!

Having shared in Communion, we acknowledge that our hungers are satisfied not only as individuals but as a community. The *divine life foreshadowed in the present age* is available to us now through the conscious act of surrender, reception, and openness to receive. In that act, we become *one with* the One whom we receive. We practice this communal act week after week until that day when, at the last, we will take this Body and Blood, this *divine life*, for the final time, as *viaticum*, that is, *food for the journey*.

Prayer:

O God,
we hunger for so much in this world that is not you.
Order our desires to hunger for you
that our delight and contentment
may be complete with you, this side of heaven,
and, at the last, before your holy face. Amen.

Submitted by:
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Friday after the Second Sunday after Pentecost
THE MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS, **Solemnity**

**A
Collect:**

Grant, we pray, almighty God,
that we, who glory in the Heart of your beloved Son
and recall the wonders of his love for us,
may be made worthy to receive
an overflowing measure of grace
from that fount of heavenly gifts.
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:

What does it mean to “glory in” a bodily organ, even one belonging to Christ? We may confidently quell any reservations our modern minds might harbor about the imagery of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, for the physical heart of Jesus is not, in a literal sense, the object of our devotion this day. Our “glory in the Heart” of Jesus here is what theologian Karl Rahner called a primordial image: one which represents the fundamental core of the person of Jesus Christ. And that core is pure love, for love is the heart of the mystery of our faith.

As we begin this celebration, as we begin to “recall the wonders” of the radical love of Christ Jesus, this Collect A directs us to pray that we be made worthy to receive that abundance of grace which flows freely from the fount of Christ’s love for us. We ask for “an overflowing measure” so that we may, in imitation of Christ, gratuitously bestow this self-sacrificial love upon the world.

Prayer:

Wash us in the river of grace, Lord, which flows from the Heart of your Son Jesus. Help us manifest his wondrous love, most of all in places where hatred holds sway. In us, let your love conquer all.

Submitted by:
Emily Strand
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Friday after the Second Sunday after Pentecost
THE MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS, Solemnity

Or B:

Collect:

O God, who in the Heart of your Son,
wounded by our sins,
bestow on us in mercy
the boundless treasures of your love,
grant, we pray,
that, in paying him the homage of our devotion,
we may also offer worthy reparation.
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 older of the two Collects for the Sacred Heart of Jesus gives significant attention to our human sinfulness, yet even more, to the mercy of God as expressed in the love of Christ. The very Heart that has been wounded by our sinfulness becomes the fount of God's "boundless treasures" of love for us. Truly, as the hymn goes, there is a wideness in God's mercy which, to our limited imaginations, only a vast ocean can begin to signify.

God's mercy is highlighted in the second part of the prayer as well. For how could we ever offer "worthy reparation" for our sins against Christ? Who could forget what he endured in his Passion and Death? That we refuse to forget – that we find glory in the Cross and make our earnest devotion to the Heart which we ourselves have wounded – is attributable not to our piety or goodness, but to those "boundless treasures" of grace which flow from the person of Christ.

It is this person, this foundational core of love which lies at the heart of Christ and his Paschal Mystery, whom we celebrate today. Because of God's mercy, we can make "worthy reparation": when the "homage of our devotion" leads us to bring Christ's radical love to the world. In this work, our celebration is complete.

Prayer:

God of mercy, you forgive our failings like a mother whose unchangeable love keeps her ever-patient with her children. Through our devotion to the Sacred Heart, perfect in us the love which flows from your Son, and give us courage to share it with our needy world.

Submitted by:
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Friday after the Second Sunday after Pentecost
THE MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS, **Solemnity**

Prayer after Communion:

May this sacrament of charity, O Lord,
make us fervent with the fire of holy love,
so that, drawn always to your Son,
we may learn to see him in our neighbor.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection:

It is not some amorphous idea, this love of which we speak when we celebrate the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It is, as Pope Benedict XVI has called it, love in its most radical form. It is a love which seeks to burn up within us all that is concerned with selfish desires. It is a love which constantly seeks its source, drawing us to the Christ, in whose Paschal Mystery this “holy love” finds its ultimate expression.

And it is a love which, in constantly seeking its source, accordingly, draws us to one another. The “sacrament of charity” (or, as one might translate it, the sacrament of friendship) extends to us not only God’s friendship, but God’s way of friendship. The Eucharist, that memorial of the love which lies at the heart of the Paschal Mystery, gives us a share in the Sacred Heart of Jesus. For didn’t God promise to replace our stony hearts with hearts of flesh (Ezekial 36:26)? Our new hearts burn within us, opening our eyes to recognize Christ in bread and wine, and in the stranger with whom we share this holy meal.

Prayer:

God of friendship, through this meal, awaken within us the fire of your holy love. Burn away selfishness, arrogance, and petty anger – and open our eyes to see your face and find your grace in those around us.

Submitted by:
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Last Sunday in Ordinary Time

OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE, **Solemnity**

Collect:

Almighty, ever-living God,
whose will is to restore all things
in your beloved Son, the King of the universe,
grant, we pray,
that the whole creation, set free from slavery,
may render your majesty service
and ceaselessly proclaim your praise.
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:

On the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, we are reminded through the Collect that God desires to restore the whole world to its original form through Jesus Christ. We pray that all of creation be restored, set free from slavery, so that we might ceaselessly give praise to God.

Slavery comes in many forms: slavery to possessions, slavery to sin, slavery to others, slavery to work, slavery to our self-interests. When we serve Christ our King, however, we are freed from slavery to the things of this world and our very lives become a sacrifice of praise to God. In other words, when we dedicate our lives to caring for creation, assisting those in need, seeking freedom for those bound by unjust systems, loving the least of those among us, we give unceasing praise to God.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, you are Christ, our Savior and King. Embolden us to leave behind those things that enslave us and free us to serve you alone.

Submitted by:
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Last Sunday in Ordinary Time

OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE, **Solemnity**

Prayer after Communion:

Having received the food of immortality,
we ask, O Lord,
that, glorying in obedience
to the commands of Christ, the King of the universe,
we may live with him eternally in his heavenly Kingdom.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Reflection:

When we pray this prayer, there are not many more words remaining in this liturgical year. We are in the last week. We begin again; we start anew on the eighth day – when we return for one more Eucharist, one more Mass – at the start of Advent.

But his end and this beginning sing the same tune, keep the same focus, and glory in the same Ruler of all. The food we consume this Sunday and every Sunday, the Body and Blood of Christ the Lord which we drink and eat, is done in obedience, glorious obedience. It is the Lord who says: Eat...drink...do this...remember me! This Sunday. Next Sunday. Every Sunday. This liturgical year. The one that begins next week. This blessed food of immortality strengthens us for one more week to sing the same tune, keep the same focus, and stay on the heavenly Kingdom path to Christ the Lord.

Prayer:

Help us, O God, be your obedient ones.
Fill us to the brim, sate us with immortal food
of the holy bread and blessed wine
of your dead and risen Son's Body and Blood.
Let us never tire of the end of liturgical years
until we see you face to face in the heavenly Kingdom.

Submitted by:
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