

Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions [FDLC]

Mystagogical Reflection on Texts of the *Roman Missal*

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# Mystagogical Reflections on the Collect & Prayer after Communion for ORDINARY TIME – 29-34

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 Mystagogical 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

### 29-34

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-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	
THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	
THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	
THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	
THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	
THIRTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	

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TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

**Collect:**

Almighty ever-living God,  
grant that we may always conform our will to yours  
and serve your majesty in sincerity of 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:**

In the *Gelasian Sacramentary* from the 7<sup>th</sup> century, this prayer was used on a Sunday late in Easter Time. It was also a common Collect and a Prayer after Communion (see Paul Turner, *Pastoral Companion to the Roman Missal*, © 2010, World Library Publications, p. 152).

What is the will of God for me? This is a frequent question. In living our lives, we are never far from seeking and conforming our will to his. Wherever we are led to serve, we do so because of the call we have received and answered. This call by God brings us to witness to his life as we live out our own.

Following God's will is the beginning of our service. It can only be fulfilled when we are no longer the center of attention. When we look beyond the person doing the service to the one who generates the impulse for that service, then the result becomes a reflection of God's will. And for the one who is ministering with sincerity of heart, the service takes on a completely new image reflecting God's generous and majestic heart.

**Prayer:**

O God, you are the energy in our lives of service. As we minister to others and announce through our work your will for us, keep us centered, as you did for your early followers, on the objective of our service – being your hands, feet, and face in our world today.

Submitted by:

Sister Sharon Marie Stola, OSB, D.Min.

Director of the Office of Divine Worship and the Catechumenate

Diocese of Joliet-in-Illinois

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TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

**Prayer after Communion:**

Grant, O Lord, we pray,  
that, benefiting from participation in heavenly things,  
we may be helped by what you give in this present age  
and prepared for the gifts that are eternal.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**Reflection:**

Here is an old prayer; at least part of it is old. It is based on one found in the *Verona Sacramentary* of the 6<sup>th</sup> century for an ordination of a Bishop (see Paul Turner, *Pastoral Companion to the Roman Missal*, © 2010, World Library Publications, p. 152).

Heavenly things are not far off. We participate in them this day, not only here in this sacred place, this parish church, but in all the places in the world where we spend the rest of our week. It is the same Christ who is wholly present and active here, there, and everywhere.

Heavenly things are not far off. Make a list. Count the benefits. And as good as all this is in the present age – and it is very good, God says – it pales in the brilliance of gifts that are eternal. Make a new list. Count those benefits.

We live actively in this present age and love it well we also keep one eye on Heaven and long for that gift, that place, That Day.

**Prayer:**

O God of earth and Heaven, because of this Communion  
help us stay focused on that one day of eternal life with you  
as we serve the men and women of this age this day.

Submitted by:  
Eliot Kapitan  
Director for Worship and the Catechumenate  
Diocese of Springfield in Illinois

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THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

**Collect:**

Almighty ever-living God,  
increase our faith, hope and charity,  
and make us love what you command,  
so that we may merit what you promise.  
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 comes from the *Verona Sacramentary* of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. It asks for an increase of virtue, specifically the three theological virtues that St. Paul addresses in the letters to the Corinthians and Thessalonians.

By asking for an increase of faith, hope, and charity we acknowledge that we are not perfect, that we still have room to grow. We associate ourselves with the commands to love God and to love neighbor (Matthew 22:34-40, Year A Gospel), with the blind man's desire to see (Mark 10:46-52, Year B), and with the humble tax collector acknowledging that he is a sinner, rather than with the Pharisee bragging about how perfect he is (Luke 18:9-14, Year C).

We also ask to make us love God's commands. This request emphasizes again our desire to be humble. We seek not so much to follow our own impulses and desires but to be docile and to follow the will of the Lord so that we may attain the promise of the kingdom.

**Prayer:**

Almighty God, all goodness comes from you. Strengthen our faith to accept your love so that we may carry out your will and come to share the life you promise.

Submitted by:  
Daniel McAfee  
Director, Office for Christian Worship  
Archdiocese of Detroit

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THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

**Prayer after Communion**

May your Sacraments, O Lord, we pray,  
perfect in us what lies within them,  
that what we now celebrate in signs  
we may one day possess in truth.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**Reflection:**

How beautifully this prayer from the *Gelasian Sacramentary* summarizes our understanding of symbol and Sacrament. Having just shared in the Body and Blood of Christ, we pray that we become perfectly transformed into what we have received. We acknowledge that what we celebrate in the Eucharist is still but a glimmer of what is to come, a reality of living in the “here but not yet”, an advent-time between the Resurrection of Christ and his coming again.

What lies within the Sacraments we share? What is it that we hope to possess fully in truth? Surely these are grace, the presence of God, the fullness of life and joy. Still, words cannot completely express our desire. So for now, we celebrate with a piece of bread, a sip of wine, and a song of praise on our lips. With eyes of faith, we call this the supper of the Lamb and the wedding feast of Christ, in the sure hope of possessing what we already have.

**Prayer:**

Help us, Lord, to see beyond the tangible things we need to recall your presence  
and the limited way we understand the limitless joy you have prepared for us,  
that we may always trust in your promise that, even now, is fulfilled for those who believe.

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

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THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

**Collect:**

Almighty and merciful God,  
by whose gift your faithful offer you  
right and praiseworthy service,  
grant, we pray,  
that we may hasten without stumbling  
to receive the things you have promised.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

**Reflection:**

This prayer is first found in the *Verona Sacramentary* from the 6<sup>th</sup> century. The gift, *munere*, that is offered here is nothing less than the gift of God first given to us. *Munere* also means duty, function, and service. To offer the Eucharist is all those things. It is a duty: we do this in memory of Christ. It is a function or action: we offer bread and wine. And it is a service: we offer the Eucharist in order that we might be transformed and sent to be Church in the world. Finally, because it is nothing less than the gift of God, our service can be right and praiseworthy. The Latin verb here is *serviatur*, an impersonal passive, which helps remind us that the emphasis is not on what we do but on what God does. It is his saving action.

Then we pray that we may hasten, yes run, without stumbling, to the promises of God. These promises are not so much things, as our translation states, but the very promises of life and grace from Jesus Christ, the gift we offer. Our prayer reminds us of the eschatological tension that we know neither the day nor the hour. Therefore we must pray and offer as a people prepared.

**Prayer:**

May what we offer become in us the very life of Jesus Christ. Let us not only become him whom we have received but also offer what he has first given to us: the gifts of bread and wine which will become our heavenly food.

Submitted by:  
Rev. Leon Strieder, SLD  
St. Mary's Seminary, Houston, Texas  
Diocese of Austin

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THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

### Prayer after Communion

May the working of your power, O Lord,  
increase in us, we pray,  
so that, renewed by these heavenly Sacraments,  
we may be prepared by your gift  
for receiving what they promise.  
Through Christ our Lord.

### Reflection:

Like many of the prayers in the *Roman Missal*, this prayer has its roots in the *Gelasian Sacramentary*. In that ancient Sacramentary, it was included in the only Mass that has a complete text of the Roman Canon.

The prayer asks that the Lord's power may be operative in us. When we contemplate the works of the Lord, how many times do we think in terms of power? When we think of power, we most often think in terms of the material world. We think of politicians, of people with money, or even of terrorists. The powers of the world control and motivate us in subtle and overt ways every day. This prayer reminds us that, having received the heavenly Sacraments, we are imbued with a power that goes beyond the vicissitudes of this physical world.

The power of God's grace, given to us through these Sacraments, nourishes and strengthens us to go forth from this assembly bringing God's promise to all that we meet.

### Prayer:

Loving God, may the power of your love give us new hope, so that we may continue your saving work in this world. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Submitted by:  
Daniel McAfee  
Director, Office for Christian Worship  
Archdiocese of Detroit

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THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

**Collect:**

Almighty and merciful God,  
graciously keep from us all adversity,  
so that, unhindered in mind and body alike,  
we may pursue in freedom of heart  
the things that are yours.  
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 begins by recalling two lasting attributes of God. He is almighty. He is merciful. With these attributes he can use divine power to free us from pain, fear, ill, and even lasting death. What a gift this is for us when we often encounter unpleasant situations that diminish our lives. Through the love of the “God of the Living” (Luke 20:38) we can be free from the pains and sufferings that we experience in this life.

While we are coming to the end of Ordinary Time, the truth learned through the Death and Resurrection remains with us throughout all of our days. In his Death, he destroyed adversity. In his Resurrection, he restored life to all. Therefore, we have the freedom to hope, to have faith, and to live knowing the love that God has for us. We do not fear death or destruction. This is the foundation of our relationship with the one true God.

**Prayer:**

Lord, increase our faith so that we may trust in your mercy and love.

Submitted by:  
Karen L. Podd  
Buffalo Diocesan Liturgical Commission  
Diocese of Buffalo

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THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

**Prayer after Communion**

Nourished by this sacred gift, O Lord,  
we give you thanks and beseech your mercy,  
that, by the pouring forth of your Spirit,  
the grace of integrity may endure  
in those your heavenly power has entered.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**Reflection:**

We have now completed our meditation on the marvelous gift that we are privileged to receive – the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. In this celebration of the Eucharist, we have received an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that will enable us to be the person of Christ to all those we encounter during the coming week.

We are strengthened and supported by the graces that fill us through the mercy shown to each of us by our gracious God and the power he bestows upon us. Can we be less than the hands, feet, and face of Christ throughout the days ahead?

**Prayer:**

O God of mercy and love, you have been our support and encouragement as we live lives of service through the power of the Holy Spirit. As we celebrate your gift, may we never forget that we need to be a gift to others, showing forth in word and deed the Lord Jesus Christ, your greatest gift to the world. We honor you with our praise and thanksgiving in the name of Christ our Lord. Amen.

Submitted by:

Sister Sharon Marie Stola, OSB, D.Min.

Director of the Office of Divine Worship and the Catechumenate

Diocese of Joliet-in-Illinois

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THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

**Collect:**

Grant us, we pray, O Lord our God,  
the constant gladness of being devoted to you,  
for it is full and lasting happiness  
to serve with constancy  
the author of all that is good.  
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 Collect for this penultimate (second-last) Sunday in Ordinary Time may well have roots in the *Verona Sacramentary* of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. It speaks of the unique joy that we believe comes from nothing more than faithful discipleship.

In a world in which the promise of every happiness can be found around the next corner, and joy to the Nth degree can be had through a variety of superficial means, this Collect is a reminder that for those of us who follow Christ, true happiness – *full* and *lasting* happiness (that is, “joy”) – comes from only one source: the Lord our God.

This opening prayer draws us to and keeps us tethered to the stance of, the virtue of, constancy – a rarity in our society and our culture. *Canstare*, from the Latin, *to stand firm*. We are called to be like Christ: unwavering before the Lord, knowing that such resolve, such deliberateness, such single-heartedness first and foremost comes from him. And so we ask for just that – and nothing more. And we believe – we know – that such unwavering service can result in only one thing: unceasing gladness, “full and lasting happiness,” joy beyond our imaginations. It is the reward promised to good and faithful servants.

**Prayer:**

O Author of all that is good, strengthen my resolve and make firm my intent to serve you and you alone in this life. Like your Son, may I be single-hearted in my devotion to you, and so be brought to see that in this and this alone will I find my joy.

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

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THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

**Prayer after Communion:**

We have partaken of the gifts of this sacred mystery,  
humbly imploring, O Lord,  
that what your Son commanded us to do  
in memory of him  
may bring us growth in charity.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**Reflection:**

This Sunday's unassuming nature, combined with its proximity to a major point of transition (the end of one liturgical year and the beginning of another), gives it a slightly awkward character. We might compare it to the pre-holiday atmosphere of Christmas Eve or New Year's Eve – it carries a sense of imminent bustle and festivity but also a somewhat comforting feeling that we still have a little more time to make all the necessary preparations.

Yet we must guard against slipping into a spiritual complacency, for we know neither the day nor the hour when we shall encounter Christ the King. The only sure approach is to hold fast to what the Son "commanded us to do" while striving to "serve with constancy" as today's Collect exhorts.

It is interesting to note that this same Prayer after Communion is also often used during Easter Time. This helps remind us that Ordinary Time should not be viewed as somehow disjointed from the high points of the liturgical year or as an acceptable time to coast along while waiting for a preparatory or penitential season to kick our spiritual lives into another gear. Every Sunday celebration of the Eucharist shares in the glory of the Resurrection and therefore provides an opportunity and exhortation to pursue the sanctifying "growth in charity" that our Lord desires for us.

**Prayer:**

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the graces you have bestowed upon us during this waning liturgical year. We ask that you will keep our sights ever fixed on your eternal Son, so that we will be found ready to meet him at all times. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Submitted by:  
Brian MacMichael  
Director of the Office of Worship  
Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend

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THIRTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

**Collect:**

Stir up the will of your faithful, we pray, O Lord,  
that, striving more eagerly  
to bring your divine work to fruitful completion,  
they may receive in greater measure  
the healing remedies your kindness bestows.  
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, which we pray only occasionally, begins with a strong plea to God: “Stir up the will of your faithful...” We call upon God to move us, to put a “fire in our bellies” that we might eagerly bring God’s divine work to completion.

At the end of the liturgical year, we are mindful of the second coming of Christ and our need to complete the work Christ began. Feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, giving shelter to the homeless, freeing the prisoner, seeking peace over war and forgiveness over vengeance are all ways that we bring to fruitful completion the work begun in Christ.

The prayer also asks God that we might receive “the healing remedies” of God’s kindness. Whenever we do the work of the Gospel, we receive ten-fold the joy and hope that we give to others. Pope Francis is a model of one whose heart has been stirred to do the work of Christ. He reminds us time and again that this work brings joy to the human heart and will heal us of all our ills. May our hearts be stirred.

**Prayer:**

Lord, stir our complacent and perhaps sluggish hearts that we might bring your gospel of love to all the world. Remind us that our joy rests in serving you alone.

Submitted by:  
Karen Kane  
Director of the Worship Office  
Archdiocese of Cincinnati

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THIRTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

**Prayer after Communion:**

We pray, almighty God,  
that those to whom you give the joy  
of participating in divine mysteries  
may never be parted from you.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**Reflection:**

In this prayer, we petition that the Lord, who connects us to himself, will preserve that union without fail and help us to do whatever we need to do to maintain that link. He will never fail us in what he needs to do to establish and preserve that unity that is founded on our Baptism and renewed with the reception of the Holy Eucharist.

**Prayer:**

Gracious God, help us to see all that you do to keep us in our relationship with you and to form our lives according to your precepts. Let us rely on your love with assurance of faith that we may value always our sharing in the divine mysteries which you reveal to us. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Submitted by:  
Rev. Louis Dorn  
Secretary, Diocesan Liturgical Commission  
Diocese of Jefferson City

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