

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: 31-CTK Sundays in Ordinary Time 2016

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 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> – click the Mystagogical Reflections button.

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Steve Erspamer.  
ICXC + NIKA  
*Jesus Christ + Savior.*  
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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

### 31-Christ the King

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>	<b>Page</b>
THIRTIETH-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	October 30, 2016	04-05
ALL SAINTS, Solemnity	November 01, 2016	06-07
THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	November 06, 2016	08-09
THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	November 13, 2016	10-11
Last Sunday in Ordinary Time OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE, Solemnity	November 20, 2016	12-13



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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:  
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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  
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November 1

ALL SAINTS, **Solemnity**

**Collect:**

Almighty ever-living God,  
by whose gift we venerate in one celebration  
the merits of all the Saints,  
bestow on us, we pray,  
through the prayers of so many intercessors,  
an abundance of the reconciliation with you  
for which we earnestly long.  
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 All Saints has a long-honored place in the Mass and was included in the Missal prior to the Second Vatican Council. Although similar in content to the previous missal, the descriptive phrases have been expanded in this new translation of the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*.

The imagery in this prayer for the celebration of All Saints draws on John's heavenly vision of a great multitude in white robes and holding palm branches found in the seventh chapter of Revelation. It expresses our faith in the interaction between the Church Triumphant, the heavenly kingdom, and the Church Militant, the earthly kingdom. Not only is it reassuring to us that there are a great number of saints in heaven but the fact that they are advocating for our spiritual welfare is extraordinary.

On this day we give thanks for the witness of faith that all the saints throughout the ages have given to us. It gives us great joy to celebrate this feast in the awareness that the multitude of saints are interceding for us as we yearn for union with God.

**Prayer:**

Lord God, by your grace, the saints have followed in your path of life. Hear our pleas for your mercy, O Lord, and help us to attune our lives to these models of faith lived in your goodness.

Submitted by:  
Judy Bullock, EdD  
Director of Worship  
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November 1

ALL SAINTS, **Solemnity**

**Prayer after Communion:**

As we adore you, O God, who alone are holy  
and wonderful in all your Saints,  
we implore your grace,  
so that, coming to perfect holiness in the fullness of your love,  
we may pass from this pilgrim table  
to the banquet of our heavenly homeland.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**Reflection:**

This Prayer after Communion has its origins in the Paris Missal and was included in the post Vatican II *Roman Missal*. On this great feast we honor God's holiness shining through in these holy men and women as we celebrate the communion of all the Saints.

The vivid imagery in this text describes life's journey as a movement from one table, the table of the Lord where we celebrate the Eucharist, to the banquet table in our "heavenly homeland" for which we long. The use of the term "pilgrim table" where life's journey begins, not only addresses the transience of life on earth, but even calls to mind the secular thanksgiving feast of gratitude and unity we celebrate at this time of year.

In this prayer we make a plea for God's grace to transform us, sanctifying us so that we may make that passage from "pilgrim table" to the eternal banquet enjoyed by all the Saints.

**Prayer:**

Gracious God, fill us with your grace that we may know your ways and follow you on the path to holiness. Given this heavenly food for our journey, sanctify us so that we may come to enjoy your heavenly banquet. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Submitted by:  
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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  
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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.

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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:  
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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:  
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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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