

**FEDERATION OF DIOCESAN LITURGICAL COMMISSIONS [FDLC]**  
**MYSTAGOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE COLLECTS**  
**OF THE *ROMAN MISSAL***



**“Collect”ing Our Thoughts – Advent**

Artwork: Alessandro Allori, *The Preaching of Saint John the Baptist* (1601-03)

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FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT  
December 2, 2012

COLLECT

**Grant your faithful, we pray, almighty God,  
the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ  
with righteous deeds at his coming,  
so that, gathered at his right hand,  
they may be worthy to possess the heavenly Kingdom.  
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 (Opening Prayer) for this First Sunday of Advent is an ancient prayer that first appeared in the *Gelasian Sacramentary* of the eighth century. It was not in the Roman Missal of 1962, but was restored to use after the Second Vatican Council.

This prayer captures the imagination for it provides us with an image of the People of God running toward Christ, doing so by our good works, in hope of being gathered at his right hand. We pray for resolve and we pray that we might one day “be worthy to possess the heavenly Kingdom.”

During this Advent Season, we long for the second coming of Christ and we long for the fullness of redemption that Christ offers us by his dying and rising. Yet, our world has not been completely redeemed, and with this knowledge we call upon God to strengthen us, to give us the desire to make straight the path of our lives by acts of charity and good works.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, strengthen my resolve to run toward you and help me to live a life of charity so that I may meet you every day in the faces of others.



Submitted by:  
Karen Kane  
Director of Worship  
Archdiocese of Cincinnati

Artwork: Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Christ in Heaven with Four Saints and a Donor* (c 1492)

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THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY  
PATRONAL FEASTDAY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, Solemnity  
Saturday, December 8, 2012

COLLECT

**O God, who by the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin prepared a worthy dwelling for your Son, grant, we pray, that, as you preserved her from every stain by virtue of the Death of your Son, which you foresaw, so, through her intercession, we, too, may be cleansed and admitted to your presence. 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 first see the celebration of the Feast of the Conception of the Most Holy and All Pure Mother of God in the fifth century on December 9 by Eastern Christians in Syria. By the eighth century the Feast was celebrated in the Western Church on December 8. On May 13, 1846 the United States Bishops unanimously chose the Blessed Virgin Mary, conceived without sin, as Patroness of our country.

The celebration of this Solemnity during Advent gives us an amazing insight into Mary's role, from the time of her conception, in the salvation of humankind as made visible in her son. This prayer asks that as we progress in living the Gospel message of her son, we look for help from Mary's intercession to being admitted to the joys of eternal life and living in God's presence and be free from sin.

Advent recalls for us these images of the presence of God in our world, through the 'yes' of Mary, now and in the time to come. As we ask God, through Mary's intercession, to guide us in the way that will lead us to heaven, let us also remember the needs of our country and seek Mary's intercession for them.

PRAYER

God, fill me with a fervent desire to accept your call to holiness as Mary did, so that I may be a reflection of you to all whom I meet this day.

Submitted by:  
Sister Sharon Marie Stola, OSB  
Director of the Office of Divine Worship and the Catechumenate  
Diocese of Joliet-in-Illinois

Artwork: El Greco, *The Virgin of the Immaculate Conception* (1608-13)



SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT  
December 9, 2012

COLLECT

**Almighty and merciful God,  
may no earthly undertaking hinder  
those  
who set out in haste to meet your Son,  
but may our learning of heavenly  
wisdom  
gain us admittance to his company.  
Who lives and reigns with you in the  
unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.**



REFLECTION

This is the season to be watchful and alert as we “make haste” to meet the Son of God. As John preached at the River Jordan, we must prepare the way. This requires that we avoid distraction and stay on course. How hard that is to do in a secular season that fills our desire with temptations of worldly gifts. As the prayer after Communion this day suggests, we must “judge wisely things on earth” and “hold firm to the things of heaven.” We need to focus on what lies ahead; seeking “heavenly wisdom,” and running toward the goal of the heavenly dwelling.

In his instruction on prayer, Jesus taught his disciples to pray, “thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” During this season, if we can remain focused on the goals of the kingdom, perhaps our secular lives can be transformed. Paul wrote to the Philippians, “I continue my pursuit toward the goal, the prize of God’s upward calling, in Jesus Christ.” If we can transform this earthly kingdom to a place that prepares the way of the Lord, we will be prepared for the prize of meeting Christ in the heavenly kingdom.

PRAYER

Lord, we seek the prize of your heavenly calling. We pray that you will help us to transcend the distractions and temptations that keep us from being focused on the ways of your kingdom. Strengthen us and enlighten our minds in your ways so that we may gain our place in your eternal kingdom.

Submitted by:  
Karen Podd  
Diocese of Buffalo

Artwork: Domenico Ghirlandio, *Preaching of St John the Baptist* (1486-90)

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OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE  
PATRONAL FEASTDAY OF THE AMERICAS, Feast [USA]  
Wednesday, December 12, 2012

COLLECT

**O God, Father of mercies,  
who placed your people under the singular protection  
of your Son's most holy Mother,  
grant that all who invoke the Blessed Virgin of Guadalupe,  
may seek with ever more lively faith  
the progress of peoples in the ways of justice and of peace.  
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 1969 reform of the general liturgical calendar, December 12 was the Optional Memorial of St. Jane Frances de Chantal. In 1971 the Congregation for Divine Worship confirmed the addition of the Memorial of Our Lady of Guadalupe on the same day for the United States. Our Lady of Guadalupe was raised to a Feast in 1987 for the United States. In 2008, in the supplement for the *Missale Romanum*, editio typica tertia, the orations for this feast were added to the general Roman calendar and thus into our English missal and Jane Frances de Chantal was moved to August 12.

The prayer emphasizes the protection of Mary for the People of God and requests that all who invoke her may seek with greater faith the progress of peoples in the ways of justice and peace. The present Mexican Missal speaks more appropriately of our country, “nuestra patria”.

God is asking us to trust that he has put the Americas under the singular protection of his Son's Mother and we are to grow in faith and work for justice and peace. We cannot be Church without a true sense of being a particular people in a particular locale. Likewise God's plan demands that we work for his justice so all people may live in the dignity of the children of God.

PRAYER

May we take Mary's Magnificat more seriously, working for those disenfranchised in our midst. For truly the Lord has cast down the mighty and has lifted up the lowly.

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



Image: photograph of *Our Lady of Guadalupe*

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT  
December 16, 2012

COLLECT

**O God, who see how your people  
faithfully await the feast of the Lord's  
Nativity,  
enable us, we pray,  
to attain the joys of so great a salvation  
and to celebrate them always  
with solemn worship and glad rejoicing.  
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 in a fifth-sixth century collection of prayers. Thought lost, the collection was rediscovered in the nineteenth century. This prayer was restored to the missal in the work of Vatican Council II. It recalls our waiting for a birthday celebration that looks beyond to the Three Days of Passion, Death, and Resurrection.

We are still waiting on this Third Sunday. But for what? This prayer reminds us that we are not awaiting the birth of Christ. That has already happened. We are, however, awaiting the coming feast day – the annual celebration that once again recalls the impact of Jesus Christ, no longer a babe, who is our great salvation.

With every baby, we see and hope for great things to come. In waiting for the feast day of this One, who is God-with-us, we look to the salvation already won for us. This birth leads to Passion and Death. And to new life. So too for us: birth to death; then death to new life.

PRAYER

You are no longer a babe, O Lord, but our risen Savior. Help shape our lives and deaths to be like yours, that one day we may share the lasting joy of new life with you for ever.

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

Artwork: James Tissot, *Saint John the Baptist and the Pharisees* (1886-1894)

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FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT  
December 23, 2012

COLLECT

**Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord,  
your grace into our hearts,  
that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ your Son  
was made known by the message of an Angel,  
may by his Passion and Cross  
be brought to the glory of his Resurrection.  
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.**

REFLECTION

As we approach the final days of Advent we are faced with the images of Christ's birth, Passion, Death, and Resurrection. The Church is placing before us the message that Christ's Incarnation was only part of God's design for the redemption of humankind. The Church is placing before us that there was much more to the story of Christ's birth.

This prayer asks that God would pour forth his grace into our hearts. Because of this grace we may know that the message of the Angel announcing the birth of Christ would signify to us that we are brought to the glory of Christ's Resurrection only by living in the shadow of his Passion and Cross. We may want to see the child in the manger. However, this prayer reminds us that the manger always includes the Cross.

Let us use these final days of Advent to reflect on Christ's life beyond his birth to making the connection to the completion of his path to the Cross and the glory of his Resurrection.

PRAYER

God of life, as you pour your grace into my heart, open it to receive the message of the birth of Christ without forgetting his Passion, Death, and Resurrection.



Submitted by:  
Sister Sharon Marie Stola, OSB  
Director of the Office of Divine Worship and Catechumenate  
Diocese of Joliet-in-Illinois

Artwork: Giotto di Bondone, *Scenes from the Life of the Virgin: Visitation* (1306)

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