

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



“Collect”ing Our Thoughts – 12th-21st Sundays in Ordinary Time

Artwork: Giotto di Bondone, *Last Judgment* (detail) (1306)

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TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

June 23, 2013

COLLECT

**Grant, O Lord,
that we may always revere and love your holy name,
for you never deprive of your guidance
those you set firm on the foundation of your love.
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 for the Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time comes from the eighth century Gelasian Sacramentary. Like most ancient Collects it is both brief and profound.

The prayer begins with a request that we may always revere and love the holy name of the Lord. The word translated from the Latin text as “revere” is “fear”. The Latin joins the inseparable twins of fear and love. Moderns tend to be uncomfortable with the word fear because we tend to equate it with terror. But the fear of the Lord is more related to our fascination with the power and presence of the divinity to which we are inexorably drawn. Fear of the Lord, our attraction to the Lord, leads to love of the Lord.

This foundation of his love gives us the assurance that, as his children, he will always be with us to pilot us through the complexities of life.

PRAYER

Loving God, we long to see you in your holy place. Grant us the confidence to follow in your footsteps and to do your work and your will.

Submitted by:

Daniel McAfee
Director of Worship
Archdiocese of Detroit

Artwork: James Tissot, *The Exhortation to the Apostles* (1886-1894)

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THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

June 30, 2013

COLLECT

**O God, who through the grace of adoption
chose us to be children of light,
grant, we pray,
that we may not be wrapped in the darkness of error
but always be seen to stand in the bright light of truth.
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 oft recalled Scripture passage, “God is light; in him there is no darkness...” (1 Jn 1:5-7) may have inspired this tenth or eleventh century Collect, which was added to the *Roman Missal* after the Second Vatican Council.

There is a certain Easter Vigil quality to this Collect, as we pray not to be wrapped in darkness, but rather to stand in the light of truth. To be wrapped in darkness of error is to reject God’s grace and goodness. To walk in the light means to live by the grace of God, according to his will for us, by loving our neighbor as Christ first loved us.

During these summer days when daylight lasts longer, perhaps we can ponder the ways that we walk in the light of Christ, the ways that we love the poor and vulnerable, the ways we bring the love of Christ to a world darkened by sin and corruption.

PRAYER

God of goodness and truth, teach us to live as children of the light. Give us the grace and courage to stand in the bright light of your truth in the midst of a world so very much in need of your grace and presence.

Submitted by:

Karen Kane
Director of Worship
Archdiocese of Cincinnati



Artwork: Jacob van Campen, *The Last Judgment* (17th century)

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FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

July 7, 2013

COLLECT

**O God, who in the abasement of your Son
have raised up a fallen world,
fill your faithful with holy joy,
for on those you have rescued from slavery to sin
you bestow eternal gladness.
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 this ancient text, an earlier version of which can be traced back to the Gelasian Sacramentary, we find a number of striking and contrasting images: the “falling” of Christ, the world raised up, the rescue of slaves, and holy joy leading to eternal gladness! The Paschal Mystery in one sentence!

In the first phrase, one might immediately think of Saint Paul’s great Philippian hymn, singing of how Christ “emptied himself and took the form of a slave” (Phil 2:7). It is the great mystery of God’s incomprehensible love that, out of the abasement of his Son, the fallen world might be redeemed, and like our Hebrew ancestors, he might rescue us, too, from slavery and certain death.

The phrases “holy joy” and “eternal gladness” are profound. It is a holy joy for which we ask – not that which is passing, temporary, shallow, incomplete; but rather, a joy that is unearned, that is gift, that is lasting, running to the very core of who we are as God’s sons and daughters – that is, holy. Our current world, culture, and society are incapable of providing us holy joy and eternal gladness. That can come only from God; and for that, we lift our hearts to the Lord, in praise and thanksgiving!

PRAYER

God of unending joy, help me to live in imitation of your Son, in whose image I have been remade. Like him, may I empty myself – to you, to my brothers and sisters, and to all whom I might meet today.

Submitted by:

Todd Williamson
Director, Office of Divine Worship
Archdiocese of Chicago

Artwork: James Tissot, *He Sent Them Out Two by Two* (1886-1894)

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FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

July 14, 2013

COLLECT

**O God, who show the light of your truth
to those who go astray,
so that they may return to the right path,
give all who for the faith they profess
are accounted Christians
the grace to reject whatever is contrary to the name of Christ
and to strive after all that does it honor.
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

Living our life professing the faith that we reaffirmed at Easter is not easy. We are not alone in living out the truth that we proclaim because here we have our sights set on the light that guides us to that truth. Unaccompanied we could do nothing that would enable us to be witnesses to the faith that we profess. Through the goodness of God, we are given the grace to make every effort to eliminate those things in our lives that would cause us to not give praise, honor, and glory to the name of Christ.

We are constantly moving on the path that leads to eternal life. We move on that path accompanied by our God and by all who profess their faith in him. God is ever with us to support, encourage, enliven, and pull us back when we wander off the path which brings us to eternal life.

PRAYER

O God, you are our guide as we profess our faith in you. We move through life proclaiming your presence in every moment and in everything we do. Continue to sustain us in the struggles of life and be our companion on the path we walk, conscious of our failures and successes in this world you created for us.

Submitted by:

Sister Sharon Marie Stola, OSB, D.Min.
Director of the Office of Divine Worship and the Catechumenate
Diocese of Joliet-in-Illinois



Artwork: Domenico Fetti, *The Parable of the Good Samaritan* (c. 1623)

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SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

July 21, 2013

COLLECT

**Show favor, O Lord, to your servants
and mercifully increase the gifts of your grace,
that, made fervent in hope, faith and charity,
they may be ever watchful in keeping your commands.
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 its origins in the Ambrosian Rite celebrated in Milan, Italy, and the surrounding territories. Originating in the Bergamo Sacramentary (tenth or eleventh century), it was added to the Missal after the Second Vatican Council.

In these words we are reminded of our ongoing need for God's grace and the gratuitous gifts we have been given by the Spirit to participate in the divine nature. Specifically, we pray for the gifts that are known as the theological virtues – faith, hope, and charity. By these gifts we are made “capable of acting as his children and of meriting eternal life” [*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1813]. These virtues empower the people of God to faithfully keep his commands by pursuing the good as the goal of their actions. And, as Saint Gregory of Nyssa reminds us, “The goal of a virtuous life is to become like God” [*De beatitudinibus*, no. 1].

One may also notice that hope is named first in the list of virtues, rather than faith. Why is this so? Perhaps it is to make a connection to the next line of the Collect where it speaks of being “ever watchful”. A people full of hope are a people ever watchful. A people full of hope recognize in the world around them the need of a life lived in service to God and the promise of eternal life that comes with it.

PRAYER

Merciful God, give us what we need to serve you – the faith to believe in you, the hope to desire life with you, and the love to respond to you who loved us first.

Submitted by:

Matt Miller
Director, Office of Worship
Diocese of Evansville



Artwork: Tintoretto, *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary* (1570-1575)

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SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

July 28, 2013

COLLECT

**O God, protector of those who hope in you,
without whom nothing has firm foundation, nothing is holy,
bestow in abundance your mercy upon us
and grant that, with you as our ruler and guide,
we may use the good things that pass
in such a way as to hold fast even now
to those that ever endure.
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 was composed following the Second Vatican Council using elements of various ancient liturgical texts. The prayer begins by naming God “protector”. Although not commonly found in our liturgical prayers, addressing God as protector has its origin in Scripture. We see this in the Gospel of Luke where Jesus answers the devil by quoting Psalm 91, “He will command his Angels . . . to guard you” [Lk 4:10-11]. For those who hope in God there is the sure promise of protection. The Collect reminds us that without God nothing has a firm foundation and nothing is holy.

The second half of the prayer asks for God’s mercy and affirms God as our ruler and guide. The prayer continues by asking that we may use the good things of this earth in such a way that they will aid us in achieving the “good things that ever endure”. What are these enduring things? They are love and eternal life. As we pray the Collect we are reminded that we are totally dependent on God for our very existence. We are reminded that God establishes and sanctifies creation thereby making all things holy. And we affirm that with God as our foundation we have hope for eternal life in the love of God who is Father, Son, and Spirit.

PRAYER

O God, embrace me in your loving arms and keep me from all harm. Give me the wisdom to recognize the work of your hand in all of creation and to long for the gift of eternal life.

Submitted by:

David J. Reilly
Director of Worship
Diocese of Kalamazoo



Artwork: James Tissot, *The Lord's Prayer* (1886-1894)

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EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

August 4, 2013

COLLECT

**Draw near to your servants, O Lord,
and answer their prayers with unceasing kindness,
that, for those who glory in you as their Creator and guide,
you may restore what you have created
and keep safe what you have restored.
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 earliest version of this prayer is found in the Verona Sacramentary. It announced a fast, perhaps during a sixth century siege of Rome. A version also appeared in the 1985 Sacramentary among the Prayers over the People. The 2002 edition removed it. (Paul Turner, *A Pastoral Companion to the Roman Missal*, © 2010, World Library Publications, p.130).

Like most of our liturgical texts, the prayer finds its source in Scriptural roots. It shows similarities to Psalm 104:30 (NAB: “When you send forth your Spirit they are created and you renew the face of the earth”) and Romans 8:21 (“...that creation itself will be set free from slavery to corruption”).

We begin by asking God to “draw near”. This congers such a wonderful image of our Father, leaning in to better hear our prayers and answering them with “unceasing kindness”. And what are we asking God to do? This is, above all, a prayer of hope that God will restore all things to their rightful order and return all creation back to its purpose, that is, to give him glory.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father,
open my eyes that I may see the glory of your creation,
teach me to always be mindful of your will,
and give me strength to witness to your purpose.

Submitted by:

Rita Thiron
Director, Office of Worship
Diocese of Lansing



Artwork: James Tissot, *The Man Who Hoards* (1886-1894)

NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

August 11, 2013

COLLECT

**Almighty every-living God,
whom, taught by the Holy Spirit,
we dare to call our Father,
bring, we pray, to perfection in our hearts
the spirit of adoption as your sons and daughters,
that we may merit to enter into the inheritance
which 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 has a rich liturgical history and is found in a handful of books for Mass from the seventh century to our own day.

These truths stand out: BEING DARING AND BOLD. For a child, a “double-dog-dare-you” was a challenge not to be ignored. The Mass reminds us of such boldness at the beginning of the Communion Rite. We cannot ignore the invitation by the Priest who dares us to say: Our Father.

BEING AN ADOPTED CHILD. Late in Lent, the Church lovingly entrusts to the elect the Lord’s Prayer. We do this, the rite says, to deepen an awareness of being an adopted child, one who calls God “Father”. We do this with them because we ourselves believe it. We are sons and daughters.

BEING IN THE WILL. Although there may be legal rights to an inheritance, it is ultimately a gift, even many gifts. God, by covenant, promises to keep us in the will, promises to share the divine inheritance with us. We in turn must promise to behave as worthy children

PRAYER

God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, keep us coming back to the Sunday table of your Son. By eating his Body and drinking his Blood, we may become ever more perfect daughters and sons.

Submitted by:

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



Artwork: Elias Moskos, *Christ Pantocrator* (1653)

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TWENTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

August 18, 2013

COLLECT

**O God, who have prepared for those who love you
good things which no eye can see,
fill our hearts, we pray, with the warmth of your love,
so that, loving you in all things and above all things,
we may attain your promises,
which surpass every human desire.
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

St. Dimitri, Metropolitan of Rostov (1651-1709), taught in *The Inner Closet of the Heart*, “No unity with God is possible except by an exceedingly great love.” It is through the love of God that we exist and are called to dwell in his presence. It is because he loves us that we are offered the gift of eternal redemption, his ultimate covenant promise.

We all know that “Love is a two way street.” For the love that God has for us to be complete, we must love him in return. And how do we love him? By living in the spirit of his law; a law that calls us to love him and our neighbor while we set our own desires aside.

How do we merit the gift of God’s love? We certainly do not merit that gift by human desire. We merit the gift through the spiritual desire that enflames our heart.

PRAYER

Lord God, kindle within us the fire of your love. Let our hope in your promises keep us on the right path so that we may rejoice in your presence all the days of our life.

Submitted by:

Karen L. Podd
Liturgical Commission
Diocese of Buffalo

Artwork: Fra Angelico, *Last Judgment* (detail) (c. 1431)

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

August 25, 2013

COLLECT

**O God, who cause the minds of the faithful
to unite in a single purpose,
grant your people to love what you command
and to desire what you promise,
that, amid the uncertainties of this world,
our hearts may be fixed on that place
where true gladness is found.
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

One of the amazing things about the “collect” prayers we encounter weekly at Mass is that they are general enough to gather together the thoughts and prayers of the assembly of believers. This text has a variety of images that individuals can grab onto! Still, the persons in church next to us might find another equally appropriate avenue with which they may identify. Singleness of purpose, loving God’s commandments, desiring God’s promises: we strive for these things every day.

As we hear this prayer we are invited to think of our own personal hopes and desires, our own striving to conform to God’s will in Christ. Where will we encounter “the uncertainties of this world” in the coming week? What are the hopes and desires we bring to our prayer today? How will we be challenged to embrace the will of God in Christ in the week to come?

PRAYER

God of love, open our hearts to your will. Give us the grace and the resolve to love your commands in all we do.

Submitted by:

Rev. Steven P. Walter, Pastor
Saint John Fisher Parish
Archdiocese of Cincinnati



Artwork: Franz Francken II, *The Last Judgment* (1606)