

FEDERATION OF DIOCESAN LITURGICAL COMMISSIONS [FDLC]
MYSTAGOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE PRAYERS AFTER COMMUNION
OF THE *ROMAN MISSAL*



Fruits of the Mystery—Advent

Artwork: Fra Angelico, *Cortona Polyptych* (central panel) (c. 1437)

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FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 1, 2013

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**May these mysteries, O Lord,
in which we have participated,
profit us, we pray,
for even now, as we walk amid passing things,
you teach us by them to love the things of heaven
and hold fast to what endures.
Through Christ our Lord.**



REFLECTION

The Prayer after Communion helps the assembly to focus on what has just been accomplished in the Eucharist. This particular prayer was newly composed for the first edition of the *Roman Missal* after the Second Vatican Council. However, it has its roots in two prayers found in the *Verona Sacramentary* dating around the sixth century.

The word “mysteries” is often understood as something beyond comprehension. In the context of this prayer, it is drawn from the biblical Greek word *mysterion*, which was later translated into Latin as *sacramentum* or sacrament. Thus, the phrase, “may these mysteries”, refers to the celebration of the Eucharist in which we have just participated. Another word worthy of explanation is the unfamiliar use of the word “profit”. It is translated literally from the Latin and means “to have an effect on us.”

Consequently, we pray that the celebration of the Eucharist affect us so that, while on this earth, we may grow in faith through our participation in the sacred mysteries. We also pray to learn to love as Christ who loves perfectly in this world with his eyes fixed on heaven.

PRAYER

Lord, through our participation in the Eucharist, transform us so that we may be made holy and be nourished to walk and love as Christ in the world.

Submitted by:

Karen Kane
Director of the Worship Office
Archdiocese of Cincinnati

Artwork: Italian Mosaic Artist, *Mosaic of Noah from Basilica of Saint Mark in Venice* (1215-1235)

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SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 8, 2013

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**Replenished by the food of spiritual nourishment,
we humbly beseech you, O Lord,
that, through our partaking in this mystery,
you may teach us to judge wisely the things of earth
and hold firm to the things of heaven.
Through Christ our Lord.**

REFLECTION

The Prayer after Communion for the Second Sunday of Advent acknowledges the desire of God's people to satisfy their hunger and thirst in the wisdom of an All-Wise God. We are a people who having tasted the goodness of the Lord, return over and over again with glad hearts to the One we have come to adore.

It is in this communal act of celebrating the Paschal Mystery that we remember God's power to transform us into being instruments of love, peace, and justice. As ambassadors of Christ, we give evidence to the world of God's wisdom and love. Now that our hunger and thirst are satisfied, we are freed to share this Good News!

PRAYER

Lord, we place our trust in your promise that you will come again in glory. Stir our hearts by the power of your Spirit to do your will for we await with joyful hope your coming. Come, Lord Jesus, come. We pray this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Submitted by:

Deacon Royce Winters
Director of African American Ministries
Archdiocese of Cincinnati



Artwork: French Miniaturist, *Tree of Jesse* (c. 1130)

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THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 15, 2013

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**We implore your mercy, Lord,
that this divine sustenance may cleanse us of our faults
and prepare us for the coming feasts.
Through Christ our Lord.**

REFLECTION



Through the Prayer after Communion, we join hearts in a final plea, making a loving request of God before being sent forth.

As the People of God faithfully await and rejoice in the Lord's nearness, there is a thick thread of theological truth in the content of today's prayer. Recalling that a Sacrament effects what it signifies, the Communion that we have just received is the sacramental sign of Christ in his Death and Resurrection. Since Christ offered his life that we might live, a principle effect of this "divine sustenance" is a deepening of love and of community in the Church. What the prayer asks is what we believe but understand only obliquely: that the nourishing, deepening presence of God within us will replace our faults and failings with grace.

In Matthew 26:28, "for this is the blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins" [NAB], we know of the Eucharist as imparting forgiveness. The Council of Trent spoke of the Eucharist as "remedy" freeing us from sinfulness.

The key word today is "sustenance". The Eucharist intends food for life's journey. Through the Eucharist, we are fed and we build an abundance of grace, sharing more fully in the life of Christ. As we strive to "become what we eat", discipleship takes root within our lives. Our faults are rooted out by God's mercy.

PRAYER

Gracious and loving God, we give thanks for a rich measure of grace, mercy, and forgiveness through Holy Communion. May we rejoice in preparing for the Lord's Nativity, sustained by this Sacrament of Love, freely offered and gladly received.

Submitted by:

Dr. Patricia J. Hughes
Director, Office of Worship
Diocese of Dallas

Artwork: Hieronymus Bosch, *Saint John the Baptist in the Wilderness* (1489-1500)

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FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 22, 2013

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**Having received this pledge of eternal redemption,
we pray, almighty God,
that, as the feast day of our salvation draws ever nearer,
so we may press forward all the more eagerly
to the worthy celebration of the mystery of your Son's Nativity.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.**

REFLECTION

Three weeks ago, in the Opening Collect, we began the Advent Season asking that God might grant us the resolve to “run forth with righteous deeds to meet [his] Christ.” Today, on this last Sunday of the season, we actually find ourselves repeating that request in the Prayer after Communion. At this point in the liturgy, having just received the Eucharist, we ask that it might strengthen us to “press forward” as we near the great feast of Christmas.

Notice, however, that there is a bit more urgency in the request we make today. We know that the approaching day is “ever nearer,” and we ask that we might move toward it “all the more eagerly”. There is a deliberate focus here, a steadfastness, to which we are invited. This is a focus and steadfastness that may very well be needed in these final days before Christmas, when we might be susceptible to the more commercial dynamics of the season or to the demands of a busy parish schedule.

As many of us may stress and struggle in these final days to “get it all done”, it is good to be reminded that what we are preparing to celebrate isn't just a “holiday;” it isn't just an “observance”. It is the feast day of our salvation! This a rather profound lens through which to view and understand just what it is we are getting ready to celebrate! To prepare “more eagerly”, with focus and steadfastness, would indeed make for a more “worthy celebration of the mystery of [the] Son's Nativity!”

PRAYER

Creator of the Stars of Night, increase in me the desire for your Son's coming. In these final days before the celebration of his Nativity, may I long all the more for his return and may I eagerly press forward to meet him in every circumstance of my life and in every person that I meet.

Submitted by:

Todd Williamson
Director of Worship
Archdiocese of Chicago



Artwork: Gaetano Gandolfi, *Joseph's Dream* (c. 1790)

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