

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



**Fruits of the Mystery—Ordinary Time (Summer)**

Artwork: El Greco, *Christ as Savior* (1610-1614)

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FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

July 13, 2014

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**Having consumed these gifts, we pray, O Lord,  
that, by our participation in this mystery,  
its saving effects upon us may grow.  
Through Christ our Lord.**

REFLECTION

Although this prayer dates from the seventh century and was used late in Easter Time, it serves us well on the Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time following the reform of Vatican Council II. It helps us recall the whole of the mystery of Christ.

In the same way we feed our children so they grow up in wisdom, age, and grace (mysterious, is it not?) the Church feeds the children of God. We, God's children, feed on Eucharistic bread and wine, feed on Body and Blood, feed on God.

This participation in Communion is our right because of new birth in Baptism. It is also our duty. For once out of the baptismal bath, we now dress like Christ and bear his light. We complete the "giving thanks" begun in the Eucharistic Prayer by dining at the Lord's table, by eating and drinking the Lord's meal, by participating in so great a mystery – Christ once dead, now risen for ever. By consuming Jesus the Christ, his saving life grows within us. We become like him – who became like us in all things but sin.

So great a mystery!

PRAYER

Oh Dead and Risen Lord,  
feed us always with your very self  
that we may grow week by week to be like you  
– dead to sin and raised to life anew.

Submitted by:

Eliot Kapitan

Director for Worship and the Catechumenate

Diocese of Springfield in Illinois



Artwork: James Tissot, *Jesus Sits by the Seashore and Preaches* (1886-1894)

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SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

July 20, 2014

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**Graciously be present to your people, we pray, O Lord,  
and lead those you have imbued with heavenly mysteries  
to pass from former ways to newness of life.**

**Through Christ our Lord.**



REFLECTION

Miriam-Webster's Dictionary defines the word *imbue* as "to cause (someone or something) to be deeply affected by a feeling or to have a certain quality." In this Prayer after Communion, not only do we ask God to graciously be present to us having just received the Body and Blood of Christ, we also ask to be imbued with the heavenly mysteries causing us to be transformed. Thus, by our very eating and drinking of the Body and Blood of Christ, we ask God to cause something powerful to happen within us—transformation.

This transformation happens because of God's graciousness. It is God who does the transforming. As the Holy Spirit is called down upon gifts of bread and wine to change them into the Body and Blood of Christ, so too, do we ask the grace of the Holy Spirit to change us.

St. Augustine said, "Be what you see; receive what you are." We are to be the Body of Christ in the world. We are to be poured out for others that they might have new life. When we say, "Amen" to the Body and Blood of Christ, we commit ourselves to be transformed into a new person, leaving behind our old ways of thinking and doing, and becoming Christ's Body in the world.

PRAYER

Lord, as we ponder the mystery of the Eucharist, change us that we might become your Body, your hands, and your feet in a world in great need of your love.

Submitted by:

Karen Kane

Director of the Worship Office

Archdiocese of Cincinnati

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

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SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

July 27, 2014

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**We have consumed, O Lord, this divine Sacrament,  
the perpetual memorial of the Passion of your Son;  
grant, we pray, that this gift,  
which he himself gave us with love beyond all telling,  
may profit us for salvation.  
Through Christ our Lord.**

REFLECTION

For any one of us who has done any in-depth studies in liturgy, there is constantly one central, one theological tenet that surfaces: *Paschal Mystery*. Regardless of how simply or profoundly we comprehend Paschal Mystery, this prayer seemingly captures its essence in what might be considered a strikingly poetic fashion.

That being said, the words that jumped off the page from this prayer is the phrase “which [Jesus] himself gave us with a love beyond all telling.” How does one describe such love; what wondrous love, what profound love, what unconditional love? It would appear that our lives of discipleship—as recipients of this gift and spiritual nourishment—just might be emboldened to bear witness to this “love beyond all telling.”

PRAYER

O God, source of all love, help us by our words and deeds to bear witness to the gift of your love which we have received in and through your Son, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray, now and for ever. Amen.

Submitted by:

Reverend James Wm. Bessert  
Director, Office of Liturgy  
Diocese of Saginaw



Artwork: Domenico Fetti, *The Pearl of Great Price* (17th century)

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EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

August 3, 2014

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**Accompany with constant protection, O Lord,  
those you renew with these heavenly gifts  
and, in your never-failing care for them,  
make them worthy of eternal redemption.  
Through Christ our Lord.**

REFLECTION

This particular Prayer after Communion comes from Mass in a monastery in the *Gelasian Sacramentary*. Examples abound in the Veronese and Gelasian Sacramentaries where the concise prayer for this part of the Roman tradition took shape.

I am often taken aback by our boldness and, in my opinion, our lack of manners when speaking with God. In today's Prayer after Communion, we almost demand that God accompany us, protect us, and make us worthy. Can I hear a "please"?

We are reminded, however, regardless of our human faults and failings, that our God will never fail to care for us. Our God loves us, protects us, and accompanies us in our daily lives. Our simple gifts of bread and wine have been transformed to heavenly gifts. Through our participation in the Sacrament, we have been transformed, too. We pray that through our participation, renewal, and transformation God will find us worthy of redemption.

PRAYER

Kind and ever-loving God, we come before you today, realizing that we have failed in what we have done and in what we have failed to do. Forgive us, Lord. We want to be in your presence always. Protect us, provide for us, be with us, care for us, and make us worthy. Please. Thank you. Amen.

Submitted by:

Sue Huett

Director, Office of Worship

Diocese of Belleville



Artwork: Tintoretto, *The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes* (1579-1581)

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NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

August 10, 2014

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**May the communion in your Sacrament  
that we have consumed, save us, O Lord,  
and confirm us in the light of your truth.  
Through Christ our Lord.**

REFLECTION



This prayer, dating back to the eighth century, contains some rich elements. The word “consumed” is very strong. We have not merely “eaten and drunk” the Sacrament; we have consumed it, that is, taken it in wholly and entirely. The power of the word reminds us of the people of Israel who were to consume the daily portion of manna in the desert, the gift of God, in order to be saved. The power of the word reminds us of the prophet Ezekiel who was given the scroll of the word of God to eat.

What is this consumed “Sacrament”? The Latin word here is plural, and so we know that the reference is not to the Body and Blood of Christ only. In the celebration of the Eucharist that is completed with this post-communion prayer, we have consumed both the Word of God and the Sacrament of the altar. Beyond that, we have celebrated the Eucharist as a baptized people, alive and gathered in the Holy Spirit. Hence, the “Sacrament that we have consumed” is the whole Christ, indeed all the mysteries of Christ. As we consume and make Christ part of us, Christ is making us part of himself. Such is our communion in and with him.

Hence, we pray that our communion in Christ may “save us...and confirm us” in divine truth. The praying community, the Church, is asking to be open to receive the salvation offered to us in the sacrament of Christ and to be rooted in his truth completely.

PRAYER

Jesus our Savior, we thank you for giving yourself to us in such varied splendor. May we take you completely into our hearts as you take us completely into yours. Amen.

Submitted by:

Father Robert J. Kennedy  
Pastor, Blessed Sacrament and Saint Boniface Parishes  
Chairperson, Diocesan Liturgical Commission  
Diocese of Rochester

Artwork: Lluís Borrassa, *Saint Peter is Walking on the Water* (1411-1413)

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TWENTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

August 17, 2014

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**Made partakers of Christ through these Sacraments,  
we humbly implore your mercy, Lord,  
that, conformed to his image on earth,  
we may merit also to be his coheirs in heaven.  
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.**

REFLECTION



We ask God's mercy, then we eat the Body and drink the Blood of Christ—but why? Could it be that through this feast we actually will become what we eat? If this is true, then as disciples apprenticed to Christ, we will also know God's promise of the peace and joy of heaven.

When the Mass concludes, “Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord,” we move from Sunday worship back into the world to try and do exactly what was asked of us. We have faith in our ability to go forth in mission, imaging Jesus to people we meet, work with, and live among.

How glorious to receive Communion and reflect the image of Christ!

PRAYER

God of mercy, apprentice us in your love, no matter where we may find ourselves this week. May our prayers echo *Kyrie* and our actions, words, and behaviors mirror the way you taught us to live. Make us master apprentices, guiding our hands, our hopes, and our hearts to serve others as you taught by your life on earth. And may we continue to become what we eat each time we receive Communion. Hold us in your mercy, for ever and ever. Amen.

Submitted by:

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

Artwork: Juan de Flandes, *Christ and the Canaanite Woman* (c. 1500)

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

August 24, 2014

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**Complete within us, O Lord, we pray,  
the healing work of your mercy  
and graciously perfect and sustain us,  
so that in all things we may please you.  
Through Christ our Lord.**

REFLECTION

Praying this prayer in conjunction with the readings of this day expands our understanding of the mystery of Christ and his Church. In Year A, we rehear themes of God's justice and inscrutable wisdom that culminate in the words to Peter, "What you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." In Year B, we pledge not to forsake but serve the LORD and with Peter proclaim, we will not leave, we do believe in your words of eternal life. In Year C, while wrestling with who is first and who is last, all nations are drawn to the LORD to recline at table in the kingdom of God.

We are called to proclaim and share the mercy of God which this prayer says is a healing work among us. Our prayer here is asking God to "perfect and sustain us" in that effort to keep in our hearts this mercy of God so that we may please the Lord in all things.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, guide us in the understanding of your ways so that we may do more than proclaim you the divine Savior. Guide us to manifest to the world the goodness of your presence in the mercy we share with those around us.

Submitted by:

Rev. Louis Dorn

Secretary, Diocesan Liturgical Commission

Diocese of Jefferson City

Artwork: El Greco, *Saint Peter* (1610-1613)





TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

August 31, 2014

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**Renewed by this bread from the heavenly table,  
we beseech you, Lord,  
that, being the food of charity,  
it may confirm our hearts  
and stir us to serve you in our neighbor.  
Through Christ our Lord.**



REFLECTION

We eat the bread of God, the bread from heaven and do not die, but live for ever. We are guests already dining at the great messianic banquet. Invited guests, yes, but ones who must participate as well, else we have no life within us. The bread of life strengthens us to be true followers of Christ. Where else can we go? We have found the Holy One of God who has the words of eternal life.

Petition, Eucharist, renewal, conversion, service, and back to petition—this is the life cycle of discipleship. Jesus tell us, “Just so, the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28). Jesus serves us the food of everlasting life that is his Body and his Blood. This spiritual food is not for our personal edification only, but for *metanoia*—transforming our hearts of stone into hearts burning within us. Hearts on fire propel us out into the world to be disciples of Christ to all we meet. We go and we serve by feeding, welcoming, clothing, healing, and visiting because we know that the Lord is with us always, until the end of the age.

PRAYER

Gracious God, you sent your Only Son to be your gift of life to the world. May we follow his example of selfless service until we dine with you in heaven.

Submitted by:

Dianne Rachal

Director, Office of Worship

Diocese of Shreveport

Artwork: James Tissot, *Get Thee Behind Me Satan* (1886-1894)

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TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

September 7, 2014

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**Grant that your faithful, O Lord,  
whom you nourish and endow with life  
through the food of your Word and heavenly Sacrament,  
may so benefit from your beloved Son's great gifts  
that we may merit an eternal share in his life.  
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.**



REFLECTION

The Prayer after Communion reminds us of the important connection between Word and Sacrament. The two are so closely interconnected that the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* [GIRM] tells us that they form one act of worship. In fact, the ambo is often referred to as the table of God's Word. The mystery of this gift of Word and Sacrament is even further tied together by the GIRM as it teaches us that Christ is really present "...in his word, and indeed substantially and uninterruptedly under the Eucharistic species" (no. 28). So this Sunday, in the Prayer after Communion, we are reminded of this unity of Word and Sacrament that we have just experienced.

This great nourishment, this great gift of life is ours every time we celebrate the Eucharist. How might we find echoes of the Word and Sacrament from today's celebration coming to mind as we pray this prayer and as we remember it in the days that follow? Perhaps it is the refrain from the Responsorial Psalm or possibly a phrase from the Gospel that we might recall. Maybe it is an action from the Liturgy, such as one of the processions, or one of the liturgical texts.

The text of this prayer reminds us of the unity of the Eucharistic celebration with all its various parts. May our celebration today bring us a share in Christ's eternal life.

PRAYER

God of Word and Sacrament, you pour out your gift of life on those who gather together in your name. May we grow in our appreciation for your presence among us. And may we come to know you more deeply through the proclamation of your Word and the celebration of your Sacraments. We make our prayer in the name of Jesus, our Lord and our brother. Amen.

Submitted by:

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

Artwork: Unknown Catalan Master, *Christ and the Twelve Apostles* (c. 1100)

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September 14

THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS, Feast

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**Having been nourished by your holy banquet,  
we beseech you, Lord Jesus Christ,  
to bring those you have redeemed  
by the wood of your life-giving Cross  
to the glory of the resurrection.  
Who live and reign for ever and ever.**

REFLECTION



At the center of every Eucharistic Liturgy is the celebration of the Paschal Mystery—the life, Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus Christ. On this Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, we focus on the glory of the Cross, and we remember that Jesus redeemed the world by his dying on the Cross and rising to new life. This dying and rising, this Paschal Mystery, is the pattern for our own lives.

Every day we bear the burden of our own crosses and we share in the sufferings of others. Like Jesus, we join in solidarity with the poor, the marginalized, the broken-hearted, the lost, and the suffering by walking with them the road of life. Our participation in the Eucharistic banquet strengthens us to bear our burdens in faith, to live Gospel lives of service, and to offer our lives to others. We die to ourselves, our selfishness and greed, so that others may have life. This is the pattern of the Christian life.

Today, we glory in the Cross of life and pray that Christ will bring us to everlasting joy at the heavenly banquet.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, we give you thanks for the gift of redemption, for you died on the Cross to redeem us from darkness and sin. Nourish our faith that we may pattern our lives after you and always live in Paschal hope.

Submitted by:

Karen Kane

Director of the Worship Office

Archdiocese of Cincinnati

Artwork: Tintoretto, *Crucifixion* (detail) (1565)

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TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

September 21, 2014

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**Graciously raise up, O Lord,  
those you renew with this Sacrament,  
that we may come to possess your redemption  
both in mystery and in the manner of our life.  
Through Christ our Lord.**

REFLECTION

The whole dynamic of this prayer has been in play throughout many of the texts of this Liturgy. For example, the Opening Collect makes reference to God's commands that are founded on love of him and on love of neighbor, and asks that by keeping the Lord's precepts, we might then have eternal life. Similarly, the first option for the Communion Antiphon asks that one's ways (i.e., one's manner of behaving, of acting, of living) be in keeping with God's statutes (Psalm 119:4-5). Even the readings in all three years, touch upon the call for all of us to live our lives in a manner that is in keeping with the demands of the Gospel.

This prayer then echoes these other texts. As so often in the Prayers after Communion, there is the recognition of the renewing and the refreshing power of the Sacrament. Thus renewed—in faith, in conviction, in the call of discipleship, in fidelity to our Baptism—we are later sent out (in the dismissal rite) “to announce the Gospel of the Lord.” How? According to the Prayer after Communion, by the very “manner of our life”—that is, in how we live!

In the end, this prayer raises for us the intimate link between Eucharist (the “mystery” referred to in the prayer) and life; between worship and discipleship; between sacrament and service. It is the link between Mystery and Mission. We could not possibly fulfill that Mission without the renewing power of the Eucharist; and the Mission of being disciples in the world repeatedly calls us back to participate in the Eucharist, which is the great mystery of our redemption!

PRAYER

Gracious Lord, may all that I do be rooted in and flow out of the great praise and thanksgiving that is the Eucharist. Renewed each time I do so, may I be sustained in my life as a disciple—to announce your Gospel and to glorify you, Lord, by the way I live my life. Through Christ our Lord.

Submitted by:

Todd Williamson  
Director of Worship  
Archdiocese of Chicago



Artwork: German Miniaturist, *Gospel Lectionary of Henry III (Workers in the Vineyard)* (1039-1040)

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