

THEOLOGIA PRIMA

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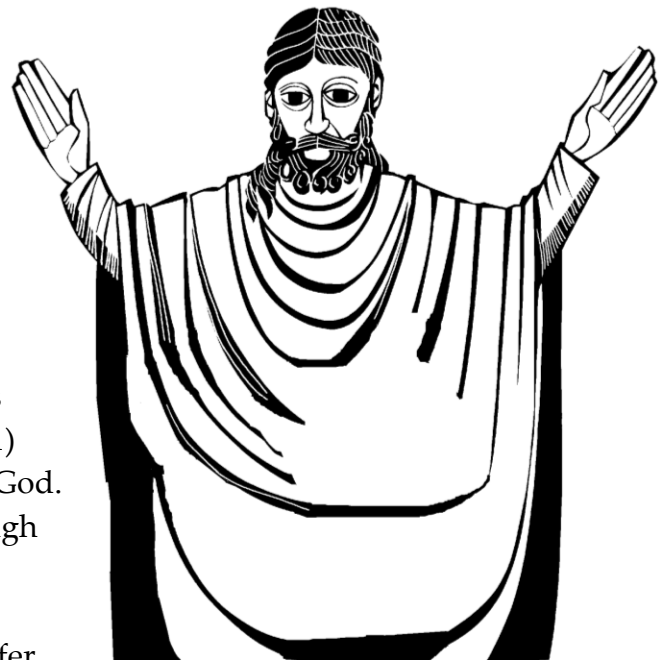
#12 LET US PRAY: THE ROMAN COLLECT

I just returned from a workshop on the Roman Missal and I must admit I am more fired-up about the new translation of the Missal and the opportunities we will have to deepen our appreciation of the liturgy and Scripture in the coming months. Even though we have received the *recognitio* for the Missal, there are still minor revisions that are being made, so technically we are still waiting for the final text. The Bishops' Committee on Divine Worship announced that we are still hoping for an implementation date of November 27, 2011. If that is true, that means every diocese and parish in the country will spend the next year doing catechesis on liturgy and specifically discussing the new texts.

Last week we briefly examined the Gloria. This week, we explore the Collect (KAHL-ekt). The Collects or Opening Prayers of the Roman Missal first appeared in written form around the 7th century. The Roman Collect is a simple but rich prayer that expresses "the character of the celebration" (*GIRM* 54). These simple, elegant prayers uncover in a precise way the theme of a particular liturgy and help focus the assembly's attention on a specific aspect of the paschal mystery.

The revision of these prayers is returning to the more formal Collect style. You will quickly notice the more elevated language and structure, which may take some time to get used to, but we will be rewarded with very rich and beautiful prayer. In order for this to happen though, the presider must spend time praying these texts before the liturgy and practicing them so he can effectively and prayerfully communicate these fine texts. Second, the assembly must be more alert in its listening.

Quickly, let us explore the structure of the Roman Collect. The assembly is cued by the presider's words, "Let us pray." When he says these words the entire assembly is silent for a good amount of time (*GIRM* 45, 54) and each person offers his or her prayers. After this silence, the presider continues with the prayer, which 1) addresses God, 2) gives praise to God and 3) petitions God. The prayer always ends with some variation of "Through our Lord Jesus Christ".



The role of the Collect is to collect all the prayers we offer and lift them to God. You will notice that the prayer is always addressed to God, "through Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit" (*GIRM* 54). The presider prays this in the person of Christ on behalf of the assembly, Christ's body. The conclusion to this prayer is the assembly's confident *Amen*. This *Amen* "solemnly affirms your belief in God and the unity of the prayers of everyone present" (Turner). This concludes the introductory rites so we all sit and prepare for the Liturgy of the Word.