



3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

"Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God. [He said to Peter and Andrew], 'Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.' Then they abandoned their nets and followed him." [Mark 1:14b, 17]

To help open the treasures of the revised Roman Missal, each week I'll give the history of and a reflection on the three Mass orations of that day, gleaned from the USCCB's website and *Essential Presidential Prayers and Texts* book. I'm truly *amazed* at the theological depth and powerful beauty of these three prayers; I hope you are, too!

3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time – Collect

Almighty ever-living God, direct our actions according to your good pleasure, that in the name of your beloved Son we may abound in good works.

Since Christmas, the Collects have reflected on God's gift of peace which came to the world most profoundly at Christ's birth; beginning this week the Collects begin to note that it's up to us, through our good works, to spread God's peace! As the Bible says, Jesus called fishermen, tax collectors and other ordinary people - just like us - to proclaim His Gospel in all their words and deeds. And as this Collect notes, to know that this pleases God ... is the icing on the cake!

The words, "according to your good pleasure" echoes what the Father said of the Son at His Baptism, when the Spirit came down upon Him in the form of a dove; as the Gospels tell us, a voice from heaven said: *"This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased."* [See Mark 1:11b; Matthew 3:17; Luke 3:22; John 1:29-34] Hopefully, God is as pleased with us, with our every word and deed, as He was in His Son's words and deeds; if not, then we, too, must leave these displeasing things behind so we can follow Christ more closely and more faithfully!

3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time – Prayer Over the Offerings

Accept our offerings, O Lord, we pray, and in sanctifying them grant that they may profit us for salvation.

Some Catholics sadly attend holy Mass each week merely to fulfill an obligation; some may even find comfort, direction and hope in their weekly dose of God's Word and the Most Holy Eucharist. There are even a few 'hostages' who

only come to keep the peace at home, or because "as long as you're living under my roof, you're going to Mass!" [May God bless those parents who *insist* that their children do what is best for them, whether they like it or not!] But as this prayer reminds us: the God-given gifts we present to the Lord that are sanctified or made holy by Him and then returned to us, are mainly for our own *eternal salvation!* So the next time someone tells you that they stopped going to Mass because "they don't get anything out of it," remind them that the *ultimate* payback is in the life to come!

And we cannot be reminded enough that the offerings presented at Mass are not just the bread and wine, although these are the primary offerings. We also offer "all our prayers, works, joys and sufferings in union with the holy sacrifice of the Mass." All the more reason why we should never miss weekly Mass, for by offering up ourselves and all that we do or that happens to us each week, God infuses our words and deeds with the power to save us!

3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time - Prayer after Communion

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that, receiving the grace by which you bring us to new life, we may always glory in your gift.

When someone 'strikes it rich' or 'gets a lucky break' don't we say of them "they just happened to be in the right place at the right time?" Do you realize that each Mass is the 'right place' and 'the right time' to receive God's countless gifts of love and grace? For while God can grace us in many ways and in many places - and He does! - God has chosen to uniquely bless us at Mass, when we fulfill the Lord's command, *"Do this in memory of me."* How so?

At the table of God's Word, we receive guidance and direction through the Scripture readings and homily; we are prompted to get to work through the Universal Prayer as we consider how God can use us to answer the intercessions and needs we offer. And as mentioned above, the gifts we offer to the Lord, which are God's gift to us in the first place [bread/wine, our works and the fruit of our labors] are returned to us with God's grace and blessing.

With God's love and my prayers,

Father Mike

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