

## **THE COLLECTS**

in *The Book of Common Prayer*

### **Introduction**

In the Western Church, with its rich Latin liturgy, there has been a special place since the fifth century for the short prayer called “the Collect.” When the medieval Latin service books were revised and shortened to create *The Book of Common Prayer* (1549) for the Church of England, the Collect was retained, being rendered into English by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer.

In the various editions of *The Book of Common Prayer* since 1549, the word “Collect” appears to be used in both a precise and also a general sense. In the precise sense, it may be said that only those are truly Collects which are used with the Epistle and Gospel in the Eucharistic Lectionary, and as the Collects of the Day in Morning and Evening Prayer.

To these we may add (a) the last prayer in the Order for the Burial of the Dead which originally had an Epistle and Gospel attached to it, and (b) the opening prayer of the Order for Holy Communion, the Collect for purity, which summarizes the preparation for worship of the people of God.

Then in a less precise sense we have the two sets of two Collects, which follow the Collect of the Day in both Morning and Evening Prayer; and the prayers at the end of the Litany, introduced by “Let us pray.”

*Collecta* is the original Latin word, meaning a gathering of any sort. So what does the Collect gather together? There are various possibilities and there appears to be a measure of truth in each of them: 1. The gathering together in a precise form certain aspects of the teaching in the Epistle and/or Gospel to which it is attached. 2. The gathering together of the thoughts (recollection) of the people of God, a collectedness of mind. 3. The prayer to be used when people actually assemble together for worship—*oratio ad collectum*.

The Collects, precisely so called, normally have a common structure, though sometimes one of the parts thereof is missing. First, there is the Invocation where God (usually God the Father, but sometimes the Lord Jesus Christ) is addressed and invoked. In the second place, there is the Recital and remembrance of an aspect of a biblical topic or theme—e.g., of salvation, redemption, or providence. Then, thirdly, there is the Petition, which constitutes the body of the short prayer. In the fourth place, there is the Aspiration or devout wish. Finally, there is the Pleading of the Name of Jesus, the Mediator, when the prayer is to the Father. However, the second and fourth parts may be missing when the Collect is very brief.

The grammatical means of providing the second part, Recital and Remembrance, is through the use of a relative clause. For example, in the Collect for Christmas, we pray: “Almighty God, who hast given us thy only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him...” In this relative clause there is the invisible “thou” before the “who” and, because of this, the form of the verb is second person singular “hast given”, rather than the third person singular, “has given”. The purpose of this structure is to allow remembrance before God in a reverential manner before offering a petition. As such, the combination of style, grammar and doctrine are all inextricably interrelated.

Thus, rendering the relative clause into contemporary English, one can choose one of five methods. 1. To use “You Who” and make sure the verb in the relative clause is in the second (not third) person form. 2. To use only “Who” and make sure the verb is in the second (not third) person form. 3. To place “You” before “O God...” or “O Lord...” and begin the relative clause with “Who”. 4. To follow modern liturgists and change the relative clause into a declarative clause—e.g., “Almighty God, You have given us Your only begotten-Son to take our nature upon Him...” (Here the impression made on worshippers can be of being irreverent, telling the Almighty what He most surely knows perfectly already.) 5. To make the relative clause into a statement of praise or thanksgiving followed by a period. Then begin the petition in a new sentence. Here the act of remembrance is lost.

In what follows “You Who” will be used but “You” will be placed in square brackets [ ] in order to indicate that it may be omitted—“O Lord, [You] Who...”. It may be claimed that “You Who” is more emphatic than merely “Who”; but that it also makes clear that there is a relative clause being used for devout remembrance before God.

What follows are the Collects for the Christian Year from Advent to Trinity Sunday—the first half of the Church Year. From these one is able to learn the nature, content and function of the Collect. The originals, of course, with their Epistles and Gospels, are in *The Book of Common Prayer*.

## The Collects

### ADVENT SEASON

The First Sunday in Advent.

ALMIGHTY God, give us grace to cast away the deeds of darkness and to put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which Your Son came to us in great humility; that on the last day, when He shall come again in His glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through Him Who is alive and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

¶ *This Collect is to be repeated every day, after the other Collects in Advent, until Christmas Day.*

The Second Sunday in Advent.

BLESSED Lord, [You] Who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning; help us so to hear them, to read, note, learn and inwardly digest them that, through patience, and the comfort of Your holy Word, we may embrace and for ever hold fast the hope of eternal life, which You have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

The Third Sunday in Advent.

Lord Jesus Christ, [You] Who at Your first coming sent Your messenger to prepare Your way before You; grant that the ministers and stewards of Your mysteries in like manner may so prepare and make ready the way by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at

Your second coming to judge the world, we may be found an acceptable people in Your sight; [You] Who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Fourth Sunday in Advent.

VISIT us, Lord, we pray, with Your power, and by Your great might bring us relief, because through our sins and wickedness we are severely hindered in running the race that is set before us. May Your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with You and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

The Nativity of our Lord, or the Birthday of Christ, commonly called Christmas Day.

ALMIGHTY God, [You] Who have given us Your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon Him, and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin: grant that we, who have been born again and made Your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by Your Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

*¶ This Collect is to be used daily throughout the Octave (8 days).*

The First Sunday after Christmas Day.

ALMIGHTY God, [You] Who have given us Your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon Him, and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin: grant that we, who have been born again and made Your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by Your Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Circumcision of Christ {January 1}.

ALMIGHTY God, [You] Who caused Your blessed Son to be circumcised and obedient to the law for all peoples; Grant us the true circumcision of the Spirit so that, our hearts and bodies being dead to all sinful desires, we may obey Your perfect will in all things; through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Second Sunday after Christmas Day.

ALMIGHTY God, [You] Who have poured on us the new light of Your Incarnate Word; Grant that the same light, being kindled in our hearts may shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## EPIPHANY SEASON

The Epiphany, or the Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles. [January 6.]

God, [You] Who by the leading of a star revealed Your Son to the Gentiles; mercifully grant that we, who know You now by faith, may after this life behold Your glory in the face of Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The First Sunday after the Epiphany

MERCIFUL Lord, receive the prayers of Your people who call upon You; and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to perform them; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Second Sunday after the Epiphany

ALMIGHTY and eternal God, [You] Who rule over all things in heaven and earth; mercifully hear the prayers of Your people, and grant us Your peace all the days of our life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Third Sunday after the Epiphany

ALMIGHTY and eternal God, mercifully look upon our weaknesses, and in all dangers and unavoidable circumstances, stretch out Your right hand to help and defend us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

LORD God, [You] Who know that we live in the midst of so many and so great dangers and that we cannot always stand upright because of our human weakness; grant us such a measure of strength and protection that we may be supported in all dangers and be carried through all temptations; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

Lord, we ask You to keep Your household, the Church, continually in Your true Faith and devotion; so that they who rely only upon the hope of Your heavenly grace, may be always defended by Your mighty power; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany

Lord God, whose blessed Son came to earth that He might destroy the works of the devil, and make us children of God and heirs of eternal life; grant that we, who have this hope, may purify ourselves as He is pure, so that, when He shall come again, in power and great glory, we may be made like Him in His eternal and glorious kingdom; where with You, the Father, and the Holy Spirit, He lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

PRE-LENTEN SEASON

The third Sunday before Lent, known as Septuagesima

Lord, we implore You favorably to hear the prayers of Your people; that we, who are justly punished for our offences against You, may be mercifully delivered by Your goodness; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The second Sunday before Lent, known as Sexagesima.

Lord God, [You] Who see that we do not put our trust in any thing that we do; mercifully grant that by Your power, we may be defended against all adversity; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Sunday next before Lent, known as Quinquagesima.

Lord, [You] Who have taught us that whatever we do without genuine love is worth nothing in Your sight; send Your Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of genuine love, the true bond of peace and of all virtues; for without such love whoever lives is reckoned as dead before You. Grant this for the sake of Your only Son, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

## LENTEN SEASON

The first day of Lent, commonly called Ash Wednesday

ALMIGHTY and eternal God, [You] Who hate nothing that You have made, and [You] Who forgive the sins of all those who are penitent; Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of You, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The First Sunday in Lent

Lord, [You] Who for our sake fasted forty days and forty nights; give us grace to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may always obey Your godly discipline in righteousness and true holiness, to the honor and glory of Your Name: Who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Second Sunday in Lent

ALMIGHTY God, [You] Who see that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves; keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, so that we may be defended from all adversities which may befall the body and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Third Sunday in Lent

ALMIGHTY God, consider the heartfelt desires of Your humble servants and stretch out the right hand of Your Majesty to defend us against all our enemies; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Fourth Sunday in Lent

ALMIGHTY God, grant, we pray, that we, who deserve to be punished for our evil deeds, may by Your grace and mercy be spared; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Fifth Sunday in Lent commonly called Passion Sunday

ALMIGHTY God, look mercifully, we pray, upon Your people so that by Your great goodness they may be always governed and preserved both in body and soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Sunday next before Easter, commonly called Palm Sunday

ALMIGHTY and eternal God, [You] Who of Your tender love towards the human race sent Your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, to make our human nature and flesh His own, and to suffer death upon the Cross, that all peoples should follow the example of His great humility; in Your mercy grant that we may both follow the example of His patience, and also be made partakers of His resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Thursday before Easter, commonly called Maundy Thursday

ALMIGHTY Father, Whose dear Son, on the night before He suffered, instituted the Sacrament of His body and blood; grant that we may thankfully receive the same in remembrance of Him, Who in these holy mysteries gives us a pledge of eternal life; even Your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Good Friday

ALMIGHTY God, we pray You graciously to look on this Your family, for which our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed and given up into the hands of sinners and to suffer death upon the Cross; Who now lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

ALMIGHTY and eternal God, by Whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified, receive our petitions and prayers which we offer to You for the many different members of Your holy Church, so that every one in his vocation and ministry may truly and devoutly serve You, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

MERCIFUL God, [You] Who have made all peoples, and neither hate nothing that You have made nor desire the death of sinners, but rather desire that they should be converted and live; have mercy upon all who do not know You as You are revealed in the Gospel of Your Son. Take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt for Your Word and bring them home to Your fold, blessed Lord, so that they may all become one flock under one shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and ever. **Amen.**

The Evening before Easter Day.

GRANT, O Lord, that we who have been baptized into the death of Your blessed Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, may continually put to death our evil desires and be buried with Him; so that we may pass through the grave, the gate of death, to our joyful resurrection through His merits Who died, was buried, and rose again for us, Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## THE EASTER SEASON.

Easter Day.

ALMIGHTY God, [You] Who through Your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ have overcome death, and opened to us the gate of everlasting life; we humbly pray that, through Your grace going before us, good desires will enter into our minds, and, by Your continual help, we shall be enabled to bring them to their fulfillment; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

*¶ This Collect is to be said throughout Easter Week.*

Monday in Easter Week

Lord God, whose blessed Son made himself known to His disciples in the breaking of bread; open, we pray, the eyes of our faith, that we may see You in all Your works; through Your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Tuesday in Easter Week

ALMIGHTY God, grant, we pray, that we who celebrate with reverence the Easter Festival, may be found worthy to attain to eternal joys; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The First Sunday after Easter

ALMIGHTY God, [You] Who gave Your only Son to die for our sins, and to rise again for our justification; grant that we may put away the old leaven of malice and wickedness in order always to serve You in purity of life and truth, through the merits of Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Second Sunday after Easter

ALMIGHTY God, [You] Who have given Your only Son to be for us both a sacrifice for sin and also an example of godly life, give us grace that we may always receive with thankfulness the immeasurable benefit of His sacrifice, and also try day by day to follow in the blessed steps of His most holy life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Third Sunday after Easter.

ALMIGHTY God, [You] Who show the light of Your truth to them that are in error, so that they may return into the way of righteousness; grant to all those who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion that they may reject everything that is contrary to their profession and follow whatever is in agreement with it; through our Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

The Fourth Sunday after Easter

ALMIGHTY God, [You] Who alone can order the unruly wills and emotions of sinful men; grant unto Your people, that they may love the thing which You command, and desire that which You promise; so that among the many and varied changes of the world, our hearts may be firmly fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Fifth Sunday after Easter, commonly called Rogation Sunday

LORD God, from Whom all good things come; grant to us Your humble servants that by Your holy inspiration we may think those things that are good, and by Your merciful guidance may put them into practice; through our Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

THE SEASON OF ASCENSION.

The Ascension Day.

ALMIGHTY God, we believe that Your only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ has ascended into heaven; grant, we pray, that we may also in heart and mind ascend there, and continually dwell with Him; Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Sunday after Ascension Day.

LORD God, the King of glory, [You] Who exalted Your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to Your kingdom in heaven; we implore You not to leave us desolate, but to send Your Spirit to strengthen us and to exalt us to the place to which our Savior has already gone; Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God now and for ever. **Amen.**

WHITSUNTIDE

Pentecost, commonly called Whitsunday.

LORD God, [You] Who at Pentecost taught the hearts of Your faithful people by sending to them the light of Your Holy Spirit; grant that by the same Spirit we may have right discernment and always rejoice in His holy strengthening and protection; through the merits of Christ Jesus our Savior, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

TRINITY SEASON

Trinity Sunday

ALMIGHTY and eternal God, You Who have given us, Your servants, grace, by the confession of a true Faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity and, in the power of the divine Majesty, to worship the Unity; we humbly pray that You will keep us firm in the confession of this Faith and always defend us from all adversities; You Who live and reign, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**