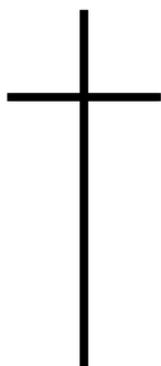


Oremus—
Let Us Pray!



Collects, Devotions, Litanies
from Ancient and Modern Sources

Edited by
Paul Zeller Strodach, D. D.

with a Foreword by the
Rev. Henry Eyster Jacobs, D. D., LL. D.

Revised for Modern Use by
Paul C. Stratman, S. T. M.

A Collection
of Prayers

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Oremus—Let Us Pray!

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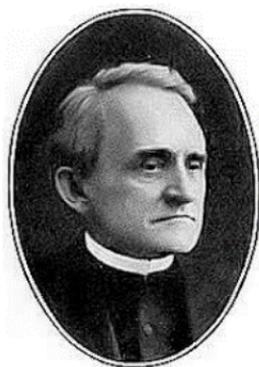
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Foreword



In Romans 8:26, Paul reminds us that all true prayer is the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believing child of God, and that as such it cannot be adequately expressed in human words. Nevertheless the divinely enkindled impulse to pray is as inseparable from spiritual life, as is the breath of our nostrils from the beat of our hearts by which our physical life is sustained.

The numerous models of prayer contained in Holy Scriptures, indicate habitual previous reflection on what was to be presented to God by devout worshipers. Far from being mere reveries, in which free rein is given the imagination to wander at large, these prayers are clear, definite, well-matured presentations of requests that are founded on the positive certainty of what God has revealed and graciously offers. While this applies also to the private prayers of the individual Christian in his closet, it is especially true where he who prays is leading the devotions of others, whether in the family or the congregation, or in conscious fellowship with the whole Church. As the Church of all ages has given expression to its faith in appropriate hymns, so also it has its classical hymns, adapted to varied circumstances of time and place, that are cherished as eternal possessions.

The contents of this little volume are correctly described in its title "Oremus." It is a call to common, united prayer, and an invitation, through such prayer, to share in all the blessings which Christ has prayed should be given His people throughout the entire history of the Church on earth. In brief compass, there is here condensed the fruit of many years' study of the Church's rich devotional literature and its practical use in the pastoral office and in the preparation of devotional Orders of Service.

The editor, having caught the spirit of this literature, now humbly offers his own additions to what has long been the common property of the Church. For wherever there is life there is growth; and the question may well be asked whether, as Christian people, we fully avail ourselves of the privilege of prayer, when beside the comprehensive petitions, whose value all acknowledge, special petitions for peculiar objects or with reference to peculiar circumstances be not also included.

Having read, in manuscript, with much edification, the volume herewith presented, we have no hesitancy in most heartily commending it as a manual for pastors and students, and a suggestive aid to the religious life of every Christian household.

Henry Eyster Jacobs
Mt. Airy, Philadelphia

Preface

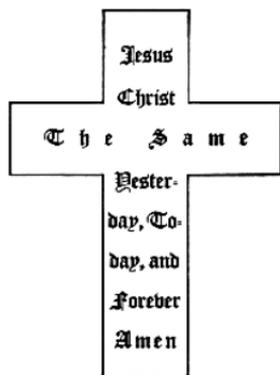
Dominus vobiscum—
Sursum corda—
Oremus—*Let us pray!*

As the years are laid away in the storehouse of the past and with them the memories of the throngs, ever growing, who have completed their journey under the banner of the cross, we who are still journeying find that what they have left us is not all

“History,” that what they were and what they have done are not all “Memories,” but living harmonies of the songs their hearts and lips have sung, the breath of their souls poured out in adoration and praise, the hunger of their spirits seeking the throne of grace, the crises of their lives—great and small, strong yet tender, humble yet bold, hesitant yet pleading, self-emptying yet seeking fullness,—put in the form which only those who know the love of Jesus in all of life’s way can use—the very soul of prayer.

As the years have been laid away, into the storehouse of the past have been garnered the prayers of God’s saints—thousands on thousands, known and unknown, some great in name—many all but nameless, some high in life—many of humble place but great in the kingdom—a great and mighty companionship this of the prayers of the ages! Of the harmonies of their souls, of their humilities and glories, of their struggles and victories, of their seekings and findings, what a treasure remains!—and this is ours today.

This little book catches but the faintest trace of this mighty chorus welling through the ages—echoing, re-echoing, like a glorious antiphonal song of century singing, praying, to century, down the stretch of time; but that which herein is gathered



comes from many times and many places, from many hearts, the breathings of the comings to God.

Much that is here has been found in sources away from the accustomed path of the meditating seeker; something of the inaccessible is brought close that one may make it his own; much originally breathed in tongues strange to our time and land comes garbed in the words we use, for the first time. Perhaps this has cooled the fervor or clouded over the glowing heart of the original, but still in colder tongue it remains—prayer. But all is to serve the hunger of the heart in its outpouring and feed the devotion of the soul in its communion with God.

The many causes for prayer and the many objects of prayer growing out of the many-sided activities of the pastoral office have guided, to a great degree, the choice and arrangement of these prayers. While the hope is to serve the pastor in his personal devotions, it will also be found that most of these devotions are suitable for general use.

The index indicates the source of the prayer in all but a comparatively few cases. Quite a number of those found in the ancient Sacramentaries have been newly translated; while others have been quoted in the language of the great Anglican liturgiologist, Dr. Neale, who loved the devotional treasures of the Church and labored so devotedly to make them appreciated. Those found in the *Kirchenordnungen* of the 16th Century and in other Germanic sources, are, we believe, translated for the first time.

Soli Deo gloria. Amen.

Paul Zeller Strodach

Reviser's Preface

Paul Zeller Strodach (1876-1947) served churches in New Jersey, Ohio and Pennsylvania, and produced *Oremus* in 1925. He was a leader in Lutheran liturgical scholarship in the early twentieth century and wrote books on worship protocol and church architecture in relation to worship. He was a translator of Luther, and many of his translations were adapted for the American edition of *Luther's Works*. He was also on the committees that prepared *Common Service Book* (1917) and *Service Book and Hymnal* (1959).



Along with Bright's *Ancient Collects*, Strodach's book, *Oremus*, is a source of ancient prayers used and referenced by many.

Like my edition of *Ancient Collects*, this book presents the prayers of *Oremus* with some revision:

- 1) Some prayers got a *simple mending*. *Thee, thou* and *thy* were replaced with *you* and *your*; *comest* and *livest* and *reignest* were replaced with *comes, lives* and *reigns*, etc., and if nothing more than that was needed, nothing more was done.
- 2) Some prayers needed to be *translated* from traditional liturgical English to contemporary liturgical English. The simple mending described above was done, but more obscure words had to be replaced with new words or sometimes replaced with short phrases. Sometimes a redundancy was removed if the repetition added little to the prayer. Since I saw this kind of revision as translation, I took care to keep the same meaning as Strodach's translations.
- 3) Some prayers, especially the longer ones, had so many redundancies and so many words that needed

to be replaced that the process of rendering the prayer became more of a *paraphrase*.

Most of the prayers in *Oremus* are themselves translations—not really originals. As Strodach noted in his Preface, some of the prayers from 16th century German sources were his own translations.

No special credit is given, but I think it can be assumed that the prayers with no attributions were written by Strodach himself. The prayers that bear written attributions to him were labeled as his in another resource.

Even though Strodach was a leader in Lutheran liturgical studies, some of his prayers for presiding at worship and for the service of holy communion contain a *sacrificial* theology. These have been modified to lessen the emphasis on sacrifice. Some prayers had petitions for transubstantiation, (“let the bread and wine become...”) which are here replaced with an ellipsis or an editing out. Some prayers also have the idea of “make us worthy” or “make us fit for your service” or “make us fit for heaven.” These have been modified to “prepare us” or “strengthen us for your service.”

The original *Oremus* had sources listed in the back of the book, which made a very clean copy. I assume that most readers will use this as a sourcebook, and will want documentation of the sources immediately available, so the sources are given with each prayer, along with reference numbers for easy identification.

Translations of Bible passages and references are chosen from different versions based on familiarity and appropriateness for use in public worship and private devotions. Quoted scriptures have Scripture references.

Paul C. Stratman
Beaver Dam, Wisconsin
The Conversion of St. Paul, 2023

Oremus—Let Us Pray

Lord, if you are not present, where shall I seek you? If you are everywhere, why do I not see you present? Lord, teach me to seek you, and show yourself to the seeker, because I cannot seek you unless you teach me. I cannot find you unless you show yourself to me. Let me seek you by desiring you, and desire you by seeking you. Let me find you by loving you, and love you by finding you. [1]

Anselm

Heavenly Father, dearest God, I am an unworthy, poor sinner, not worthy to lift my eyes or hands to you or to pray. But since you have commanded us all to pray, and since you have promised to hear, and since you have taught us by word and example through your dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, I come to you, according to your command, obedient to you, and relying on your gracious promise, and in the name of my Lord Jesus Christ, with all your holy Christians on earth, I pray as he has taught me: Our Father ... [2]

Martin Luther

O sacred heart of Jesus, filled with infinite love, broken by my ingratitude, and pierced by my many sins, and yet loving me still, accept this act of consecration that I make to you of all that I am and all that I have. Take every faculty of my soul and body, draw me day by day near and nearer to your sacred side, and there, as I can bear the lesson, teach me your blessed way. Amen. [3]

Roman

Collects and Prayers

Brief Prayers and Aspirations

On awakening

Say the Gloria.

Thanks to you, O blessed God, for the night and its rest—for the brightening day—shine on me, Lord. [4]

O God, you have given me another day of life, I devote it and myself to you. Amen. [5]

On rising

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Blessed be the Holy Trinity and the undivided Unity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I confess to him that he has kept me in his love and commit myself to his gracious keeping this day. Amen. [6]

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ the crucified, I arise. May he who has redeemed me, keep, protect, and defend me from all evil this day, always, and in the hour of my death. Amen. [7]

John Cosin

I offer you my heart, and I pray that every thought, word, and action and all my desires may be directed this day according to your good pleasure. Amen. [8]

Lord Jesus, I give you my body, my soul, my substance, my fame, my friends, my liberty, my life. Deal with me and all that is mine as it seems best to you, to the glory of your blessed name. Amen. [9]

Before Divine Worship

I will go to your house, adore you in your sanctuary and confess your name. Lord, receive my praise, the words of my mouth. Sanctify me, since I am a person with unclean lips, and send your holy angel to cleanse my mouth with a burning coal and make me worthy of praising you. Amen. [10]

Good, blessed Jesus, I will magnify you. Pray for me because there is no good in me. Amen. [11]

Lord, take away from us all coldness, all distractions, and fix our souls on you and your love, merciful Lord and Savior, in this our hour of prayer. Amen. [12]

Edward White Benson

After Divine Worship

Lord, in the greatness of your tender mercies, forgive me wherever I have knowingly or unknowingly sinned in your service. Amen. [13]

Lord, grant that what we have said with our lips we may believe in our hearts, and always faithfully complete. Amen. [14]

Jerome

The Lord grant that we, protected by his help, aided by his mercy, glorified by his resurrection, may lift up his praises in the holy church with pure minds. Amen. [15]

On Passing or Entering a Church

Lord, I love the habitation of your house and the place where your glory dwells. Lord, in the greatness of your tender mercies, I will enter your house, worship and confess your name. [16]

Before the Cross

Christ, I adore and bless you—through your Cross, you have redeemed the world. [17]

Lord, guard us by the sign of your cross, keep us safe under its guard, and deliver us from all the snares of the devil; you live and reign, now and forever. [18]

Jerome

Before Reading Holy Scripture

Your words are a lamp for my feet and a light for my path.
(Psalm 119:105)

My delight is in the law of the Lord, and I meditate on your law day and night. (adapted from Psalm 1:2)

Lord, to whom will I go? You have the words of eternal life. I have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God. (adapted from John 6:68-69)

On Beginning Any Work

Help, direct, control me, that in you, with you, for you, I may do this work. Without you I am nothing and can do nothing. Amen. [19]

Show me your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Make my steps steadfast in your ways, and do not let my feet be moved. [20]

I will follow you, Lord, wherever you go—because you have the words of eternal life. [21]

Grace before a Meal

Lord, give me your blessing, that I do not work for the food that spoils, but for the food that endures for eternal life. Amen. [22]

Lord, let me always hunger and thirst for righteousness. O God, my soul thirsts for the living water. With you is the fountain of life. Amen. [23]

Lord God, heavenly Father, bless us and these your gifts which we receive from your bountiful goodness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. [24]

Thanksgiving after a Meal

Glory be to you, O Lord, for you have refreshed me with food and drink. Make me always live for your praise. Amen. [25]

Thanks be to God for these and all his blessings bestowed on us. Amen. [26]

At Evening

Lord, from you nothing is hidden. With you there is no darkness at all. Shine your light in my heart, that walking in your ways, I may fall into no sin. Amen. [27]

Before Sleep

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Come, divine Love, grant me quiet sleep, that as I lay down, trusting in your protecting love, I may rest in you, now and forever. Amen. [28]

Pillow-prayer

God the Father bless me,
God the Son defend me,
God the Holy Spirit preserve me,
now and forever. Amen. [29]

Cardinal Bona's Via Compendii ad Deum

Collects

Adoration

O God, to know you is to live. To serve you is the health and joy of the soul. I praise you with my lips and my heart and with all that might which I have. I bless and adore you; who lives and reigns, one God, now and forever. Amen. [30]

Anselm

Blessed be God, the only God, three persons in one eternity of love.

Blessed be God, the lover of humanity, our Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier.

Blessed be God, the source of human love, through which all earthly friendships are blessed.

Blessed be God for all that he is.

Blessed be God for all that he has done.

Blessed in his Church on earth, and blessed in the height of heaven.

Blessed in the fellowship of the redeemed, and blessed amid all the heavenly host.

Blessed by all the chorus of humanity, and blessed by the whisper of each single soul.

Blessed from everlasting, blessed now, and blessed forever.

Blessed be God. Amen. [31]

Sursum Corda

To Jesus, the Life of our flesh, who gives life to those he wishes:

To Jesus, the Life of our soul, who came that we might live abundantly:

To Jesus, the Life of his Church, who loved her and gave himself for her:

Let all in earth and in Paradise who are reconciled by his death and saved by his life give glory and honor, worship and praise, now and forever. Amen. [32]

Sursum Corda

Spirit of Life, who fills all the world, I worship and adore you.
Spirit of Light, who teaches all the truth, I worship and adore
you.

Source of all gifts of nature and of grace, of knowledge natural
and supernatural, I worship and adore you.

As you have made and endowed me, taught and corrected me,
borne with me, recovered me, restored me, now with the
warmth of a quickened soul, with the devotion of a humble
mind, with the worship of a thankful heart,

Lord and giver of life, I worship and adore you. Amen. [33]

Sursum Corda

Glory to our ascended Lord, for he is with us always.

Glory to the Word of God, going forth with his armies,
conquering and to conquer.

Glory to him who has led captivity captive, and given gifts for
the strengthening of his saints.

Glory to him who has gone before to prepare a place in his
Father's house for us.

Glory to the author and finisher of our faith, that God in all
things may be glorified through Jesus Christ,

To him be all worship and praise, dominion, and glory, now and
for evermore. Amen. [34]

Sursum Corda

Faith

I believe in you, God the Father, my Maker.

I believe in you, God the Son, my Savior.

I believe in you, God the Holy Spirit, my Helper.

Glory be to you, Holy Trinity, One God. Amen. [35]

Hope

Merciful God, my hope is in you. Do not cast me out, but save
me for the sake of Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen. [36]



Also available:

