

How do I/we respond now?

- Through gratitude, penitence, and more gratitude
- By approaching our prayer life with deliberate, conscious, understanding and focus as opposed to recitations or rote.

Introduction

The answer to my morning devotions is Morning Prayer, Rite 1. Regardless of whether one prefers Rite 1 or 2, the structure is the same, but the Confession and Thanksgiving in Rite 1 are more specific. It begins with confession and ends with thanksgiving, with the usual and daily assigned prayers, readings, and canticles in between. When I begin my day with it, my morning worries and weariness disappear and I connect with God and celebrate his love and mercy in my life.

We've just been through three weeks of soul searching and self-examination. In this fourth week, we will use the wonderful tools provided by the church and make them our own. We have seen our sin and blessings, identified them, found where they are, and now we must take what we have discovered by owning them and moving forward. This week, we will focus on penitence, thanksgiving, and resources available to us.

Penitence: Prayer in which we confess our sins and make restitution where possible, with the intention to amend our lives (BCP, p. 857). The Prayer Book Catechism identifies penitence as one of the seven principal kinds of prayer (p. 856). In the sacramental rite of Reconciliation of a Penitent, those who repent of their sins may confess them to God in the presence of a priest and receive the assurance of pardon and the grace of absolution (p. 861). The BCP provides two forms for the Reconciliation of a Penitent (pp. 447-452).

The season of Lent is a penitential season of preparation for the Easter celebration of Jesus' resurrection. Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent. At the Ash Wednesday service, the celebrant invites the people to the observance of a holy Lent "by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word" (pp. 264-265). The Ash Wednesday service includes a Litany of Penitence (pp. 267-269).

(From Reconciliation of a Penitent

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/glossary/penitence/>)

In Morning Prayer, the confession of sin opens the service. In the regular service, the confession of sin and absolution follow the prayers of the people and precede the peace at the eucharist (BCP, pp. 331, 360). Another option is for the eucharist to begin with a Penitential Order (pp. 319-321, 351-353). The Penitential Order includes an acclamation and the confession of sin and absolution. It may also include the decalogue and one or more appropriate sentences of scripture. Compline includes a confession of sin and prayer for absolution (BCP, pp. 127-128). Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer may include a confession of sin and absolution (pp. 41-42, 62-63, 79-80, 116-117).

From Thanksgiving (Prayer)

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/glossary/thanksgiving-prayer/>)

The Catechism identifies thanksgiving as one of the seven principal kinds of prayer (BCP, p. 856). We offer thanksgiving to God “for all the blessings of this life, for our redemption, and for whatever draws us closer to God” (p. 857). The eucharistic prayer, from the *Sursum corda* through the people’s Amen, is known as the Great Thanksgiving (see BCP, p. 361). The BCP provides a variety of thanksgivings, including general thanksgivings, and thanksgivings for the church, national life, the social order, the natural order, and for family and personal life (pp. 836-841).

Creeds, Litanies, and Prayers! Oh My!

(from *Emerging Shorts*)

There are many prayers out there, and when people join in, sometimes the mind can wander, or the prayer can lose its meaning. I enjoy analyzing everything (you probably noticed that by now), so I use the prayers from a variety of sources, and I make them mine. I will substitute words that clarify meaning or me. I’ll add phrases or words, and I’ll change them for me. Hope this is not too heretical, but I don’t change any of the meanings. I just clarify them in my language for my brain, understanding, and relationship with God.

Many are opposed to liturgical prayer because they are composed by others and often said by rote, but I see them as a guide. The ancient Jews had a

prayer book and order of service. That is the format Christ used, but he warned that we don't worship the liturgy, we use the liturgy as a tool or guide for communicating with God. To me, that means to form it to my life, times, situation, and language without changing the meaning.

One of the ways I change my prayers is I insert where additional prayers and thoughts need to go. Other things I do include changing negative phrasing to positive phrasing, inserting words that clarify definitions, and combining different versions of the same prayers.

For example, the word "catholic" that is found in the creeds, means universal, embracing all, and is not referring to the religion named Catholic or Roman Catholic. Yet, many do not know this unless they question or are taught the difference.

For me, I learned about this when I was in my confirmation class. Even as a fifth grader, I analyzed everything and worked hard to understand all that I was required to memorize, so I asked the priest, "Father, if we are not Catholic, why do we claim to be Catholic in our creeds and beliefs?"

He thought for a moment and explained it to me this way. "The word catholic means universal and including all of us. Notice it's not capitalized. It's a common noun, not a proper noun. It's not the different religion." Those may not have been his exact words, but that was the way he explained it to me so that I could understand it. I understood the difference between a proper and common noun, and I recognized that the proper noun was the religion with a capital letter. When I say the creed and say "catholic," I think the words "all embracing, universal." To me, that is essential for all parts of creeds and prayers.

Another example is a word that follows right after it: apostolic. This can mean a few things, all of which support Christians in their worship. One meaning of "one catholic and apostolic church" means we believe in the all-inclusive church living together as the apostles did. This would create some interesting dilemmas when one analyzed how the apostles lived and what they did. Another thought this brings to mind is the amazing apostolic succession, a church unified under the complete lineage between Jesus, through the apostles, to us in 2022 through the laying on of hands and communion of saints. I love this because it unifies us with all believers, those living 2000 years ago, our ancestors, our deceased loved ones,

through everyone today, and then with all believers in generations yet to come. We are united with all of them through Christ, today, this very minute as we pray, now. There is no distinction between men, women, dead, alive, past, present, future.

These are very special spiritual tools that when used with purpose to guide us through whatever ordeal or moment, can bring us closer to God and bring Him closer to us. Everyone has favorite creeds, litanies, and prayers. I am going to share a few of mine, along with the some of my changes.

CREEDS

I like my version, which is a combination of both the Nicene and Apostle's Creeds, along with my interpretation of some of the words. Here are my issues with both creeds that I try to correct in my Morning Prayer:

- *Neither mentions Jesus's example or essential lessons that he taught when he lived. To me, His life and example lead the way for how I live my life as a Christ follower.*
- *The Apostle's Creed shortchanges the Holy Spirit. It's like this amazing God energy is added as an afterthought to go with the rest of the list.*

When I pray the daily office's Morning Prayer, I mix Rite I and Rite II language and use this.

*I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of Heaven and Earth,
And of all things, visible and invisible.*

*I believe in Jesus Christ, His only son, our Lord
He was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
Born of the Virgin Mary,
Dedicated his life to teaching, preaching, healing, bringing meaning and
truth, and honoring God. [I like to add this because it's important that we
remember his example and lessons].
For this, he Suffered under Pontius Pilate,
Was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead
On the third day, he rose again
He ascended into Heaven and is seated at the right hand of God.
From thence, he shall judge the quick and the dead
And His kingdom shall have no end.*

*I believe in the Holy Spirit
The Lord and giver of LIFE
Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son
Who with the Father and Son is worshipped and glorified
Who spoke through the prophets.*

*I believe in one holy universal and apostolic church
I believe in one baptism for the remission of sin
I believe in the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sin, and the
resurrection of the dead, and of life everlasting. Amen.*

Psalms:

I open many devotions using Psalms and hymns. Here are a few that I use, along with the changes I've made to create meaning for my life.

From Psalm 51 (In this one I change negative phrasing to positive phrasing).

*Open my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall proclaim thy praise,
Create in me a clean heart of God and renew a right spirit within me.
Keep me always in your presence, O Lord, and keep your holy spirit
strong within me [positive phrasing from psalm's version]
Give me the joy of thy saving help again
and sustain me with thy bountiful spirit.
Glory to the father, to the son, and to the holy spirit. As it was in the
beginning is now and ever shall be. World without end. Amen.*

From Psalm 100 Jubilate Deo – This is important to me because I believe it teaches us how we are to approach God, with song and thanks. When I was in a car accident, I felt my car teeter as it started to flip. I thought to myself, “I may meet Jesus today,” and decided to “enter his gates with praise and thanks. As my car flipped over and over, I listed all the wonderful things about my life that I was grateful to have and enjoy.

When I sing this, I revert to the way I sung it as a child during Sunday Morning Prayer service.

*Be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands; **

*serve the Lord with gladness
and come before his presence with a song.
Be ye sure that the Lord he is God;
it is he that hath made us and not we ourselves; **

*we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.
O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving
and into his courts with praise; **

*be thankful unto him and speak good of his Name.
For the Lord is gracious;
his mercy is everlasting; **

*and his truth endureth from generation to generation.
The mercy of the Lord is everlasting: O come, let us adore him.*

Litanies, Prayers, and Confessions

My favorite litany is the one attributed to St. Patrick, commonly called *St. Patrick's Breastplate*. The music and lyrics can be found in the *1982 Hymnal*, Hymn #370.

I bind unto myself today
the strong Name of the Trinity,
by invocation of the same,
the Three in One and One in Three.

I bind this day to me forever,
by power of faith, Christ's incarnation;
his baptism in Jordan river;
his death on Cross for my salvation;
his bursting from the spiced tomb;
his riding up the heavenly way;
his coming at the day of doom;
I bind unto myself today.

I bind unto myself the power
of the great love of cherubim;

the sweet 'Well done' in judgment hour;
the service of the seraphim.
Confessors' faith, Apostles' word,
the Patriarchs' prayers, the prophets' scrolls,
all good deeds done unto the Lord,
and purity of virgin souls.

I bind unto myself today
the virtues of the star lit heaven,
the glorious sun's life giving ray,
the whiteness of the moon at even,
the flashing of the lightning free,
the whirling wind's tempestuous shocks,
the stable earth, the deep salt sea
around the old eternal rocks.

I bind unto myself today
The power of God to hold and lead,
his eye to watch, His might to stay,
his ear to hearken to my need.
the wisdom of my God to teach,
his hand to guide, His shield to ward;
the word of God to give me speech,
his heavenly host to be my guard.

Against the demon snares of sin,
the vice that gives temptation force,
the natural lusts that war within,
the hostile men that mar my course;
or few or many, far or nigh,
in every place and in all hours,
against their fierce hostility
I bind to me these holy powers.

Against all Satan's spells and wiles,
against false words of heresy,

against the knowledge that defiles,
against the heart's idolatry,
against the wizard's evil craft,
against the death wound and the burning,
the choking wave, the poisoned shaft,
protect me, Christ, till Thy returning.

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me.
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

I bind unto myself the Name,
the strong Name of the Trinity,
by invocation of the same,
the Three in One and One in Three.
By Whom all nature hath creation,
eternal Father, Spirit, Word:
praise to the Lord of my salvation,
salvation is of Christ the Lord. Amen.

The Confession of Sin (from Rite I)

*Almighty and most merciful Father,
we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep,
we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts,
we have offended against thy holy laws,
we have left undone those things which we ought to have done,
and we have done those things which we ought not to have done.
But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us,
spare thou those who confess their faults,
restore thou those who are penitent,
according to thy promises declared unto mankind*

*in Christ Jesus our Lord;
and grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake,
that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life,
to the glory of thy holy Name. Amen.*

*The Almighty and merciful Lord grant us absolution and remission of all
our sins, true repentance, amendment of life, and the grace and
consolation of his Holy Spirit. Amen.*

The Lord's Prayer

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread [it is here that I include the needs for the
day, such as, wisdom, discernment, patience, focus, etc.].
And forgive us our trespasses [I list them here],
as we forgive those who trespass against us [I list those here].
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.*

The General Thanksgiving

*Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
we thine unworthy servants
do give thee most humble and hearty thanks
for all thy goodness and loving-kindness
to us and to all men.
We bless thee for our creation, preservation,
and all the blessings of this life [here I may insert specific blessings];
but above all for thine inestimable love
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ;
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.*

*And, we beseech thee,
give us that due sense of all thy mercies,
that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful;
and that we show forth thy praise,
not only with our lips, but in our lives,
by giving up our selves to thy service,
and by walking before thee*

*in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost,
be all honor and glory, world without end. Amen.*

From the Suffrages: This one covers everything.

V. O Lord, show thy mercy upon us;
R. And grant us thy salvation.
V. Endue thy ministers with righteousness;
R. And make thy chosen people joyful.
V. Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;
R. For only in thee can we live in safety.
V. Lord, keep this nation under thy care;
R. And guide us in the way of justice and truth.
V. Let thy way be known upon earth;
R. Thy saving health among all nations.
V. Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;
R. Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.
V. Create in us clean hearts, O God;
R. And sustain us with thy Holy Spirit.

A Prayer for Today (from Forward Movement)

*O God, give me strength to live another day
Let me not turn cowardly to its difficulties or recreant to its duties
Keep me sweet and sound of heart, in spite of ingratitude, treachery, or
meanness
Preserve me from minding little stings or giving them.*

*Help me keep my heart clean, and live so honestly, fearlessly, [here I add
whatever qualities I need for the day, such as, lovingly, spiritually, wisely,
etc.] so that no outward failure can dishearten me, [depress me,] or take
away the joy of conscious integrity.*

*Open wide the eyes of my soul so that I can see good [and God] in all
things.*

*Grant me this day some new vision of thy truth
Inspire me with the spirit of joy and gladness
And make me a cup of strength for suffering souls.
In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.*

Reflection: How do you pray? When do you pray? Where do you pray?

Response: Review the litanies, creeds, and prayers that touch your soul. Break them down and fill them in with your reflections. Include a minimum of one litany, a confessional prayer, a prayer of thanksgiving, and at least one other. Create a prayer page to use. Feel free to copy and paste from above and revise to suite your needs, ensuring you keep the same essential meanings.

Prayer: Find a quiet place and time and pray your prayers for morning or evening devotions.

Complete your weekly reflection sheet.

Sources:

The Book of Common Prayer (BCP) 1979

TheEpiscopalChurch.org/glossary

Forward Movement: <https://prayer.forwardmovement.org/home>

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Hymnal 1982