

SAINT AUGUSTINE'S
PRAYER BOOK

A Book of Devotions

Revised Edition, 2014

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Prepared by
FORWARD MOVEMENT

on behalf of

THE ORDER OF THE HOLY CROSS

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Foreword to the Revised Edition

Like many Episcopal priests, I first found a copy of the *Saint Augustine's Prayer Book* during seminary, and, like many Episcopalians, lay and ordained, I found it had much to teach me as the book became a constant companion over the years. I accepted the responsibility of editing a new version with genuine affection. There is a great deal of substantial and helpful material here, and with some careful omissions, gentle revision, and new material, the book can teach again what it is to pray, what sin is, and what sort of persons the Spirit is trying to make of us.

I am humbled by the trust the Order of the Holy Cross placed in me, allowing me the gift of revising this resource they began publishing in 1947. I am also thankful for the time that my parish has provided, for hospitality at Sewanee's School of Theology, and for countless conversations with people committed to the work of prayer that shapes souls and deepens faith. The partnership with Forward Movement and Derek Olsen made this revision possible.

Anglicanism teaches a three-fold life of prayer—regular participation in the Eucharist, some form of daily prayer that is structured and connected to the larger Church, and the individual's own prayer. This

book is aimed mostly at the last of those three. In part, the book offers prayers and acts of devotion to help prepare an individual for public worship. As part of private reflection and prayer, the tradition from which this book grows includes prayers and litanies addressed to saints and angels. While such expressions would not be part of public worship, they allow the individual to more consciously pray within the “blessed company of all faithful people.” Other litanies and prayers offer a more personal and effective response than corporate worship includes.

In working on this project and reflecting on similar books, I am struck with the way in which these old manuals see prayer as the means of shaping a soul—of seeking virtues and acknowledging faults with hope of amendment of life. People often say “prayer changes things.” In many of these prayers, and I trust in those who use them, there is a desire to change—to be transformed and renewed. In a time when many speak of spirituality as opposed to religion, here is religion that is deeply spiritual.

May God use this book to strengthen our prayer and to enrich our participation in the sacraments and to create in us better habits and more faithful lives.

David Cobb
The Church of the Ascension
Chicago, Illinois
March, 2014

Remember Christian Soul

That today and every day you have

God to glorify.

Jesus to imitate.

Salvation to work out with fear and trembling.

A body to use rightly.

Sins to repent.

Virtues to acquire.

Hell to avoid.

Heaven to gain.

Eternity to hold in mind.

Time to profit by.

Neighbors to serve.

The world to enjoy.

Creation to use rightly.

Slights to endure patiently.

Kindnesses to offer willingly.

Justice to strive for.

Temptations to overcome.

Death perhaps to suffer.

In all things, God's love to sustain you.

The Christian's Obligations

HOLY HABITS AND PATTERNS OF PRAYER

What is the duty of all Christians?

The duty of all Christians is to follow Christ; to come together week by week for corporate worship; and to work, pray, and give for the spread of the kingdom of God.

— *THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER*, p. 856

The purpose of this book is to help Christians, particularly within The Episcopal Church and Anglican tradition, to develop strong habits of prayer, to prepare for and participate in public liturgy thoughtfully, with a spirit of expectation and openness to God's presence, and to nurture a mind and soul ready to work, pray, and give for the spread of the kingdom. It is a book of prayer, and it is also a book of practice—of disciplines, habits, and patterns that will help build a Christian spiritual life. It should be used in connection with the more primary resources of the Bible and *The Book of Common Prayer*, and as

part of a spiritual life that is nurtured by the local Christian community and regular public worship.

Times of Prayer: Days and Seasons

The passing hours of the day and night, the changing seasons of the year, and days of particular significance all affect the shape and content of prayer. Morning comes with a thanksgiving for the light and a new call to work toward God's purposes. Evening brings a sense of completion and the opportunity for taking stock. Late in the night, our thoughts turn to God as shelter and protector.

Christians normally participate in the celebration of the Eucharist on Sunday. Each Sunday is a memorial of the Lord's Resurrection on the first day of the week. Sunday also calls to mind the first day of Creation and the gift of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost—the Sunday that ends the Great Fifty Days of Easter. Light, life, and the empowering Spirit are the focus of every Sunday of the year.

Friday is a reminder of Good Friday and, outside of the Fifty Days of Easter and the Twelve Days of Christmas, is marked by abstinence. Prayers on this day will hold in mind the mystery of Christ's death and the triumph of the Cross. Saturday—the Sabbath day—recalls God's rest as creation was complete and

the Lord's Sabbath rest in the tomb. It is a day of preparation for worship on the Lord's Day. Time and the changing days mean something: they reveal the mystery of God in Christ, and they call us to know ourselves within that great narrative. Christians share in public worship and mark the changing seasons, keeping holy days and observing the Church's fasts, to strengthen their own spiritual life and to encourage others in their spiritual life. In private prayer and in public worship, these feasts and fasts, the festivals and seasons, form a pattern of worship that honors God and remembers the saints while giving meaning to time as it passes.

Abstinence and Fasting

Abstinence means to refrain from some particular type of food or drink. One traditional expression of abstinence is to avoid meat on Fridays in Lent or through the entire year, except in the seasons of Christmas and Easter. It is common to undertake some particular act of abstinence during the entire season of Lent. This self-discipline may be helpful at other times, as an act of solidarity with those who are in need or as a bodily expression of prayer.

To fast is to avoid eating altogether or to eat a very limited diet: traditionally one restrained meal

and two much smaller ones. Fasting is traditional on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. It is commendable to make an offering to some charitable effort equivalent to the cost of whatever the fast kept you from consuming.

Beyond the simplest and most normal habits of marking Fridays or Lenten weekdays, it would be unwise to undertake severe acts of abstinence or fasting without conversation with a spiritual director or a wise and thoughtful priest. As an end in themselves, fasting and other disciplines can become a point of pride or, if taken too far, unhealthy. Those who cannot choose their food or those involved in necessary work should eat what is provided or what is necessary for health and energy.

These disciplines are meant to provide exercise in self-control and to focus attention—either, as in Lent and Holy Week, on the sufferings of Jesus, or on the daily deprivations that those in need endure. It is not at all the same thing as a diet or self-improvement effort, though there may be physical benefits. The focus is not on our self but on God, as we turn to prayer with more attention and more effort.

Confession

Here the old saying holds true: “all may, some should, none must.” Many people find a regular pattern of confession an important part of remaining accountable in resisting sin and growing in holy patterns of living. Others will turn to this sacrament in times of particular concern, when in need of “help and counsel...that you may receive the benefit of absolution, and spiritual counsel and advice; to the removal of scruple and doubt, the assurance of pardon, and the strengthening of your faith” (*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 317). In some parishes, times for confession will be announced, particularly before the great festivals; in any parish, one can always approach the priest and ask for an appointment. In some situations, you may find it helpful to seek out a priest who is particularly experienced in spiritual direction or in hearing confessions.

This book includes one approach to preparing for confession; others are available. If you intend to make a first confession, it might be helpful to have a conversation with the priest beforehand and to seek particular advice in preparation.

Stewardship of Time and Resources

Giving is an integral part of a faithful and joyful Christian life, just as the Offertory is an essential aspect of the Eucharistic Action. The question is not whether to give, but how much. For many, the standard of the tithe—10 percent of one's income—is the basis for giving. For others, whose income is far beyond what is necessary, a tithe may be only a beginning point. For some, who face overwhelming demands to care for family or others, a tithe may be too much. Each of us must think realistically about finances, make provision for those who depend upon us, and use what God has given us wisely and as a reflection of our faith. Bishop Jeremy Taylor wrote in the 1600s in *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living*, “He that gains all that he can gain lawfully this year, possibly next year will be tempted to gain something unlawfully.” In the same way, if we give only what we think we can easily spare, we will have reason to give even less next year. Even if one contributes more substantially by check, electronic payments, or other methods, placing something in the offering plate at the Eucharist makes a concrete and specific connection between each worshiper and what is offered at the altar.

A Christian rule of life will also take seriously the use of time. Paradoxically, time is constant—twenty-four hours in a day and seven days in the week—and yet seems to hang or to disappear. A rule of life will ask us to consider and decide how we will spend the time that we are given. There is a venerable tradition of Sunday being treated as a different day, set aside for public worship, renewing ties of family and friendship, and enjoying rest and recreation. In the same way, feasts and fasts through the year will impinge on our schedule. Prayer can be integrated into the active rhythms of life, but it will likely be no more effective than our willingness to allow days and seasons to interrupt and to shape our schedules and calendars. To grow and flourish, we need to be able to spend time in exercise and rest, in study and at work, with friends and family, and in solitude. The proportion that different aspects of life require will change through the year and across the years. What does not change is our responsibility to use the life we are given wisely and with an awareness that we are stewards of time and of resources.

Participating in the Eucharist

In 1 Corinthians, Paul warns against receiving the Eucharist without discerning the Lord's Body. The Blessed Sacrament and the Body of Christ who gather to celebrate it are both tremendous gifts. To enter that gathering and to receive that food without thought or awareness is to take for granted the gift and the Giver. The Exhortation and the Bidding to Confession in *The Book of Common Prayer* ask us to know how we have offended and what amendment of life we intend. Clearly, there is reason to approach the Sacrament with preparation, with prayer that makes us aware of our self, of the community around us, and of God's own grace and call to us.

In the past, it was common to prepare for Communion by a time of fasting. This fast was never an act of penance but one of homage to our Lord. When a communicant fasts before receiving, the Blessed Sacrament becomes the day's first nourishment. While this is no longer required, it is a commendable discipline and reinforces the mental and spiritual preparation needed for a thoughtful and intentional participation in the Holy Eucharist.

It is normal to receive Communion only once a day. If for some particular reason you are at two celebrations on one day—say your Sunday parish

Eucharist in the morning and a special event in the afternoon—there is no reason not to receive a second time, though many would choose to simply receive a blessing at one of the two liturgies.

It is only reasonable and considerate to make every effort to arrive before the beginning of the liturgy, in order to make a prayerful preparation and not to distract others by arriving after the service is begun. A common discipline would expect that anyone receiving Communion would arrive before the Gospel is read.

If it is absolutely necessary to leave after the distribution of Communion and before the end of the liturgy, it is often best not to return to your seat, but to stop in the rear of the church and make an act of thanksgiving there before leaving as quietly and unobtrusively as possible.

The normal practice is to receive the consecrated bread in the palm of the right hand, supported by the left. Take care not to cup the hands in such a way that the bread could fall between the hands. If kneeling, lift your hands about shoulder height. Gloves should not be worn to receive the Sacrament.

Help guide the cup to your mouth by taking hold of the base. If you are receiving by intinction, be very careful not to touch more than the edge of the bread

into the wine, in order to make sure your fingers are not in contact with the wine or the cup. More germs are conveyed in that manner than in drinking from the cup.

This book contains prayers to be used in preparation for participation in the Eucharist and as thanksgiving afterward. Some deliberate and thoughtful prayer, before and after, is essential to an active and informed participation. These disciplines will leave us more ready to receive the immense gift that God offers us as we hear scripture proclaimed, as we share in Christ's high priestly prayer for the whole world, and as we offer and receive the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.

Devotions on the Resurrection and for Eastertide

A DEVOTION FOR EASTER MORNING

Ancient sources provide this for a station during the procession before the principal Eucharist on Easter Day.

An angel of the Lord in dazzling apparel was seated at the sepulcher. Which, when the women beheld, they were affrighted, and stood afar off. Then the angel answered and said unto them,

R. Fear ye not, for he whom ye seek among the dead now liveth, I say unto you, and with him hath risen from the dead the life of all people. Alleluia.

V. O Praise him that was crucified in the flesh, and glorify him that was buried for you and adore him rising from the dead.

R. Fear ye not...

V. Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him. The Lord hath risen from the grave.

R. Who for us did hang upon the tree. Alleluia.

A GRADUAL FOR EASTER

This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

V. Give thanks unto the Lord for he is gracious; because his mercy endureth for ever.

R. *Alleluia.*

V. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

R. *Alleluia.*

This is the day...

STATIONS OF THE RESURRECTION

Taken as a whole, the gospel accounts of the Risen Lord's encounters with his disciples are full of movement. It seems someone is always going somewhere—often arriving too late and often surprised at what is found. This devotion, modeled in some ways on the Stations of the Cross, draws the various gospel stories together and provides a framework for reflecting on each of them.

There are many ways to use the Stations of the Resurrection in your spiritual journey. The gospel accounts and prayers could be read quietly and in one place. Stations might be prepared, either with images or perhaps with candles set in various locations around the nave, which could be lit from the Paschal Candle as the procession moves from station to station. An individual might plan a walk or hike, with various stopping points to read the meditations and with the time spent walking between stations used for prayer and meditation. And like the Stations of the Cross, these are suggestions that can be adapted to a range of situations.

This devotion interweaves the accounts from the various gospels. Each gospel has its own perspective that is expressed in the details and the chronology it presents. This compilation is intended as a means of reflection and prayer on the larger witness to the Living Christ that the four gospels offer together.

OPENING PRAYERS

Rejoice now, heavenly hosts and choirs of angels.

*Rejoice now, all the whole earth,
bright with a glorious splendor.*

Rejoice and be glad now, Mother Church, and let
your holy courts in radiant light, resound with the
praises of your people.

*For in Christ's resurrection,
joy has come to the whole earth.*

O ALMIGHTY GOD, we come to seek the Living
among the living and to follow Christ as he
goes before us to Galilee and into joys eternal. Let
the hope of his Resurrection shine in our praises, as
it leads us into more faithful witness and more joyful
service; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and
reigns in glory everlasting. *Amen.*

*This hymn (to the tune Puer nobis or some other tune of the same
meter) may be sung as the procession moves from station to station.*

The Light of radiant dawn streams out,
And praise fills heaven all about.
Earth echoes the exultant shout,
And groaning hell is put to rout.

THE FIRST STATION

THE EARTHQUAKE

And suddenly there was an earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men.

— MATTHEW 28:2-4

The earth trembled and was still, alleluia.

*When God arose to judgment and to help all
the meek upon earth, alleluia.*

Let us pray.

Break open our lives and pour your light into the night of our sorrow, that we may live in the joy of your resurrection, now and evermore. *Amen.*

The Risen Christ in glory bright
Has banished death's eternal night,
And having harrowed hell with might
Brings forth the sleeping saints to light.

THE SECOND STATION

AT THE TOMB

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

— MARK 16:1-8

Christ is risen from the dead, alleluia.

And goes before you into Galilee, alleluia.

Let us pray.

Grant us courage, O Lord, like the women who came to your tomb early on the first day of the week, and when fear and sorrow might overwhelm us, make us to hear and heed the angel's message, "Do not be afraid," that we may ever follow where you have gone before. *Amen.*

Entombed within the stone of late,
Securely sealed, where soldiers wait,
Now shining in triumphant state,
Christ rises victor from death's gate.

THE THIRD STATION

PETER AND THE BELOVED DISCIPLE GO TO THE TOMB

Mary Magdalene ran, and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

— *JOHN 20:2-10*

Those who sowed with tears, alleluia.

Will reap with songs of joy, alleluia.

Let us pray.

Lord Jesus, let our minds rest in your Word, so that when doubt and grief would overwhelm us, faith will open our eyes to see your hand at work in our life and enable us to turn toward the future with hope and toward each other in perfect charity. *Amen.*

The light dawns now, the shadows clear,
And yet their hearts are held in fear.
The empty tomb before them lies,
And still they mourn their Lord so dear.