

# The Form of Church Prayers and Hymns with the Manner of Administering the Sacraments and Consecrating Marriage According to the Custom of the Ancient Church

¶ *On working days, the Minister frames the sort of exhortation to prayer which may seem suitable to him, adapting it to the times and to the topic of his sermon.*

¶ *On Sunday morning [Strasbourg: and on the day of prayers], the following form is generally used.*

## **Invocation**

Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth. Amen.

## **Confession**

My brethren, let each of you present himself before the face of the Lord, and confess his faults and sins, following my words in his heart:

O Lord God, eternal and almighty Father, we confess and sincerely acknowledge before Your holy Majesty that we are poor sinners, conceived and born in iniquity and corruption, prone to do evil, incapable of any good, and that in our depravity we transgress Your holy commandments without end or ceasing; therefore we purchase for ourselves, through Your righteous judgment, our ruin and perdition. Nevertheless, O Lord, we are grieved that we have offended You, and we condemn ourselves and our sins with true repentance, beseeching Your grace to relieve our distress. O God and Father, most gracious and full of compassion, have mercy upon us in the name of Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. And as You do blot out our sins and stains, magnify and increase in us day by day the grace of Your Holy Spirit; that as we acknowledge our unrighteousness with all our heart, we may be moved by that sorrow which shall bring forth true repentance in us, mortifying all our sins, and producing in us the fruits of righteousness and innocence which are pleasing to You, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **Absolution**

¶ *Now the Minister delivers some word of Scripture to console the conscience; and then he pronounces the Absolution in this manner:*

Let each of you truly acknowledge that he is a sinner, humbling himself before God, and believe that the heavenly Father wills to be gracious unto him in Jesus Christ.

To all those that repent in this way, and look to Jesus Christ for their salvation, I declare that the absolution of sins is effected, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## **Singing of the First Table of Commandments**

¶ *Now the congregation sings the first table of the Commandments, after which the Minister says:*

## **Collect**

The Lord be with us. Let us pray to the Lord:

Heavenly Father, full of goodness and grace, as You are pleased to declare Your holy will unto Your poor servants, and to instruct them in the righteousness of Your law, grant that it may also be inscribed and impressed upon our hearts in such a way, that in all our life we may endeavor to serve and obey none beside You. Neither impute to us at all the transgressions which we have committed against Your law: that, perceiving Your manifold grace upon us in such abundance, we may have cause to praise and glorify You through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Amen.

## **Singing of the Second Table of God's Commandments**

¶ *While the Congregation sings the rest of the Commandments, the Minister goes into the pulpit; and then he offers prayers of the type which follows:*

Strasbourg

### Prayer for Illumination

Let us call upon our Heavenly Father, Father of all goodness and mercy, beseeching Him to cast the eye of His clemency upon us, His poor servants, neither impute to us the many faults and offences which we have committed, provoking His wrath against us. But as we look into the face of the Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, whom He has appointed Mediator between Himself and us, let us beseech Him, in whom is all fullness of wisdom and light, to vouchsafe to guide us by His Holy Spirit into the true understanding of His holy doctrine, making it productive in us of all the fruits of righteousness: to the glory and exaltation of His name, and to the instruction and edification of His Church. And let us pray unto Him in the name and favor of His well-beloved Son, Jesus Christ, as He has taught us to pray, saying: Our Father, who art in heaven...

¶ *Or:*

Almighty and gracious Father, since our whole salvation stands in our knowledge of your Holy Word, strengthen us now by your Holy Spirit that our hearts may be set free from all worldly thoughts and attachments of the flesh, so that we may hear and receive that same Word, and, recognizing your gracious will for us, may love and serve you with earnest delight, praising and glorifying you in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Geneva

¶ *That doen, a Psalm is sung by the Congregation. Then the Minister commences again to pray, beseeching God for the grace of his Holy Spirit, that his Word may be faithfully expounded to the honor of his name and the edification of the Church, and be received with such humility and obedience which it deserves. The form is left to the discretion of the Minister.*

### Psalm

### Prayer for Illumination

### Scripture Lesson

### Sermon

### Pastoral Prayer

Almighty God, heavenly Father, You have promised to grant our requests which we make unto You in the name of Your well-beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord: by whose teaching and that of His apostles we have also been taught to gather together in His name, with the promise that He will be in the midst of us, and will be our intercessor with You, to obtain all those things for which we agree to ask on earth.

First we have Your commandment to **pray for those whom You have established over us as rulers** and governors; and then, for all the needs of Your people, and indeed of all mankind. Wherefore, with trust in Your holy doctrine and promises, and now especially that we are gathered here before Your face and in the name of Your Son, our Lord Jesus, we do heartily beseech You, our gracious God and Father, in the name of our only Savior and Mediator, to grant to us the free pardon of our faults and offenses through Your infinite mercy, and to draw and lift up our thoughts and desires unto You in such way that we may be able to call upon You will all our heart, yea agreeably to Your good pleasure and only-reasonable will.

Wherefore we pray, O heavenly Father, for all princes and lords, Your servants, to whom You have entrusted the administration of Your justice, and especially for the magistrates of this city. May it please You to impart to them Your Spirit, who alone is good and truly sovereign, and daily establish them in the same, that with true faith they may acknowledge Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, to be King of kings and Lord of lords, as You have given Him all power in heaven and earth. May they seek to serve Him and to exalt His kingdom in their government, guiding and ruling their subjects, who are the work of Your hands and the sheep of Your pasture, in accordance with Your good pleasure. So may all of us both here and throughout the earth, being kept in perfect peace and quietness, serve You in all godliness and virtue, and being delivered and protected from the fear of our enemies, give praise unto You all the days of our life.

We pray also, O faithful Father and Savior, for **all those whom You have ordained pastors** of Your faithful people, to whom You have entrusted the care of souls and the ministry of the holy Gospel. Direct and guide them by the Holy Spirit, that they may be found faithful and loyal ministers of Your glory, having but one goal: that all the poor, wandering, and lost sheep be gathered and restored to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Chief Shepherd and Prince of bishops, so that they may grow and increase in Him daily unto all righteousness and holiness. Will You, on the contrary, deliver all the churches from the mouths of ravening wolves and from all mercenaries who seek their own ambition or profit, but never the exaltation of Your holy name alone, nor the salvation of Your flock.

We pray now, O most gracious and merciful Father, for **all men everywhere**. As it is Your holy will to be acknowledged the Savior of the whole world, through the redemption wrought by Your Son Jesus Christ, grant that those who are still estranged from the knowledge of Him, being in the darkness and captivity of error and ignorance, may be brought by the illumination of Your Holy Spirit and the preaching of Your Gospel to the straight way of salvation, which is to know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. Grant that those whom You have already visited with Your grace and enlightened with the knowledge of Your Word may grow in goodness day by day, enriched by Your spiritual blessings: so that all together we may worship You with one heart and one voice, giving honor and reverence to Your Son Jesus Christ, our Master, King, and Lawgiver.

Likewise, O God of all comfort, we commend unto You all **those whom You do visit and chasten with cross and tribulation**, whether by poverty, prison, sickness, or banishment, or any other misery of the body or affliction of the spirit. Enable them to perceive and understand Your fatherly affection which You do chasten them unto their correction, that they may turn unto You with their whole heart, and, having turned, receive full consolation and deliverance from every ill.

Finally, O God and Father, grant also to **those who are gathered here** in the name of Your Son Jesus, to hear His Word and keep His holy Supper, that we may acknowledge truly, without hypocrisy, what perdition is ours by nature, what condemnation we deserve and heap upon ourselves from day to day by our unhappy and disordered life. Wherefore, seeing that there is nothing of good in us and that our flesh and blood cannot inherit Your kingdom, may we yield ourselves completely, with all our love and steadfast faith, to Your dear Son, our Lord, the only Savior and Redeemer:

¶ *What concludes this prayer is a long paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer*

To the end that He, dwelling in us, may mortify our old Adam, renewing us for a better life, by which Your name, according as it is holy and worthy, may be exalted and glorified everywhere and in all places, and that we all creatures may give You true and perfect obedience, even as Your angels and heavenly messengers have no desire but to fulfill Your commandments. Thus may Your will be done without any contradiction, and all men apply themselves to serve and please You, renouncing their own will and all the desires of their flesh. In this manner may You have lordship and dominion over us all, and may we learn more and more each day to submit and subject ourselves to Your majesty. In such a way may You be King and Ruler over all the earth, guiding Your people by the scepter of Your Word and the power of Your Spirit, confounding Your enemies by the might of Your truth and righteousness. And thus may every power and principality which stands against Your glory be destroyed and abolished day by day, till the fulfillment of Your kingdom be manifest, when You shall appear in judgment.

Grant that we who walk in the love and fear of Your name may be nourished by Your goodness; and supply us with all things necessary and expedient to eat our bread in peace. Then, seeing that You care for us, we may better acknowledge You as our Father and await all good gifts from Your hand, withdrawing our trust from all creatures, to place it entirely in You and Your goodness.

And since in this mortal life we are poor sinners, so full of weakness that we fail continually and stray from the right way, may it please You to pardon our faults by which we are beholden to Your judgment; and through that remission, deliver us from the obligation of eternal death in which we stand. Be pleased, therefore, to turn aside Your wrath from us, neither impute to us the iniquity which is in us; even as we, by reason of Your commandment, forget the injuries done to us, and instead of seeking vengeance, solicit the good for our enemies.

Finally, may it please You to sustain us by Your power for the time to come, that we may not stumble because of the weakness of our flesh. And especially as we of ourselves are so frail that we are not able to stand fast for a single moment, while, on the other hand, we are continually beset and assailed by so many

enemies – the devil, the world, sin and our own flesh never ceasing to make war upon us – will You strengthen us by Your Holy Spirit and arm us with Your grace, that we may be able to resist all temptations firmly, and persevere in this spiritual battle until we shall attain full victory, to triumph at last in Your kingdom with our Captain and Protector, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

¶ *It is proper to observe that on the Sunday prior to the celebration of the Lord's Supper, the following admonitions are made to the people; first, that each person prepare and dispose himself to receive it worthily and with such reverence that it deserves; second, that children may certainly not be brought forward unless they are well instructed and have made profession of their faith in the church; third, that if strangers are there who may still be untaught and ignorant, they proceed to present themselves for private instruction. On the day of the Lord's Supper, the Minister touches upon it in the conclusion of his Sermon, or better, if there is occasion, he preaches the whole Sermon about it, in order to explain to the people what our Lord wishes to say and signify by this mystery, and in what way it behooves us to receive it.*

## **Singing of the Apostles' Creed**

### **Prayer of Consecration**

Inasmuch as we have made confession of our faith to testify that we are the children of God, hoping therefore that He will take heed of us as a gracious Father, let us pray to Him, saying:

Heavenly Father, full of all goodness and mercy, as our Lord Jesus Christ has not only offered His body and blood once on the cross for the remission of our sins, but also desires to impart them to us as our nourishment unto everlasting life, we beseech You to grant us this grace: that we may receive at His hands such a great gift and benefit with true sincerity of heart and with ardent zeal. In steadfast faith may we receive His body and blood, yea Christ Himself entire, who, being true God and true man, is truly the holy bread of heaven which gives us life. So may we live no longer in ourselves, after our nature which is entirely corrupt and vicious, but may He live in us and lead us to the life that is holy, blessed and everlasting: whereby we may truly become partakers of the new and eternal testament, the covenant of grace, assured that it is Your good pleasure to be our gracious Father forever, never reckoning our faults against us, and to provide for us, as Your well-beloved children and heirs, all our needs both of soul and body. Thus may we render praise and thanks unto You without ceasing, and magnify Your name in word and deed.

Grant us, therefore, O heavenly Father, so to celebrate this day the blessed memorial and remembrance of Your dear Son, to exercise in the same, and to proclaim the benefit of His death, that, receiving new growth and strength in faith and in all things good, we may with so much greater confidence proclaim You our Father and glory in You; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, in whose name we pray unto You, as He has taught us: Our Father, who art in heaven...

### **The Words of Institution**

Let us hear how Jesus Christ instituted His holy Supper for us, as St. Paul relates it in the eleventh chapter of First Corinthians:

“For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks, He broke it and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’ In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, ‘this cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the body.’” (1 Cor. 11:23-29)

### **Instruction on the Holy Supper**

We have heard, my brethren, how our Lord observed His Supper with His disciples, from which we learn that strangers and those who do not belong to the company of His faithful people must not be admitted. Therefore, following that precept, in the name and by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, I

excommunicate all idolaters, blasphemers and despisers of God, all heretics and those who create private sects in order to break the unity of the Church, all perjurers, all who rebel against father or mother or superior, all who promote sedition or mutiny; brutal and disorderly persons, adulterers, lewd and lustful men, thieves, ravishers, greedy and grasping people, drunkards, gluttons, and all those who lead a scandalous and dissolute life. I warn them to abstain from this Holy Table, lest they defile and contaminate the holy food which our Lord Jesus Christ gives to none except they belong to His household of faith.

Moreover, in accordance with the exhortation of St. Paul, let every man examine and prove his own conscience to see whether he truly repents of his faults and grieves over his sins, desiring to live henceforth a holy life according to God. Above all, let him see whether he has his trust in the mercy of God and seeks his salvation wholly in Jesus Christ and, renouncing all hatred and rancor, has high resolve and courage to live in peace and brotherly love with his neighbors.

If we have this witness in our hearts before God, never doubt that He claims us as His children, and that the Lord Jesus addresses His Word to us, to invite us to His Table and to give us this holy Sacrament which He imparted to His disciples.

And yet, we may be conscious of much frailty and misery in ourselves, such that we do not have perfect faith, but are inclined toward defiance and unbelief, or that we do not devote ourselves wholly to the service of God and with such zeal as we ought, but have to fight daily against the lusts of our flesh. Nevertheless, since our Lord has granted us the grace of having His Gospel graven on our hearts, so that we may withstand all unbelief, and has given us the desire and longing to renounce our own wishes, that we may follow His righteousness and His holy commandments: let us be assured that the sins and imperfections which remain in us will not prevent Him from receiving us and making us worthy partakers of this spiritual Table. For we do not come here to testify that we are perfect or righteous in ourselves: On the contrary, by seeking our life in Jesus Christ we confess that we are in death. Know, therefore, that this Sacrament is a medicine for the poor sick souls, and that the only worthiness which our Lord requires of us is to know ourselves sufficiently to deplore our sins, and to find all our pleasure, joy and satisfaction in Him alone.

Above all, therefore, let us believe those promises which Jesus Christ, who is the unfailing truth, has spoken with His own lips; He is truly willing to make us partakers of His body and blood, in order that we may possess Him wholly and in such a way that He may live in us and we in Him. And though we see but bread and wine, we must not doubt that He accomplishes spiritually in our souls all that He shows us outwardly by these visible signs, namely, that He is the bread of heaven to feed and nourish us unto eternal life. So, let us never be unmindful of the infinite goodness of our Savior who spreads out all His riches and blessings on this Table, to impart them to us. For in giving Himself to us, He makes a testimony to us that all that He has is ours. Therefore, let us receive this Sacrament as a pledge that the virtue of His death and passion is imputed to us for righteousness, even as though we had suffered them in our own persons. May we never be so perverse as to draw away when Jesus Christ invites us so gently by His Word. But accounting the worthiness of this precious gift which He gives, let us present ourselves to Him with ardent zeal, that He may make us capable of receiving it.

### **The “Reformed” Sursum Corda**

To do so, let us lift our spirits and hearts on high where Jesus Christ is in the glory of His Father, whence we expect Him at our redemption. Let us not be fascinated by these earthly and corruptible elements which we see with our eyes and touch with our hands, seeking Him there as though He were enclosed in the bread or wine. Then only shall our souls be disposed to be nourished and vivified by His substance when they are lifted up above all earthly things, attaining even to heaven, and entering the Kingdom of God where He dwells. Therefore let us be content to have the bread and wine as signs and witnesses, seeking the truth spiritually where the Word of God promises that we shall find it.

### Distribution of the Elements

Strasbourg

¶ *That done, the Minister, having informed the people that they are to come to the holy Table in reverence, good order, and Christian humility, first partakes himself of the bread and wine, then administers it to the deacon, and subsequently to the whole congregation, saying:*

Take, eat, the body of Jesus which has been delivered unto death for you.

¶ *And the deacon offers the cup, saying:*

This is the cup of the new testament in the blood of Jesus which has been shed for you.

¶ *Meanwhile, the Congregation sings Psalm 138*

Geneva

¶ *That done, the Ministers distribute the bread and the chalice to the people, having admonished them to come forward with reverence and in good order. Meanwhile, some Psalms are sung; or some portion of Scripture is read, appropriate to the significance of the sacrament. At the conclusion, Thanksgiving is offered:*

### Thanksgiving After the Supper

Heavenly Father, we offer You eternal praise and thanks that You have granted so great a benefit to us poor sinners, having drawn us into the Communion of Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, whom You have delivered to death for us and whom You give us as the meat and drink of life eternal. Now grant us this other benefit: that You will never allow us to forget these things; but having them imprinted on our hearts, may we grow and increase daily in the faith which is at work in every good deed. Thus may we order and pursue all our life to the exaltation of Your glory and the edification of our neighbor; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, who in the unity of the Holy Spirit lives and reigns with You, O God, forever. Amen.

### Singing of the Canticle of Simeon

#### Benediction

The LORD bless you, and keep you; the LORD make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance, and give you peace. Amen. (Num. 6:24-26)