

Collect

Roman Missal (2000)

The Priest, with hands joined, says: *Let us pray.* (Latin *Oremus*)

And all pray in silence with the Priest for a while.

*Then the Priest, with hands extended, says the Collect prayer, at the end of which the people acclaim: Amen.*¹

Basic Form of Collect

1. Address: “Almighty and Eternal God...”
2. Relative Clause: “who...”
3. Request: “grant that...”
4. Conclusion: “Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.”²

Bowing the Head at the Name of Jesus

General Instruction of the Roman Missal (2000): *A bow of the head* is made when the three Divine Persons are named together and at *the names of Jesus*, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of the Saint in whose honor Mass is being celebrated.³

4th Sunday of Advent (cf. Angelus)

Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord
your grace into our hearts,
*that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ your Son,
was made known by the message of an Angel,*
may be his Passion and Cross
be brought to the glory of his Resurrection.
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.⁴

Christmas Mass During the Day (cf. Sacramentary of St. Leo)

*O God, who wonderfully created the dignity of human nature
and still more wonderfully restored it,
grant, we pray,
that we may share in the divinity of Christ,
who humbled himself to share in our humanity.*

¹ Roman Missal, *The Order of Mass*, no. 9.

² John F. Baldovin, “History of the Latin Text and Rite,” in *A Commentary on the Order of Mass of The Roman Missal* (ed. Edward Foley et al.; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2011), 123. Cf. Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite*, 1:276-79.

³ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* no. 275.

⁴ Roman Missal, *Fourth Sunday of Advent*, Collect.

*Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. Amen*⁵

Scripture

The Prayer of King David

Let *my prayer* be counted as incense before you,
and *the lifting up of my hands* as an evening sacrifice! (Psalm 141:1-2)

The “Collect” of King Solomon

Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven; and said, “O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing mercy to your servants who walk before you with all their heart; who have kept with your servant David my father what you declared to him; yes, you spoke with your mouth, and with your hand have fulfilled it this day. Now therefore, O Lord, God of Israel, keep with your servant David my father what you have promised him, saying, ‘There shall never fail you a man before me to sit upon the throne of Israel...’ Hear the supplication of your servant and of your people Israel, when they pray toward this place; yes, hear in heaven your dwelling place; and when you hear, forgive.” (1 Kings 8:22-25, 30)

Tradition

St. Gelasius and the Collects (5th Century)

Liber Pontificalis: Gelasius, born in Africa... *produced with careful wording prefaces and prayers for the sacraments...*⁶

St. Gregory Edits the Collects (7th Century)

Walafrid Strabo (9th Century): Because many prayers by so many undetermined authors were dubious and lacking in sound meaning, *blessed Gregory carefully collected the reasonable ones, setting aside the excessive or inappropriate; he put together a book which is called a sacramentary, shown clearly in its title.*⁷

⁵ Roman Missal, *The Nativity of the Lord*, At Mass During the Day, Collect. See Lauren Pristas, *The Collects of the Roman Missals* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 76-77; St. Leo I, *Sermon* 21.

⁶ *Liber Pontificalis* 51.6. In Davis, *The Book of Pontiffs*, 42.

⁷ Walafrid Strabo, *Little Book on the Origins and Growth of Certain Things in Ecclesiastical Observations*, Chapter 23. In Alice L. Harting-Correa, *Walahfrid Strabo’s Libellus De Exordiis Et Incrementis Quarundam In Observationibus Ecclesiasticis Rerum: A Translation and Liturgical Commentary* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), 135.

Bowing the Head in Church at Jesus' Name (1274 AD)

Council of Lyons II (14th Ecumenical Council): *Those who assemble in church should extol with an act of special reverence the "name which is above every name" (Phil 2:9)... the name, that is, of Jesus Christ... Each should fulfill in himself that which is written for all, "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow" (Phil 2:10); whenever that glorious name is recalled, especially during the sacred mysteries of the mass, everyone should bow the knees of his heart, which he can even do by a bow of his head.*⁸

Mystery

The Mystical Meaning of the Collect (13th Century)

St. Robert Bellarmine: The first ceremony with respect to God, i.e. *the elevation of the hands*, has an example in Scripture... *Moses obtained his request while praying with his hands elevated [Exodus 17:11-12]. Likewise, ...Solomon spread his hands to heaven when he was about to pray [1 Kings 8:22]. ...David says: "The elevation of my hands as an evening sacrifice" [Psalm 141:2]. St. Paul... "I will that men pray in every place, uplifting pure hands" [1 Timothy 2:8].*⁹

Questions for Discussion and Reflection

1. Why does the priest stretch out his hands when he prays the Collect? Why is it called a "Collect" prayer?

For Further Reading

1. Joseph Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development*. 2 vols.; trans. Francis A. Brunner, C.S.S.R.; repr.; Notre Dame, Ind.: Christian Classics, 2012 [orig. 1951]. 1:333-346.
2. Lauren Pristas, *The Collects of the Roman Missals*. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013.

⁸ Second Council of Lyons (1274 A.D.), Constitution no. 25. In Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 1:328.

⁹ Robert Bellarmine, *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*, chap. 15. In Bellarmine, *On the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*, 240.