

Luther Hymnfest Prayers

Opening Prayer

With heart and voice before the world,
I thank, praise, and glorify you, my Lord Christ,
that you are merciful to me and help me.
This I have received in baptism,
that you, and none other,
shall be my Lord and God. Amen *(Martin Luther)*

Closing Prayer

Dear God and Father, I pray for you to so nurture me
that I may be to you as a beautiful garden,
so that many people may enjoy your fruit
and be attracted through me to all godliness.
Write into my heart, by your Holy Spirit,
whatever is abundantly found in Scripture.
Let me constantly keep your word in mind,
and permit it to become far more precious to me than my own life
and all else that I cherish on earth.
Help me to live and act accordingly.
To you be praise and thanks in eternity. Amen *(Martin Luther)*

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Luther's Reflections from 40-Day Journey with Martin Luther, Gracia M. Grindal, editor.
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Luther's Reflections on Confession

What is confession? Confession consists of two parts. One is that we confess our sins. The other is that we receive the absolution, that is, forgiveness, from the confessor as from God himself and by no means doubt but firmly believe that our sins are thereby forgiven before God in heaven.

As to Confession, I refer to the practice of confessing to God alone or to our neighbor alone, asking for forgiveness. These two kinds are included in the Lord's Prayer when we say, 'Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.' Indeed, the entire Lord's Prayer is nothing else than such a confession. For what is our prayer but a confession that we neither have nor do what we ought and a plea for grace and a joyful conscience? This kind of confession should and must take place continuously as long as we live. For this is the essence of a genuinely Christian life, to acknowledge that we are sinners and to pray for grace.

Luther's Reflections on the Apostles' Creed

I believe in the Holy Spirit, one holy Christian church, the community of saints, forgiveness of sins, resurrection of the flesh, and eternal life. Amen

To this article, as I have said, I cannot give a better title than "Being Made Holy." In it are expressed and portrayed the Holy Spirit and his office, which is that he makes us holy. Therefore, we must concentrate on the term "Holy Spirit," because it is so precise we can find no substitute for it...God's Spirit alone is called a Holy Spirit, that is, the one who has made us holy and still makes us holy. As the Father is called a creator and the Son is called a Redeemer, so on account of his work the Holy Spirit must be called a Sanctifier, or one who makes us holy. How does such sanctifying take place?

Answer:...the Holy Spirit effects our being made holy through the following: the community of saints or Christian Church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. That is, he first leads us into his holy community, placing us in the church's lap, where he preaches to us and brings us to Christ.

Luther's Reflection on the Lord's Prayer—Bill Unverfehrt

Luther Speaks:

It is a good thing to let prayer be the first business of the morning and the last at night. Guard yourself carefully against those false, deluding ideas which tell you, "Wait a little while. I will pray in an hour; first I must attend to this or that." Such thoughts get you away from prayer into other affairs which so hold your attention and involve you that nothing comes of prayer for that day. When your heart has been warmed by such recitation to yourself (of the Ten Commandments and the words of Christ, for example) and is intent upon the matter, kneel or stand with your hands folded and your eyes toward heaven, and speak or think as briefly as you can:

O Heavenly Father, dear God, I am a poor unworthy sinner. I do not deserve to raise my eyes or hands toward thee or to pray. But because thou has commanded us all to pray and hast promised to hear us and through thy dear Son Jesus Christ hast taught us both how and what to pray, I come to thee in obedience to thy word, trusting in thy gracious promise. I pray in the name of my Lord Jesus Christ together with all thy saints and Christians on earth as he has taught us: "Our Father who art"... through the whole prayer, word for word.

Luther's Reflections on the Ten Commandments

If I have had time and opportunity to go through the Lord's Prayer, I do the same with the Ten Commandments. I take one part after another and free myself as much as possible from distractions in order to pray. I divide each commandment into four parts, thereby fashioning a garland of four strands. That is, I think of each commandment as, first, instruction, which really what it is intended to be, and consider what the Lord God demands of me so earnestly. Second, I turn it into a thanksgiving; third, a confession; and fourth, a prayer.

Luther's Reflections on Holy Baptism

Baptism is an external sign or token, which so divides us from all men not baptized, that thereby we are known as a people of Christ, our Captain under Whose banner, i.e., the Holy Cross, we continually fight against sin. Therefore in this Holy Sacrament we must have regard to three things—the sign, the significance thereof, and the faith.

The significance of baptism is a blessed dying unto sin and a resurrection in the grace of God. So man is drawn out of baptism and spiritually born, and through this spiritual birth is a child of grace and a justified man. Therefore sins are drowned in baptism, and in place of sin, righteousness comes forth.

The third thing in the sacrament, i.e., faith, is of all things the most necessary, for it is the ground of all comfort. Through my baptism, God has bound Himself in a covenant with me, not to count my sin against me, but to slay it and blot it out.

Luther's Reflections on the Holy Sacrament

Now, what is the Sacrament of the Altar? It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, in and under the bread and wine which we Christians are commanded by the Word of Christ to eat and to drink... the Sacrament is bread and wine, but not mere bread and wine, such as are ordinarily served at the table, but bread and wine comprehended in, and connected with, the Word of God. It is the Word which makes and distinguishes this Sacrament, so that it is not mere bread and wine, but is, and is called, the body and blood of Christ.

We go to the Sacrament because there we receive such a treasure by and in which we obtain forgiveness of sins.