

AN UNCOMMON BOOK OF PRAYER

AMONG the many treasures of St. Edmund's College, Ware, are a number of old Catholic Prayer-Books. Their preservation is mainly due to the zeal and insight of Father Raymund Stanfield. Amongst them is a copy of the famous old *Manual: A Manual of Prayers and Litanies: Distributed according to the Days of the Week. With other Excellent Devotions fitted for all Persons and Occasions. Last Edition much corrected. Permissu Superiorum, 1688.*¹ It is a 12mo. volume, singularly compact though actually containing no less than 564 beautifully printed pages. From the foreword 'To the Pious Reader' we learn that the present edition is 'purg'd from many, both gross Errata's in the Print, and improprieties in the Translations'; the Hymns are 'rendered according to the Corrected Latin of P. Urban VIII (now generally used in the Church), and those too in far more Musical Numbers.'

But the main and justest glory of this last Edition is a large and exquisite body of Litanies, so strong, and yet so sweet; so affectuous, and yet so instructive; so rigorously ordered and expressed, yet so soft and naturally flowing; in fine, so intirely comprehensive and yet so moderately proportion'd that it is impossible they can be attended to without rendring their Readers wisely devout; nor practis'd without engaging attention; nor once read, without inveigling into a continual practise.

The Calendar which follows is peculiarly interesting. In January alone twenty British Saints are commemorated or their feasts kept; in February twenty-two; in March twenty-seven; in April twenty-six, and

¹This *Manual* is, of course, well known to those interested in the Liturgy of the Penal times, see Joseph Gillow, *The Origin and History of the Manual, reprinted from the Ushaw Magazine*, 1910, where, p. 37, he traces it through no less than seventy-two editions.

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so on. Four of the above are Bishops or Archbishops of Canterbury, including Lanfranc and St. Anselm, two are Bishops of London. There follows a very brief summary of Christian doctrine which we should probably term 'What every Christian ought to know.' Morning and Evening Prayers for every day of the week occupy pages 14-292. Prefixed to these is an 'Advertisement for the Morning' with a prayer to be said 'When you are forth from your bed,' another 'in putting on your Apparel,' yet another 'when you are Apparelled.' Grace before meals is precisely the same as we say to-day: 'Bless us, O Lord and these thy gifts which we are about to receive of thy bounty, through' The Morning and Evening Prayers are taken straight from the Liturgy, the Breviary Hymns and Psalms being given in forcible English, though the original Douay Version of the Psalms is sometimes very quaint and very 'Latin'—the words of Ps. xlv, for example: 'Intende, prospere procede et regna' being rendered 'Intend, proceed prosperously and reign.'

But perhaps the most interesting feature is the daily Litany. On Sundays we have *The Litany of the Holy Trinity*, on Mondays, *For the Dead*, on Tuesdays, *Of the Saints and Angels*, on Wednesdays, *The Litany of Intercession for England*, where the Response is: 'Have mercy on England' or 'Pray for England.' The English Saints invoked are St. Alban, St. Thomas, 'All holy Martyrs of this nation, who voluntarily lost your lives here, to find them again in a joyful eternity, pray for England.' Then follow St. Gregory, St. Augustine, 'St. Bede, most Venerable Confessor,' St. Helen, St. Ursula and St. Winifred. The Petitions in this Litany are most outspoken:

'From the Spirit of Pride, Rebellion and Apostacy, deliver England, O Lord.'

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‘ From the Spirit of Hypocrisie, Prophaneness and Sacriledge, deliver England, O Lord.’

‘ From presuming on their own private opinions, and contemning the authority of thy Church, deliver England, O Lord.’

‘ From Schism, Heresie, and all blindness of heart, deliver England, O Lord.’

‘ From Gluttony, Drunkenness, and the false liberty of an undisciplined life, deliver England, O Lord.’

‘ That it would please thee to incline the hearts of our Magistrates rightly to understand our Religion, and impartially consider our sufferings, we beseech Thee hear us.’

‘ That it would please Thee to improve our restraints and temporal disadvantages into an occasion of retiredness and Christian severity, supplying our want of Public Assemblies by a greater diligence in private devotions, we beseech thee hear us.’

There follow exquisite prayers for ‘patience,’ for ‘Preservation of the True Catholick Faith,’ ‘for those that are fallen from the Church.’ The Litany for Thursday is *Of the Blessed Sacrament* and in its pathetic Petitions every point of Eucharistic doctrine that was then assailed is emphasised, *e.g.*, the power of Consecrating, the Victim in the Tabernacle, the Reality of Processions of the Sacred Host, the Viaticum, the fact that, despite His ascension into heaven, Christ is yet upon our altars. One of the Petitions echoes the controversies of the time :

‘ From presuming to interpret the great secrets of thy Will by the incertain rules of our Private Conceits, deliver us, O Lord.’

The Hymn for Friday is a translation of the *Jesu, dulcis memoria* of which the whole thirteen verses are given. The rendering may be familiar to some of our

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readers though the present writer has never seen it before. We give the first three verses as a sample of the easy grace and vigour of the translation :

‘ Jesu, the only thought of thee,
Fills with delight my memory;
But when thou dost thy presence shew,
Heav’n seems into my brest to flow.

‘ No theam so sweet, nor voice can be,
Nor to the ear such harmony;
No heart can thoughts so charming frame,
As Jesus his most precious Name.

‘ Jesu, our hope when sins we grieve,
Thy mercies all our wants relieve,
If good, to those that seek thy grace,
What art thou, when they see thy face?’

The *Litany of our Blessed Saviour* which follows on the above has very long and very touching petitions; one of these runs ‘ That neither for reward nor danger, we withdraw our fidelity from thee.’ The *Litany of the Blessed Virgin*, for Saturday evenings, is as unlike the *Litany of Loretto* as can be imagined, but its petitions are couched in terms of the tenderest piety drawn from the various episodes in the life of Our Lady. No *Little Office of the Blessed Virgin*² is given but an *Office of the Holy Cross* and another *Of the Holy Ghost* are provided. Various prayers follow, one of St. Austin, another *A Devout Prayer made by Sir Thomas More when he was Prisoner in the Tower*: ‘ Take from me, O Lord, this lukewarm, or rather key-cold manner of meditation, and this dulness in prayer’ Then come Devotions and Litanies for the sick; acts of various virtues; Meditations on the Sacred Passion; prayers before and during Mass; be-

² This omission is remarkable, since the *Office of Our Blessed Lady* was edited by Richard Verstegen as early as 1599.

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tore and after Confession and Communion. There is also given *The Manner of Serving at Mass* where some of the instructions to the server are interesting: 'When you see the Priest spread his hands over the chalice, light your wax candle; kneel, and with your other hand hold up the vestment till the Elevation be past; that done, kiss the vestment, put out the light, and so often as you pass by the Blessed Sacrament adore on your knees.' A little later on he is told to 'Give the Pax to the audience, observe order of calling and years.'

A still further collection of Hymns and Prayers is given, also a short *Litany of Jesus* and the *Jesus Psalter*, a *Litany of the Blessed Virgin* not unlike the *Litany of Loretto*, and *The Golden Litany* briefly commemorating the chief Articles of our Blessed Redeemer's Life and Passion.

The most remarkable thing of all is a species of Appendix containing *The Method of Saying the Rosary of our Blessed Lady, as it was order'd by Pope Pius the Fifth, of the Holy Order of Preachers. And as it is said in Her Majesty's Chapple at St. James's. The Sixteenth Edition. Printed for T.D. in the year 1686.* A brief account of the Rosary is given and then, surprisingly enough, each Mystery is introduced by the familiar 'Let us contemplate in this Mystery' precisely as it used—until recently—to be said in so many churches. Then follows the Litany of Loretto where 'Mater Intemerata' is rendered 'Mother untouched' and 'Salus Infirmorum' by 'Health of the weak.'

Finally we have Prayers for the King, Queen and Queen Dowager. Here the whole of Ps. xix is given and not merely the last verse or 'Domine salvum fac Regem' as we have it to-day. The same Prayer for the Royal Family is given as that to which we are accustomed, but with the name of King James in-

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served; while on the last page we have ' To be added to the last Collect at the end of Mass :

' And defend thy servant Innocent the chief Bishop, James our King, Mary our Queen, and Queen Catharine.'

HUGH POPE, O.P.

A PRAYER

L ORD, should'st thou add unto my fare
The bitter herb, the herb called care,
Grant I may not withhold the grace,
But wear, dear Lord, a tranquil face—
Unfeigned, a tranquil face.

Teach me to bear the seeming ill;
Always to seek, all ways thy will :
Then that I may my soul address
To climb its heights, its deeps no less,
At least, my God, in willingness—
At least in willingness.

For heights and depths alike confess
Thy glory, and have power to bless,
And lift from out dread nothingness,
The soul, which bears of Thee th' impress,
Thy fashion, yea, thine own likeness;—
Then kindle thou and make to burn,
O make to burn my willingness.

H.S.