

“Great Litany,” each intercession of which combined several petitions.

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C. Modern Europe and America

A litany is a prayer that invokes the assistance of God and/or the saints for a variety of intentions. In the Roman Catholic liturgy, litanies are employed for both public liturgical offices and as popular devotional prayers. In other Christian denominations, such as Anglicanism and Lutheranism, litanies generally omit the invocation of the saints, while providing intercessory material often drawn from the earlier Catholic tradition.

For most of the modern period, Catholic litanies were used according to the liturgical books of the Tridentine reform. The 1568 *Breviarium Romanum* (1025–28) provides an extended Litany that contains a variety of characteristic parts of litanies: 1) the invocation of the mercy of God under several titles; 2) the invocation of Mary under several titles; 3) the invocation of various saints, divided into categories (apostles, martyrs, doctors, priests and deacons, holy women and martyrs); 4) requests to be freed from negative circumstances; 5) requests that God might intercede in various ways; 6) the invocation of Christ as *Agnus Dei*; 7) the Our Father; 8) a series of collects and short invocations. The 1570 *Missale Romanum* (288–90) provides a litany of similar structure in the Easter Vigil service, although it omits the Our Father and concluding collects. Similar litanies were used in other rites, notably in the ritual for the sacrament of Holy Orders.

In the late 20th century, the liturgical reforms following the Second Vatican Council significantly adapted the use of litanies in various liturgical rites. The 1969 *Ordo Baptismi Parvulorum* (26) imitates the Easter Vigil by adding a brief litany of the saints to the baptismal liturgy for children. The 1970 *Missale Romanum* (281–83) includes an Easter Vigil litany, but changes its structure significantly: the list of saints and requests is much abbreviated, the saints

are now listed in chronological order rather than divided according to category (e.g., Mary Magdalene appears between John the Apostle and Stephen the Protomartyr), and a rubric indicates that the litany is to be added to with the names of patron saints of the place and of the people to be baptized.

In addition to liturgical litanies, devotional litanies are an important part of Catholic prayer. The 1953 *Rituale Romanum* (844–56) provides five “Approved Litanies”: the Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus, the Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Litany of Loreto of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Litany of St. Joseph, and the Litany of the Saints. In the case of the Litany of Loreto, modern Popes have added titles reflecting the development of Catholic Marian devotion and dogma (Hebert: xix–xx). Popular prayer books included others for “private use”; e.g., the 1956 *Dominican Sisters’ Office Book* (744–69) includes devotional litanies to the Dominican saints Dominic, Thomas Aquinas, Albert the Great, Vincent Ferrer, Catherine of Siena, Rose of Lima, and Blessed Imelda, while the 1985 *A Prayerbook of Favorite Litanies* provides 116 litanies for various saints and intentions.

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D. World Christianity

“Λιτανεία,” from the ancient Greek “Λιτή,” means prayer, supplication, petition, or entreaty (the verb is “λιτομαι”). The word “Λιτανεία” and the verb “λιτανεύω” also mean: pray to, supplicate God in prayer, or even someone praying on someone’s behalf. In the Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Catholic Churches, they use another word to express supplication during the liturgical service. The word is “εκπνήζς” and is essentially a prayer chanted by a deacon during the liturgy service while the priest prays silently. This litany consists of nine entreaties and is answered by three “κῳγίε” (Kyrie) responses. The other word that means prayers is “εκπνῳζς” as mentioned in *I Clem.* 34 and in Chrysostom’s homily 83.1.

This supplication can be said privately (private devotion) or publicly (during liturgical service) or for a specific reason for church necessities (Ignatius of Antioch *the Romans* 4.2). Christian litany was affiliated with Jewish Litany (LXX Josh 6:2; 2 Macc 3:20; 10:16; Dan 3:57–87), with some differences.