

Embolism (liturgy)

The **embolism** in **Christian Liturgy** (from Greek ἐμβολισμός, an interpolation) is a short prayer said or sung after the **Lord's Prayer**. It functions “like a marginal gloss” upon the final petition of the Lord's Prayer (“. . . deliver us from evil”), amplifying and elaborating on “the many implications” of that prayer.^[1] In the **Roman Rite of Mass**, the embolism is followed by the **doxology** or, in the **Tridentine Mass** (which does not have that doxology), by the **Fraction**.^[2]

According to the 1913 **Catholic Encyclopedia**, “[t]he embolism may date back to the first centuries, since, under various forms, it is found in all the Occidental and in a great many Oriental, particularly Syrian, Liturgies.”^[3]

1 In the Roman Rite

In the **Mass** of the Roman Rite, as revised in 1969, the priest celebrant says or sings:^[4]

Libera nos, quæsumus, Domine, ab omnibus malis, da propitius pacem in diebus nostris, ut, ope misericordiæ tuæ adiuti, et a peccato simus semper liberi, et ab omni perturbatione securi: expectantes beatam spem et adventum Salvatoris nostri Iesu Christi.^[5]

The English translation is:

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, graciously grant peace in our days, that, by the help of your mercy, we may be always free from sin and safe from all distress, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.^[6]

A less literal English translation was used before 2011:

Deliver us, Lord, from every evil, and grant us peace in our day. In your mercy keep us free from sin and protect us from all anxiety as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

1.1 Older form

In the **Tridentine** form of the **Roman Missal** the embolism, said inaudibly by the priest except for the final phrase, “Per omnia sæcula sæculorum”, is:

Libera nos, quæsumus Dómine, ab ómnibus malis, præterítis, præsentibus et futúris: et intercedénte beáta et gloriósa semper Vírgine Dei Genitríce María, cum beátis Apóstolis tuis Petro et Páulo, atque Andréa, et ómnibus Sanctis, da propítius pacem in diébus nostris: ut, ope misericórdiæ tuæ adiúti, et a peccáto simus semper líberi et ab omni perturbatióne secúri. Per eúndem Dóminum nostrum Iesum Christum, Fílium tuum. Qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte Spíritus Sancti Deus. Per ómnia sæcula sæculórum.^[7]

A translation of this is:

Deliver us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, from all evils, past, present and to come, and by the intercession of the Blessed and glorious ever-Virgin Mary, Mother of God, together with Thy blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and Andrew, and all the Saints, mercifully grant peace in our days, that through the bounteous help of Thy mercy we may be always free from sin, and safe from all disquiet. Through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son our Lord. Who is God living and reigning with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, World without end.”^[8]

Speaking of the Roman Rite embolism in its then-current form, the 1913 **Catholic Encyclopedia** said: “The Roman Church connects with it a petition for peace in which she inserts the names of the Mother of God, Sts. Peter and Paul, and St. Andrew. The name of St. Andrew is found in the **Gelasian Sacramentary**, so that its insertion in the Embolismus would seem to have been anterior to the time of St. Gregory. During the Middle Ages the provincial churches and religious orders added the names of other saints, their founders, patrons, etc., according to the discretion of the celebrant.”^[3]

2 In other rites

The embolism is not used in the Greek Liturgies of St. Basil and St. John Chrysostom.^{[3][9]} In the Liturgy of St. James the English translation of the embolism is as follows:

Lord, lead us not into temptation, Lord of Hosts! for thou dost know our frailty; but

deliver us from the wicked one, from all his works, from all his assaults and craftiness; through thy holy name, which we call upon to guard us in our lowliness.^[1]

In the Mozarabic Rite this prayer is recited not only in the Mass, but also after the Our Father at Lauds and Vespers.^[3]

3 References

- [1] Ayo, Nicholas (1992). *The Lord's Prayer: A Survey Theological and Literary*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003. p. 196. ISBN 978-0-7425-1453-9. Retrieved 25 February 2010.
- [2] Kunzler, Michael (2001). *The Church's Liturgy*. New York: Continuum Int'l Publ'g. p. 237. ISBN 978-0-8264-1353-6. Retrieved 25 February 2010.
- [3] Catholic Encyclopedia: *Embolism*
- [4] General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no. 81
- [5] Catechism of the Catholic Church no. 2854 n.175, quoting the *Missale Romanum*.
- [6] Order of Mass, 125
- [7] 1962 Missale Romanum
- [8] Ordo Missæ of the Missale Romanum 1962
- [9] <http://books.google.com/books?id=f6g8AAAAYAAJ&pg=PA338&dq=embolism+liturgy&cd=4#v=onepage&q=&f=false>

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