

## *Understanding Episcopal Liturgy*

### *#19 Why are some of our prayers called 'collects'?*

The word *collect* has historical roots in the Latin word 'colligo' which means 'to gather'. This type of prayer was said in the 4th and 5th centuries as the participants were gathering for the procession into the worship space. Today we think of a *collect* as a gathering of the prayers of the people together into a single, relatively short prayer. When used to describe one of our prayers, *collect* is pronounced with the emphasis on the first syllable.

Many of the *collects* in the Book of Common Prayer are based on earlier version written by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, author of the very first *Book of Common Prayer* (1549). Cranmer perfected and standardized this type of prayer.

Most *collects* follow a standard four or five-part form. I like to describe *collects* using the four-part: You - Who - Do - Through

You: We identify the 'you', the one we are praying to.

Who: We identify an attribute of God.

Do: We ask God to do something. (This usually comes right after a semi-colon.)

Through: We connect this petition with some aspect of God's being.

So a simple collect could be like this: "Christ Jesus, who commanded us to love one another; remain in our hearts that we may love others as you loved us, through your Spirit we pray. Amen."

*If you have a question about something in our liturgy, I will be happy to answer it. Please ask in person, or send an email to me at [revmajor@stpaulsyr.org](mailto:revmajor@stpaulsyr.org).*

*Fr. Philip +*