

Women and Medieval General Intercessions: Introduction

J. Frank Henderson

Frank Henderson's Page on Liturgy and Medieval women
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INTRODUCTION

The general intercessions of the medieval liturgy touched the lives of medieval women in two ways. First, they had the potential to make women “visible” by naming or referring to them. Second, they had the potential to invite and engage the participation of women as those who prayed them. In our own times these prayers also act as a kind of mirror of medieval church and society and provide material for a variety of liturgical, ecclesial, societal and linguistic studies. Here I offer an introduction to this type of liturgical prayer and its use in the medieval liturgy, and consider its relevance for medieval women.

Texts and Sources

I have identified and collected 153 sets of medieval general intercessions, plus another ten early Anglican texts. Some are complete texts while others are partial or outlines; others are simply allusions and a number are represented only by bibliographic citations. These are listed, together with their sources, in a separate document also posted on this website: *Medieval General Intercessions: Bibliography of Texts and Sources*.

Form, Performance, Context and Content

The general intercessions considered here were important parts of the medieval liturgy from about the ninth century until the Reformation. Thereafter they were either omitted or substantially transformed. Today they have been restored to use as part of the liturgical renewal of the late twentieth century. These prayers are now known in different churches as prayers of the faithful, prayers of the people, prayers of the church, and as general intercessions, where “general” means universal – all the needs of the church, society and creation.

In the middle ages these prayers were often referred to in Latin as the *oratio dominicalis* (the Sunday prayer); in English as bidding prayers; in French as *prières du prône*, and in German as *Fürbitten*. Here I generally do not use “bidding prayer”, in part because this term is tautologous; “bidding” simply means “praying” – thus “praying prayer.” In addition, post-reformation use has sometimes applied this term to the Litany of the Anglican liturgy (which in fact has a different origin) and other texts. I also avoid the term *prières de prône* because it (or the shortened form, *prône*) also has been used in several different ways. It has been used to refer not only to the general intercessions, but also to the part of the eucharistic liturgy that includes these prayers (and sermon and announcements), to a separate preaching liturgy that includes the same elements, and to the sermon itself. To reduce the possibility of misunderstanding, therefore, the term “general intercessions” is generally used here.

Uses and Context

The general intercessions were most frequently used in the Sunday mass, but sometimes also at separate preaching liturgies on Sunday. Within the liturgy of the mass, the general intercessions were used in two ways. One was in connection with the sermon (before, during or most often after), more or less as they are used today. This was probably the predominant practice in parish churches. The second usage was more common in cathedrals and monasteries, where the intercessions followed the blessing of water, lengthy and formal procession, and sprinkling of side altars that took place at the very beginning of Sunday mass. As the procession of canons or monks entered the chancel, the presiding priest stayed in the doorway of the screen, turned to the people, and led them in saying the intercessions. At the end he went to the altar and began mass. Additional uses and contexts of the general intercessions will be considered later.

Structure and Performance

The general intercessions were led by the priest but addressed to, and participated in, by the people; it was theirs to pray. (Intercessions from Germany are an exception; many prayers there ask the people to “help me” [the priest] to pray in intercession.) They began with an address to the people, for example “all men and women,” “dearly beloved,” or simply “you” (plural). The people were then invited to pray, e.g., “Pray for...” or “let us pray for...” or the like. Additional addresses and invitations to respond sometimes followed individual intentions or groups of intentions. The following are examples.

For these and all true Christian people, every man and woman say a Pater noster and an Ave... (EN-38. Becon 1483)

And that these prayers may be heard and sped the sooner through your prayers, every man and woman that here is, help them heartily with a Pater noster and an Ave Maria (EN-42. York. 1509)

Et affin que à nostras pregieras se vueille plus tost inclinar, tous et toutas en vuellas dire lo pater noster et l’ave maria. (FR-27. Limoges St Pierre du Queyrois 1450)

The intentions followed. These were divided into a series for the living and a series for the dead. Those for the living began with prayers for peace and for the church, then for the civil government and nation, and finally for members of the parish. The intentions for the dead identified family members, benefactors, those with connections to the parish, and others. In addition to the living and the dead who were specifically identified, prayers for all Christian people, living and dead, were also included.

This description indicates that the general intercessions were litanic in form. That is, a number of distinct prayer intentions were read out by the priest, followed by a short, constant response by all. The response most commonly took the form of the Our Father (Pater noster) and Hail Mary (Ave Maria). The response might follow each individual intention, or a group of

intercessions, or occasionally, might be only at the end of the entire set of intercessions.

The intentions spoken by the priest were addressed to the people, not to God, while the responses spoken by the people were addressed to God (and/or Mary), not to the priest. If prayer is speech addressed to God, therefore, this was being done by the people at the invitation of the priest.

Language

To make the participation of the people meaningful and authentic, the general intercessions were in a language that was intelligible to them, the vernacular. Latin might be used, however, when the congregation was a group of clergy who knew this language. In addition, intercessions were sometimes written in Latin, but with a directive to the priest to translate them into the vernacular as he spoke.

The texts under consideration here, therefore, are in medieval English, French, German, Icelandic, Polish, Occitan, Catalan, Spanish, and Latin. (Those in Polish, Icelandic and some others have been published in modern French translations.)

In some cases the vernacular intentions were interrupted by the singing of psalms in Latin by the clergy or monks. This aspect is not considered further here.

Variability

The general intercessions were composed to reflect the needs of each local church; hence they differ one from another in naming parishioners, clergy, and civil society and government. As church and society varied from time to time, the prayers changed to reflect this. As a result, the bidding prayers were not permanent liturgical texts, but variable. We may think of them as snapshots taken on a particular occasion, showing us the concerns of that local church or that priest at a certain time and place. Though their basic shape and approach are similar, each is distinct in its exact formulation. A few texts show that they were used over a considerable period of time and brought up to date by erasures, overwriting and marginal additions.

This variability means in addition that the general intercessions were not written into the body of the liturgical books, but were written on loose pages, at the ends of books, or at the conclusion of sermons; as a result, many have been lost.

Visibility and Participation of Women

The terms “visibility” and “participation” are used here in very specific and distinct

ways. “Visibility” refers to the content of the general intercessions; “participation” refers to the doing of them – the praying of these intercessions.

Women were made visible in the general intercessions by naming them or referring to them as persons to be prayed for, that is persons for whom prayers of intercessions are to be said. This naming most commonly did not involve personal names (“e.g., Margery”) but rather naming of groups of women (e.g., “pregnant women”). Such visibility can be assessed by studying the content of the intercessions alone, independent of the community that used these prayers or other circumstances of time and place. Thus women did not have to be present when the intercessions were used in order for women to be visible. Such visibility varied widely within the general intercessions considered here. Thus, although it will be demonstrated that the general intercessions had considerable potential for making women visible, this potential was not always achieved.

The verbal constructions used to name women in the general intercessions could take a variety of forms and depended, among other things, on whether the language used was gendered or ungendered. The basic logic of the general intercessions indicated that women were always at least implicitly included – except when men were explicitly named (e.g., king, pope). Thus women might be named implicitly through the use of ungendered language, gender neutral language and masculine language used generically (that is, inclusively). Women might be named explicitly through the use of nouns used for women alone, feminine pronouns used alone, gender balanced language, doubling of gendered nouns, doubling of gendered pronouns, or by using the personal names of individual women. Examples given below will illustrate many of these usages.

Women could participate in the general intercessions only if they were present in the communities that prayed them. (Here I consider participation only at the external level; the extent of internalization of these prayers is beyond our present knowledge.) Women who were among the local church communities that used general intercessions were invited – and expected – to participate in praying them; this was indicated both nonverbally and verbally.

Nonverbally, the general intercessions were intelligible to the laity; they were intended to be audible to the people; the priest faced the people as he led these prayers, and he spoke to them. Verbally, the people were explicitly addressed and invited to participate.

Studies and Documentation

A number of articles have been prepared that examine the numerous general intercessions that I have collected, especially from the perspective of women; these are also posted on this website. They are of two types. One contains resources that document the contents of the general intercessions with respect to women. These are the following:

“Ilk man and woman”: Gender-Balanced Language in Medieval General Intercessions

and Preaching. *Documentation*

Pèlerins et Pèlerines: Doubling Gendered Nouns in Medieval General Intercessions. *Documentation*

Ceux et Celles: Doubling Gendered Pronouns in Medieval General Intercessions. *Documentation*

Women Pilgrims in Medieval General Intercessions. *Documentation*

Pregnant Women in Medieval General Intercessions. *Documentation*

Women Workers, Servants and Merchants in Medieval General Intercessions. *Documentation*

Gild Sisters in Medieval General Intercessions: *Documentation*

Women Religious in Medieval General Intercessions. *Documentation*

Deceased Women in Medieval General Intercessions. *Documentation*

Queens and Noblewomen in Medieval General Intercessions. *Documentation*

Other articles provide more extensive and detailed studies of these prayers, especially from the perspective of women. These, which are still in progress at time of writing (September 2003), are as follows:

General intercessions, solemn prayers, and Dhuoda's advice to her son

Christine de Pisan's prayers to Our Lady and the general intercessions of the liturgy

Gender inclusivity in medieval France: Evidence of liturgical texts (prières du prône)

Mary Tudor and evidence for a court form of bidding prayer in medieval England

Widows, queens and sword-bearers in medieval liturgical prayers

Women, men and systems of governance in medieval general intercessions

Women and the night prayer of the sick in crusader hospitals

Women among the ranks of the church in medieval general intercessions and solemn prayers

Still other studies are based on the smaller number of early Anglican general intercessions that I have identified, including the following (here, for historical reasons, I do use the term bidding prayers).

Sovereign and pope in English bidding prayers before and after 1534

Consequences for women of Henry VIII's 1534 decree on bidding prayers

Clergy, nobility and commoners in English bidding prayers before and after 1534

Queen Katherine Parr and the bidding prayer

Approaches and Presentation

As a way to speak about women and the medieval general intercessions, I have chosen to consider the diverse communities that used these texts and the occasions on which they were

used -- to the extent this information is available. Some of these communities included women as participants and some did not. Some of the texts refer explicitly to women and some do not.

The general intercessions were prayed by local church communities in the course of their liturgical celebrations; they were on the lips and in the ears of members of individual worshiping assemblies. The type of community that used the general intercessions most frequently was the parish – or that portion of the parish community that gathered for worship at any given time and place. Here I consider the parish as the “principal” local church community and the form (or range of forms) of the general intercessions used in parish Sunday worship to be the “regular” or “typical” type of text of these prayers.

But other communities need to be considered as well; these are of two kinds. First, local worshiping communities other than parishes also used general intercessions in their worship. Here I designate these as “particular” local church communities. They include special occasions within parishes; cathedrals; monasteries, convents and other communities of ‘religious’; hospitals; universities; groups of pilgrims; and royal chapels.

In addition, the medieval general intercessions identify and pray for communities whose geographic scopes go beyond the boundaries of parish or monastery or hospital. Here I refer to these as “wider” communities. Then as now, people belonged to – were members of – both local church communities and wider communities at the same time. In their general intercessions they named and prayed for these multiple dimensions of church and society.

Such wider communities of their very nature never gathered for worship or used general intercessions themselves; nevertheless, they are a prominent part of most general intercessions. They include dimensions of the church other than those already named: international, national, diocesan church; other clergy; etc. They include political and social entities such as nation, region, etc., as well as economic communities

Here I identify these multiple local and wider communities, show how they are named or referred to in the general intercessions, and consider both the visibility of women and their participation in these liturgical prayers.

Spelling in English examples has been selectively modernized to aid the modern reader. Language referring to women has been underlined. Otherwise, spelling and accents are those of the sources or published editions. Ellipses at the beginning and end of examples are to be understood.

The remainder of this article is divided into three sections, corresponding to the three types of communities just considered: the parish as principal local church community; particular local church communities; and wider communities. These categories are further subdivided as seems appropriate.

Within each category and subcategory I indicate the types of intentions found in the general intercessions; that is, for whom was prayer offered or who was identified. Next I give one or a few texts in English and/or other languages. Whenever possible, these include texts that show how women were made visible.

The source of each excerpt is identified and linked to the *Bibliography* through the use of a unique designator; full bibliographic information is therefore given only in the bibliography. These designators have four elements. (1) A code for the country of origin or equivalent (using modern political-geographic terminology. Thus EN = England; FR = France; GR = Germany; IC = Iceland; IR = Ireland; IT = Italy; PO = Poland; RO = Religious Order (when this is more significant than country). SP = Spain. (2) Within each of these groups the general intercessions are numbered consecutively, in approximate chronological order. (3) The name of a place or person with whom each text is associated is given next. (4) Finally, the approximate date of composition is provided. An example of this system is “FR-1. Lotharingia 10th c.”

THE PRINCIPAL LOCAL CHURCH COMMUNITY: THE PARISH AT SUNDAY WORSHIP

The parish is the most significant local church community. The majority of surviving medieval general intercessions were used in parishes; Sunday worship in parishes was the most common occasion on which these prayers were used. The principal Sunday liturgy was of course the mass, celebrated in the morning. In addition, however, there might also have been a separate service consisting of a sermon, general intercessions and other prayers, held later in the day.

Texts

Evidence that individual sets of general intercessions were used in Sunday worship is of several kinds. First, use on Sunday is often indicated by the title used or by accompanying rubrics. Second, general intercessions may be attached to sermons that were given on Sundays, as indicated by the scripture readings concerned. Third, inclusion of an intention for those who supply bread from which holy bread is made indicates that the intentions were used at Sunday mass, as holy bread was shared at no other liturgy. (This was not bread for holy communion, but was merely blessed [not consecrated] and distributed after mass.) In view of the inherent variability of medieval general intercessions, lack of such an intention does not necessarily mean that these were used outside of mass, but suggests that possibility. In some cases, the brevity of published or surviving texts does not permit any conclusion regarding the nature of the liturgy in which they were used.

The following sets of general intercessions appear to have been used by parishes in their Sunday worship. An asterisk (*) indicates the inclusion of an intention for those supplying bread.

IC-1. Skalholt 1500
EN-5. Worchester 1349*
EN-13. London 15th c*
EN-15. Salisbury 1400*
EN-22. Butley 1401*
EN-23. York 1405*
EN-27. York 1440*
EN-32. Hearne 1457*
EN-34. Winchester 1475*
EN-36. Wynchen de Worde 1483*
EN-37. Caxton 1483*
EN-38. Becon 1483
EN-39. Shrewsbury 1484*
EN-40. York 1490
EN-42. York 1509*
EN-44. Sarum Processional 1517
EN-46. LeStrange temp Henry VIII

FR-8. Poitiers 1260
FR-20. Limoges St Pierre du Querroix. 1379
FR-22. Paris St Andres de Arcs 15th c*
FR-25. Paris Saint-Jean-en-Greve 1405*
FR-26. Paris 1449*
FR-27. Limoges St Pierre du Querroix 1450
FR-28. Meaux Cathedral 1475*

GR-6. Honorius A 1100
GR-7. Honorius B 1100
GR-8. Bavaria 1150
GR-13. Baumgartenburg 14th c
GR-14. Augsburg 1420
GR-24. Regensburg 1485
GR-25. Passau 1496
GR-26. Surgant A 1503
GR-27. Surgant B 1503

SP-1. Cuixa 1388*
SP-3. Tarragona 15th c*
SP-4. Tarragona 1501*
SP-5. Pamplona 1561*
SP-6. Lerida 1567

PO-4. Czestochowa 1400
PO-5. Krakow 1415

PO-16. Leopol 1450
PO-17. Warsaw 1480
PO-18. Tyneic 15th c
PO-19. Gniezno St James 15th c
PO-20. Poznan A 1510
PO-21. Poznan B 1510

Women were members of the local parish community and therefore were participants in its Sunday general intercessions. As will become apparent, women were also visible in many of the intentions.

Intentions for the Living

The following is a composite list of intentions for the living drawn from many sets of general intercessions. Any one set of intercessions contains some but not all of these; the number of intentions included varies widely. The order of intentions is my own; this too varies greatly from one set of intercessions to another.

These intentions may refer to the parish as a whole and those gathered for worship; to particular women; to those in great need; to those who make particular contributions to parish life; to oneself, family and friends; to those who live good lives and those who do not.

All parishioners and the entire community

You shall pray for all our parishioners wherever they be on land or on water that God save them from all manner of perils and for all the good men of this parish, for their wives, children and goods that God maintain save and keep them (EN-37. Caxton 1483)

Pro tota communitate istius regni et parochie (PO-4. Czestochowa 1400)

Après nous prions dieu pour qui sommes cy assemblez pour faire le service de dieu (FR-22. St Andrè des Arcs 15th c)

Et par especial pour ceulx et celles qui demeurent et habitent en ceste parroisse (FR-22. St Andrè des Arcs 15th c)

Those present

Et per aquilz et aquellas que sont venent ouvrir lo divinau offici de nostre seignour (FR-27. Limoges St Pierre du Queyrois 1450)

Those absent

each one pray for the other and for them which be absent and would be present and may not; and for them that may and will not, that God amend them. (EN-13. London 15th c)

and for all them that would be here and may not for sickness, for work or any other lawful occupation that they may have part of all the good deeds that shall be done in this place or in any other. (EN-37. Caxton 1383)

Pregnant women

and for women that be with children, that God grant to them a good deliverance and purification, and to their children baptism and confirmation. (EN-13. London 15th c)

Pour toutes fame ensintes (FR-17. Provins Saint Quirrance 1300)

Vor all swanger frawen (GR-18. Bohemia 1378)

Pro pregnantibus mulieribus (PO-5. Krakow 1415)

Widows

pour vesves (FR-25. Paris 1405)

Witwen vnd weisen beshirmet werden (GR-26. Surgent A 1503)

Orphans

Et pour tous orphelins et orphelines (FR-26. Paris 1449)

Bitten umbe ... witwen und wezen (GR-17. Nicolaus 1423)

Children

Liebe kinder pet auch vmb alle kinder der müter der christenheit (GR 21. Aldersbach 15th c)

The poor

Bittel umbe ... alle arme leut (GR-13. Baumgartnerberg 14th c.)

The sick

Ye shall also pray for all them that be sick or diseased of this parish that God send to them health the rather for our prayers (EN-37. Caxton 1483)

Pro infirmis. Et per tous maulaudeys et malaudas (FR-27. Limoges St Pierre du Queyroix 1450)

Nous prions pour tous les malades de ceste parroice (FR-25. Saint-Jean-en-Greves 1405)

Those in distress

pour tous les attristes (PO-19. Gneizno St James 15th c)

Après nous prierons dieu pour tous desconfortez et desconseillez, et touz autres qui sont en tristesse et tribulatio (FR-22. St André des Arcs 15th c)

pour tous desvoyés de vérité et de raison (FR-26. Paris 1449)

Gild members

pour tous les frères et seurs des confraries de ceste eglise (FR-26. Paris 1449)

Pilgrims

You shall pray also for all palmers and pilgrims, for all manner of men and women which any good journey have gone, goeth, or shall go, that God give them grace well to go and well for to come [back] and unto us parte of the good journeys, deed and prayers and they of ours (EN-13. London 15th c)

Por pelerins. Enapres, faisons proiere a Nostre Segnor Jesu Crist pour tous ceus et por toutes celles qui sunt es pelerinages (FR-8. Poitiers 1260)

Priez pour touz pelerins et pelerines (FR-17. Provins Saint Quirrance 1300)

Item, pregarem nostre Senyor Deu per los romeus e romies. (SP-1 Cuixa 1388)

Fur all bilger vnd bilgerin.. (GR-26. Surgant A 1503)

Those who supply bread

Also you shall pray for the good man and good wife that this day brought or sent bread unto the church, of which holy bread is to be made. (EN-13. London 15th c)

pour tous ceulx et celles qui font la charité du pain benoit (FR-22. Paris St André des Arcs 15th c)

a mas rogaremos por aquel or por aquella que ha traydo el pan de charidad que comunmente se dice el pan bendito (SP-6. Lerida 1567)

Parish Benefactors

Also you shall pray for those who give or bequeath unto this church any ornament, as book, bell, chalice, vestments, lamp or light, or any thing, that God reward them spiritually and bodily. (EN-13. London 15th c)

Ye shall pray also especially for all those good men and women who gift or bequeath any manner of goods unto this church (EN-39. Shrewsbury 1484)

pour tous ceulz et celles qui tienent le luminaire de l'eglise (FR-25. Paris Saint-Jean-en-Greve 1405)

Almsgivers

Pro eleemosinariis (PO-3. Beszowa 1400)

Founders and oldest members

and for them that first began and longest holdeth on that God reward them at the day of doom (EN-37. Caxton 1483)

and for them that first began and hold on the longest (EN-13. London 15th c)

Those who pay tithes and offerings

Also you shall pray especially for true tithers and devout offerers, who truly pay their tithes and devout offerings, that God of his goodness increase them spiritually and bodily. (EN-13. London 15th c)

Ye shall pray also especially for all those good men and women that dewly and truly pay their tithes, their offerings, their debts to god and to holy church, as they are bound by the law (EN-39. Shrewsbury 1484)

Those who do not pay tithes

and they that do not do so [pay tithes], that they may have grace to amend themselves, the quicker and better for our good prayers at this time (EN-32. Shrewsbury 1384)

Ourselves

Ye shall also pray for yourself, that God for his mercy grant you grace. (EN-15. Salisbury 1400)

Family and friends

Quilibet pro suo patre vivo et matre, pro fratribus et sororibus, consanguineis, amici (PO-16. Leopold 1450)

Married women

Pro omnibus dominabus (PO-20. Poznan A 1510)

pour les epouses (PO-21. Poznan B 1510)

Personal Benefactors

and for all them that do, bequethe or say you good that God reward them at their need (EN-37. Caxton 1483)

Persons for whom prayers have been promised

Et de tous ceulz et celles pour qui nous sommes tenus, et de qui nous avons entention de prier (FR-25. Paris Saint-Jean-en-Greves 1405)

Those in a state of grace

Also ye shall pray for all them that live good lives that God preserve them in it (EN-37. Caxton 1483)

c) pour tous ceulx et celles qui sont en estat de grâce (FR-22. Paris St André des Arcs 15th)

Prisoners

for them that are... in prison that God bring them out there-of (EN-23 York 1405)

Et aussy pour tous aultres prisonniers qui sont detenus pour dette (FR-30. Argenton 1493)

Penitents

Pro penitentibus (GR-21. Aldersbach 15th c)

Pro omnibus penitentibus et pro omnibus induratis corde (PO-20. Poznan A 1510)

Personal Malefactors

and for them that [do other than good to you] that Ihesu Crist amend them. (EN-37. Caxton 1483)

Sinners

and for them that be in debt or in deadly sin that Ihesu Crist bring them out thereof the rather for our prayers. (EN-37. Caxton 1483)

Vmb all todsunder vnd todsunderin (GR-19. Lambach 15th c)

c) pour tous ceulx et celles qui sont en péchié mortel (FR-22. Paris St Andre des Arcs 15th)

Enemies

Pro inimicis suis (PO-3. Beszowa 1400)

Pro nencon inimicis (PO-16. Leopold 1450)

Unbelievers

Pro infidelibus (PO-3. Beszowa 1400)

Evildoers

Pro malificis ut deus eos conuertat (GR-6. Honorius A 1100)

Excommunicated

Item, pregarem nostre Senyor Deu per aquells o aquelles qui son vedats o vedades (SP-1. Cuixa 1388)

Intentions for the Dead

Again, most sets of intercessions contain some but rarely all of the intentions listed here. These intentions only occasionally refer to deceased clergy and royalty; deceased family members are almost always included. Other intentions refer to deceased benefactors, persons buried in the local church or cemetery; those whose anniversaries of death are being remembered or for whom one has promised prayers; those in purgatory and those who have been forgotten.

Clergy

Furthermore ye shall pray for all christian souls, for all archbishops & bishops souls and in especial for all them that have been bishops of this diocese, and for all curates, parsons and vicars souls and in especial for the souls of them that have been curates of this church and for the souls that have served in this church. (EN-37. Caxton 1483)

Royalty

Also ye shal pray for the souls of all christian kings and queens and in especial for the souls of them that have been kings of this realm of England (EN-37. Caxton 1483)

Relatives and Godparents

You shall pray also for your fathers souls, and your mothers souls, for your godfathers souls and your godmothers souls, for your brothers souls, your sisters souls, for your uncles souls, your aunts souls and for all your elders souls. (EN-13. London 15th c)

Those for whom prayers have been promised

Also you shall pray especially for all the souls for whom you and I be bound and held to pray for. (EN-13. London 15th c)

Personal Benefactors

And you shall pray especially for the souls from whom you have received any good by gift or bequest, whereby you have your living and your sustenance. (EN-13. London 15th c)

Parish Benefactors

You shall pray also for all the souls which have given or bequeathed any good to this church, wherefore it is better maintained. (EN-13. London 15th c)

pour tous ceulz et celles qui ont lessié a la cure de ceens rentes (FR-25. Saint-Jean-en-Greves 1405)

Pro fundatoribus et benefactoribus: aller stifter und stiffterin (GR-21. Aldersbach 15th c)

Dittes voz Patenostres pour l'ame du conte henry qui fonda l'eglise de ceans, et pour la

comtesse marie sa femme... Priz pour l'ame du roy de navaire thibault qui morut en navaire et pour la royne sa femme... (FR-17. Provins 1400)

Et en remembrance d'eulx faren pregieyre per ... scientifique persone Monsr mestre Paul Guay;, et per donne Johanete Vidale, sa moiller; .. per lo seigr Jo. Romanet et donne Margarite Vigane, sa moiller; per lo Seigr Jo Romanet et donne Catherine Rogiere, sa moiller... (FR-27. Limoges St Pierre du Queyroix 1450)

Those whose anniversaries are being remembered

Also you shall pray for all the souls whose anniversary masses are said, kept and held in this church yearly (EN-13. London 15th c)

Those buried in this church or cemetery

Also you shall pray for... all the souls whose bodies and bones rest in this church or in this church yard or in any other. (EN-13. London 15th c)

et touz ceulz et celles desquels les corps reposit en l'eglise (FR-22. Paris St André des Arcs 15th c)

Those in purgatory

Also you shall pray especially for all the souls that be in the pains of purgatory, that God for his mercy bring them out thereof to the bliss that ever shall last. (EN-13. London 15th c)

Those forgotten and in need

and in especial for them that have most need and least help that God for his endless mercy lessen and diminish their pains by means of our prayers & bring them to his everlasting bliss in heaven (EN-37. Caxton 1483)

PARTICULAR LOCAL CHURCH COMMUNITIES

As already stated, I regard the general intercessions used in the Sunday worship of the medieval church to be the basic, normative, regular form of general intercessions -- those for ordinary occasions. This conclusion takes into account a good deal of individual diversity.

But these texts are not the whole story. Other forms and examples of general intercessions were also used in what I call "particular circumstances" or on "special occasions." These too were entirely legitimate, but less common; today they are less well recognized and acknowledged. Often – but not always – these special general intercessions are distinctive in content – but not in form or general orientation. They often identify the special local church communities that used them, and pay less attention to other local church communities.

Here I identify the general intercessions that were used for such “special occasions” or by such “particular” local church communities. I specify which local church community used them, and describe – at least in general terms – how they are distinct in content. I consider how they facilitated the participation of women and expressed their visibility.

Parish Communities on Special Occasions

Parish communities might use general intercessions on occasions other than regular Sunday worship; here I use the term “special occasion” to include several quite diverse situations.

Annual Remembrance of Benefactors

As already noted, parishioners and others who were benefactors of the parish were often mentioned in general terms in the Sunday general intercessions; so were deceased benefactors. In addition, once a year deceased benefactors might be prayed for by personal name; sometimes their benefactions might also be read out.

The few texts we have of this type all come from England, where they are known as bede rolls (a term, however, that is also used for other, unrelated documents). These are:

- EN-7. Sandwiche 1380
- EN-11. London Charterhouse 1390
- EN-30. Bristol All Saints 1450
- EN-31. Norfolk Swaffham 1455
- EN-45. Morebath 1520

Women were participants and visible in the content of these texts. Here are a few excerpts from one of these texts.

(Names plus items given:)

Hugh Mustarder, who gave a Chalice, and Alyce his Wife, who gave the little Bell of the Tower.

Richard Cross and Katharyne his Wife, who gave fifty Marks to repair the old Steeple and the Vestry that is now.

Katheryn Robyn, who gave a Pyx of silver and did glaze a Window in the South Side of the old Church.

Cecyly Blake, who gave a Vestment to the Rood Altar.

Kateryn Colleyn, who gave 3 Surplesses to the Honour of God

(then a list of names only)

William Morrel and Catherine his Wife

John Allen and Mary his Wife

Margeret Pepyr
Margaret Serjeant
Maud Bolton (EN-31. Norfolk Swaffham 1455)

Parish guilds/guilds

There is also evidence (from England) that parish guilds/guilds sometimes used general intercessions at their regular meetings (which I presume to be weekly or monthly). Only partial texts survive and differences between general intercessions used on these occasions and those on Sunday cannot be determined. The texts in question are:

EN-8. Wignale Holy Trinity 1389
EN-9. Wignale Assumption 1389
EN-10. Wignale Cranbone 1389

Women were members of such guilds, and individual women are named in other documents from Assumption parish. It is not possible to say how visible they were in the texts, which survive only in part. The following is the most complete text:

Beseech we ihesu crist mercy, for the peace and state of holy church, for the pope of Rome and the cardinals, for the patriarch of Jerusalem, and for the state and peace of holy church: maintain them and sustain them; and for the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Bishop of Norwich and for the Prioress of Crabous, and for alle the convent and for all Archbishops, Bishops, Abbots, Priors, and for all men and women of religion; and for the king and the queen, and all the Commoners of this Realm, vt patet in Pulpito, &c. (EN-10. Wignale Cranbone 1389)

Parish funerals

There is evidence from Poland that general intercessions were read at funerals, which I am presuming to be a parish liturgy. These are the texts:

PO-6. Kradow 1428
PO-7. Krakow 1431

The extent to which women were participants and were visible in the texts cannot be determined, as the texts themselves have not been published.

Morning prayer and evening prayer

One set of general intercessions comes from a liturgical psalter owned by an individual women. They were used -- in the church or at home -- toward the end of morning prayer and

evening prayer. It is:

FR-19. Metz 1346

This unique text consists of a series of relatively standard intentions, to which the responses are variable, being appropriate verses from psalms. In this case the woman who used this psalter was the leader of these intercessions as well as the sole participant. Women are visible only in the following intention:

Prions pour nos freires et suers:

to which the response is

Pour me freires et mes prochiens...

Other intentions include the following:

Prions pour tout l'estet et degreiz de sainte Eglize;

Prions pour nostre roy

Pour la paix et l'uniteit de toute sainte Eglize

Pour nostre governour et pastour espirituell;

Prions pour ceulx qui vont en lons pelerinaiges et qui cheminent fuer de lour lieu.

Etc. (FR-19. Metz 1346)

Cathedral Communities

As the principal church of the diocese, people might – whether regularly or occasionally – celebrate liturgies in the cathedral. Several different types of communities existed in relation to the cathedral: lay people might belong to a parish that worshiped there on a regular basis; the cathedral clergy (canons, vicars, boys) formed a community of their own; clergy from the entire diocese (or a wider area) might worship there in the course of synods or other gatherings; laity and clergy might worship with the bishop on special occasions; laity and clergy might worship at cathedral for occasions that had significance for the nation. Examples of intercessions used on such occasions are given below.

Cathedrals as parishes

Cathedrals functioned as parish communities and such general intercessions have already been considered. Women were participants and most likely would have been visible in the intentions.

Weekly intercessions, especially for deceased benefactors

Two sets of general intercessions seem to have been used by communities of cathedral canons; they are quite different from those used for parishes. These are:

EN-12. Salisbury 15th c

EN-33. Exeter 1461

These texts presume a clerical community but also seem to be placed in the context of Sunday worship. The extent to which women were participants is therefore not clear. Certainly; women were visible in the intentions, at least to some extent.

These have relatively brief sets of intentions for the living, most of which have to do with the wider community. Thus there are intentions for peace and the state of the church in general, for the pope and cardinals, the bishops, and the cathedral clergy. These are then followed by much longer sets of intercessions for the dead, especially cathedral clergy and benefactors of the cathedral. Many of these are identified by their personal names.

In the case of the Exeter intercessions the deceased who are remembered include a long list of kings of England, nobility (including Anne, late Dutchesse of Excetre, and Margarette, wife of the late Earl of Devonshire.), bishops, etc. In the case of the Sarum intercessions the living benefactors who are remembered include several women as well as those brothers and sisters who are members of the cathedral confraternity. The deceased who are remembered include long lists of bishops and canons, kings, nobles, and other benefactors. Several women are included, e.g., Dame Katerine Hungerford, Agnes wife of Nicholas Hardyng, and Agnes Barowe. Interestingly, this prayer was brought up to date and used on November 5, 1889.

Consecration of a bishop

Diocesan communities sometimes became local church communities, for example at the consecration of a bishop. The one such text is:

PO-8. Gniezno 1437

Women probably were among the participants in this liturgy, but whether they were visible in the intentions cannot be determined. Though the text has not been published, it has been described as follows:

en finale du sermon prononce en 1437 a la cathedrale de Gniezno pour la consecration episcopale de l'archeveque-primat Vincent Kot, avec des intention specialement adaptees

Synods

Diocesan clergy might become a local church community when they gather for a synod or convocation. These texts are:

FR-7. Paris Notre Dame 1218

EN-43. Colette 1509

PO-10. Leczyca 1446

PO-14. Gniezno 1471

Except possibly for abbesses, women would not have participated in such synods. The content of the parisian text does make women visible to some extent:

Pro rege et uxore suo.

Et pro rege Ludoico et uxore sua.

Pro nostre domini regis, et regina Elisabet qui hic jacet.

Collette is a sermon and will be considered below. The two Polish texts have not been published. The French text is quite distinctive and contains intentions for all the hospitals in the city of Paris; for 13 churches and religious communities; for recluses and the poor; for the cantor and canons of the cathedral; as well as for bishops, living and dead.

Sermons

Several general intercessions were included in sermons given in cathedrals. These include:

EN-25. Ullerston 1416

EN-41. St Paul 1489

EN-43. Colette 1509

CZ-1. Prague A 12th c

CZ-2. Prague B 12th c

CZ-3. Prague C 12th c

Two of these sermons were given to audiences of clergy, one (Ullerston) in Latin, the other (Colette) in English.. The third (St Paul) was given, in English, by the boy bishop of London to an audience of laity and clergy, including younger (teen age?) women. They are all relatively brief and pray for the pope, all pastors, all Christian people, bishops, all the people of England, and all present. (Colette). The boy bishop remembers also the dean and clergy of the cathedral, the king, queen and nobility, as well as the mayor, aldermen and sheriffs. The section for the deceased remembers a late bishop of London and all benefactors of St Pauls. Ullerstone prays for the state of the church, for the bishop, for all prelates, for the dean of the cathedral, for the king (Henry V), for all the faithful living and dead.

The three Czech texts are attributed to the bishop of Prague and so are presumed to have been preached in his cathedral. However, the texts are not particularly distinctive.

Marriage of a king

National events sometimes gave rise to the cathedral as local church community, for example the consecration or marriage of the king. The sole text is:

PO-15. Krakow 1470

Women would have participated in the general intercessions used at this wedding. While

the bride is named in the text, it is not known if other women were as well. It was been described as follows:

et finale d'un sermon anonyme prononce au mariage d'un roi

and included the following distinctive intention for the bride and groom:

Postremo, ut hoc fedus sanctissimis sponso et sponse plenum sit amoris et fidei, plenum iocunditatis et gaudii, plenum utilitatis et comoditatis

Religious Communities

“Religious” here is used in the common Roman Catholic sense to mean members of religious orders and congregations or of similar groups, or individuals who were known as mulieres sanctae etc. Thus monasteries, beguinages and other such groups could also constitute types of local church communities.

Communities of Origin

General intercessions used in communities of religious may first be grouped according to the community that used them, as follows.

Beguines

- FR-9. Paris Beguinage A 1272
- FR-10. Paris Beguinage B 1272
- FR-11. Paris Beguinage C 1272
- FR-12. Paris Beguinage D 1273
- FR-13. Paris Beguinage E 1273
- FR-14. Paris Beguinage F 1273
- FR-15. Paris Beguinage G 1273

Benedictines

- EN-2. Ramsey 13th c
- FR-3. Fleury (Winchcombe) 11th c
- GR-4. Otlohs 1050
- GR-5. Otlohs 1067
- GR-8. Bavaria 1150
- GR-10. Benediktbeuer 12th c
- GR-11. Oberaltarich 13th c
- Gr-14. Augsburg 1420
- GR-18. Lambach 15th c
- GR-22. Benediktbeuer 15th c

Cistercians

- GR-18. Bohemia 1378
- GR-21. Aldersbach 15th c

Carthusians

- GR-12. Karthause (Chartreuse) 12th c

Augustinian Canons

- EN-22. Butley 1401
- FR-17. Provins Saint Quirrance 1300
- FR-24. Provins Saint Quirrance 1400
- GR-23. St Florian 1477

Franciscans

- FR-30. Argenton 1431
- GR-15. Nicolaus A 1417
- GR-16. Nicolaus B 1417
- GR-17. Nicolaus C 1423
- GR-20. Schaffhaus 1470

Military Orders

- RO-1. Hospitallers 1260
- RO-2. Hospitallers 1310
- RO-3. Templars 1257
- RO-4. Teutonic Knights A n.d.
- RO-5. Teutonic Knights B n.d.

Other

- PO-3. Beszowa 1400 (au couvent des Paulins)
- PO-18. Tyneic 14th c (Dominicans)
- RO-6. Trinitarians 1198

Women obviously were participants in the general intercessions used in the beguinage.

However, women presumably would not have participated in general intercessions used by religious communities of men themselves, especially in the case of the monastic orders.

Whether the lay sisters referred to in certain texts participated in these intercessions is not clear.

The visibility of women in these texts is considered further below.

Entirely Parochial Content

From the point of view of content, some of the general intercessions under consideration here have no distinct character; they are entirely like those from parishes. These texts include the following:

FR-17. Provins 1300
GR-4. Otlohs 1050
GR-10. Benedictbeuer A 12th c
GR-11. Oberaltaich 13th c
GR-14. Augsburg 1420
GR-15. Nikolaus A 1417
GR-16. Nikolaus B 1417
GR-17. Nikolaus C 1423
GR-20. Shaffhaus 1470

They may have been used in parish communities served by religious priests or in parishes under the control religious communities. Finally, they may been used in parish communities that worshiped in some part of the religious community's own church.

Mixed Religious and Parochial Content

General intercessions from some other religious communities are a mixture of distinctive content and content that may be said to be parochial in character. These texts include the following:

EN-22. Butley 1401
FR-3. Fleury (Winchcombe) 11th c
FR-24. Provins Saint Quirrance 1400
GR-5. Otlohs 1067
GR-8. Bavaria 1150
GR-15. Nicholas A 1417
GR-18. Bohemia 1378
GR-19. Lambach 15th c
GR-21. Aldersbach 15th c
GR-22. Benediktbeuer 15th c
GR-23. St Florian 1477

In general, potential distinctive elements include:

- references to the head of the community – the abbot or prior
- references to living benefactors and those prayed for in a special way
- references to deceased heads and members
- references to deceased benefactors and founders
- references to deceased members of confraternities

Many of these prayers include intentions for “all religious”. Sometimes this appears to refer to religious orders and communities in general and therefore is not noteworthy in this context. Sometimes however it appears to refer to the members of a particular monastery or convent.

Heads and members

The following are selected examples of intercessions that include intentions for abbots, priors and members of the religious communities that used them.

And in especially for my master the prior of Butley with all his brothers (EN-22. Butley 1401)

Pro abbatibus nostris

Pro fratribus et sororibus nostris (FR-3. Fleury (Winchcombe) 11th c)

vor alle epte und eptissenne [abbesses]

vor alle bruedir end swestirn

welichs ordins oder geslechtis sy synt (GR-18. Bohemia 1378)

und umb mein genadigen herren ... probst zw sant florian

Und umb den ganzen Conuentt der selbs (GR-23. St Florian 1477)

Servants of the Monastery

Two of the religious communities prayed for the servants of the monastery, including female servants. Thus:

Vmb ewer gaumer vnd gaumerin vmb chnecht vmd dyren dy dahaimpt sind (*modern*: Oberkneche und Obermagde, Knechte vnd Magde) (GR-19 Lambach 15th c)

Darnach pit vmb all vnser trew diener vnd dienerin (*modern*: die Dienstboten und Dienstbotinnen) (GR-21. Aldersbach 15th c)

Living benefactors and others

The following are selected examples of intercessions that include intentions for living benefactors and others prayed for in a special way.

Umb all dy menschen dy mir und dem ganczen conuent emphollen sein sy sein lebenlig oder tod

Umb all dy menschen dy daz gotzhaus vorgestewert habent oder gefudert unter warten, oder mit werchen (GR-19. Lambach 15th c)

Umb dy menschen die ir heiligs almusen und stewr hie pey disen wirdligen gotzhausn lasen

Vmb dy menschen die mir und meinem herren in unser pet beuolhen sein

Umb all dy seyen in unser pruderschaft (GR-22. Benediktbeuer 15th c)

Deceased heads and members

The following are examples of intercessions that include intentions for deceased abbots, priors and members of the religious community in question.

[*modern*] die verstorbenen Bruder (GR-5. Otlohs 1067)

Umb aller sell der leycnam hye rast dem gozhaus (GR-23. St Florian 1477)

Deceased benefactors and founders

The following are selected examples of intercessions that include intentions for persons outside the community who were benefactors or founders.

aller der sel dy stifter und fundrar dicz gozhaus (GR-19. Lambach 15th c)

Darnach pit auch vmb aller stifter vnd stiffterin set des gotzhaus zw alderspach (GR-19. Lambach 15th c)

Umb stifter und stewer dicz gozhauss (GR-23. St Florian 1479)

Deceased members of confraternities

The following intercessions include intentions for lay persons who were joined to the community through membership in confraternities and who were especially remembered in prayer.

olde pruoder olde swester (der Gemeinschaft) (GR-8. Bavaria 1150)

dy bruderschaft mit unserm ordini (GR-18. Bohemia 1378)

Parochial elements in intercessions of religious communities

In addition to these distinctively religious elements, some of the intentions of these communities were essentially the same as those of parishes, including those for the pope, king, etc.

In addition, the religious prayed for the sick, needy, distressed, penitents, poor and pilgrims. They also very often prayed for pregnant women and for sinners (which in German texts is always the doubled construction todsünder und todsünderin).

Entirely or Mostly Religious

Four sets of general intercessions are entirely distinctive and include no intentions of a parochial type. These are:

- EN-2. Ramsey 13th c
- RO-3. Templars 1257
- RO-4. Teutonic Knights A nd
- RO-5. Teutonic Knights B nd

The following are two examples of this type of general intercession.

(Peace, the church, the holy land)
et por nostre maison
e por toutes maison de religions; et pour tous autres homes religieux
et por nos confreres et por nos consuers
et por tous nos bienfaiteurs de nostre maison, mors et vie
(for the dead generally)
et por les armes de nos peres et de nos meres (RO-3. Templars 1257)

[in translation]
For Christendom
For the pope and all prelates
For our order
For the high master of the order
For other brothers of the order
For all are in a state of mortal sin
For all lands in which the order serves
For all benefactors
For deceased benefactors
For deceased brothers and sisters of the order's confraternity
For the souls of fathers and mothers. (RO-5. Teutonic Knights B nd)

It may be concluded that women were often visible in the general intercessions of religious communities of men, either because these were not distinguishable from those of parish communities at all, or because they contained elements of parish intercessions even while being distinctively religious in part, or because they referred to women lay sisters, servants, members of confraternities, or dead family members.

Hospital Communities

The sick and those who ministered to them in hospitals also constituted a type of local

church community. These texts are the following

FR-16. Amiens l'Hotel Dieu 1275
FR-21. Joigny l'Hotel-Dieu 15th c
RO-1. Hospitallers 1260
RO-2. Hospitallers 1310
PO-21. Poznan B 1510

The first two hospitals were in French cities, the second two were Crusader establishments in Acre and Rhodes, respectively. The first two were intended for use during Sunday worship while the second two were used as a form of night prayer. The last is from some unknown Polist "maison-dieu."

Women potentially were participants in these intercessions in two ways: as patients, and as lay sisters, who provided nursing care and other services to those who lived or served the hospital.. Women were especially visible in the first four texts, as will be shown below.

These intercessions included the following types of distinctive content

Heads and members of hospital communities

proies por tous les confreres de l'Hospital, et pour tous les consors, et por ceux et celles qui servent a la charite en la saint maison de l'Hospital
Proies por les maistre de l'Hospital et por les freres qui sont gardiens de la sainte maison de l'Hospital (RO-1. Hospitallers 1260)

Pries por nostre maistre qui est gardien de la sainte maison de l'Hospital...
Pries pour nos freres et quelque part qu'il s'est
Pries por tous nos confreres et nos conseurs... (RO-2. Hospitallers 1310)

Si prions pour le maison de chaiens, et pour tous les habitans, nomeement pour no maistre...
Si prions nomeement pour les freres et la sereurs de la maison de chaiens (FR-16. Amiens l'Hotel-Dieu 1275)

Nous prions ... en especial pour les maistre, freres et seurs de seans. (FR-21. Joigny l'Hotel-Dieu 15th c)

Living benefactors

Pries pour tous ceaux et celles qui ont done les aumosnes a la sainte maison de l'Hospital... (RO-2. Hospitallers 1310)

Nous prions dieu ... en especial pour tous les bienfaicteurs de ceans (FR-21. Joigny l'Hotel-Dieu 15th c))

Priez aussi le Dieu clement pour les donateurs de cette maison-Dieu (PO-21. Poznan B 1510)

Deceased benefactors

Pries tuit por les armes ... de tous nos bienfactors (RO-2. Hospitallers 1310)

Prions tous et toutes pour les ames de tous chaix et de toutes cheles qui la maison de chaiens estorerent et qui les aumosnes et les rentes i laisserent et dounerent (FR-16. Amiens l'Hotel-Dieu 1275)

Nous prierons ... en especial pour nostre fondaresse qui fonda et doissia l'ospital et le lieu de céans, pour tous les aultres fondeurs et fondarresses et bienfaiteurs de nostre hospital. Et pour tous ceulx et celles qui ont fonde et lessie céans leurs anniversaires... (FR-21. Joigny l'Hotel-Dieu 15th c)

Prions le Dieu o. pour les âmes dont les corps reposent ici dans cette maison-Dieu, autour de cette maison-Dieu (PO-21. Poznan B 1510)

Parochial intentions that refer to women

Proies por les armes de vos payres et de vos meires
Proies ... por la royne Berenguiere et por la contesse de Flandres (RO-1. Hospitallers 1260)

Pries tuit por les armes de vos pères et de vos mères (RO-2. Hospitallers 1310)

Si prions pour le roi de franche, et pour le royne se feme
Et si prions pour les âmes de nos pères et de nos mères, de nos frères, de nos sereurs
Et pour les âmes de chaix et de chelles qui se reposent en le chimentière de chaiens (FR-16. Amiens l'Hotel-Dieu1275)

Nous prierons ... pour tous cheulx et celles qui sont ordonnez a faire le saint service de cieü

Nous prierons dieu pour tous ceulx et celles qui sont en estat de grace (FR-21. Joigny l'Hotel-Dieu 15th c)

University Communities

Faculty and students at universities in Poland also constituted a type of local church community. The surviving general intercessions seem to have focused on prayers for benefactors. In addition, the community of beguines in Paris were closely associated with the university of Paris, however, and there are two references to this in the surviving fragments of their intercessions. These texts are:

PO 2. Krakow 1407
PO-11. Krakow A 1450
PO-12. Krakow B 1450
PO-13. Krakow 1460
FR-9. Paris Beguinage 1272
FR-11. Paris Beguinage 1272

Women may not have participated in the general intercessions used in Krakow, as the population of medieval universities was largely male. They certainly did participate in the intercessions used in the beguinage of Paris.

Only in the first case has a substantial portion of the text been published. It is mainly a prayer for benefactors, including royalty and noblewomen. Two of the intercessions are as follows:

Pro domino nostro Rege fundatore et conservatore Universitatis, ac domina Regina...
Pro domina Katerina ... que pro augmento Universitatis collegiatum erectis...

This text also includes an intention for those teaching at the university (Item pro omnibus magistris...) as does the first parisian text. The second parisian text prays Et pro universitate parisiensi.

Pilgrimage Communities

Groups of persons on pilgrimage also constituted a type of local church community. The one such text is:

SP-2. Monserrat 14th c

This text is described as “intentions proposees aux pelerins de Monsterrat.” Women certainly took part in pilgrimages and therefore potentially could have participated in these intercessions. They are not mentioned explicitly in the intentions themselves, however. Following typical intercessions for pope, king, nobility, farmers, merchants, captives etc., there is also one for pilgrims to Jerusalem, Rome and Compestella. The following particular intentions for Monserrat and pilgrims to its Virgin are also included.

Pro recommendantibus et invocantibus ipsam devotam
Pro procuratoribus, procuratores et nuntios huius devote recipientibus
Postea honesto et non cupido gestu vel verbo, recomendet baccinos et helemosinas et oblationes consuetas.:

Royal Chapel Communities

Kings and queens and their attendants and court members could also constitute a type of local church community, The two known texts are the following:

AN-1. Sarum Processional 1545

EN-47. Mary 1553

The first prays for the church of England (ecclesia Anglicana) and for the king and bishops, and then for the queen and nobility. The second prays for England and for Philip and Mary by name and title.

Such a court form might have been used when the king and noblemen were away from the queen and her attendants, in which case women may well not have been participants. Alternatively, it might have been used for the queen and noblewomen alone, or thirdly, for king, queen and noblemen and noblewomen. The queen is referred to (“queen”) in the earlier text, but called by her personal name (“Mary”) in the second.

WIDER COMMUNITIES

In their general intercessions, local church communities prayed for several “wider” communities to which their members also belonged. These included wider church communities, wider political and social communities, and wider economic communities. In several cases these wider communities are identified by naming leaders who represent or symbolize them.

Wider Church Communities

Medieval general intercessions were especially prayers for the whole church in all its manifestations:

- international (pope, patriarchs, holy land)
- national (archbishops)
- diocesan (bishops)
- other clergy
- members of religious orders and similar communities
- members of religious associations, mostly of laity, that included members of more than one local church; here they are termed confraternities

Church and Christendom in general

You shall kneel down on your knees and pray devoutly and meekly to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, three persons and one God; To the holy maid and mother saint Mary, and to all the holy court of heaven, especially for the state and peace of all holy church and all Christian kingdoms and especially for the kingdom of England, that Jesus Christ, king of heaven and prince of peace grant rest, unity and peace among all Christian people. (EN-13. London 15th c)

International church

You shall pray also for the pope of Rome especially and all his cardinals (EN-13. London 15th c)

You shall pray also... for the Patriarch of Jerusalem (EN-13. London 15th c)

You shall pray also especially for the holy land and for the holy cross upon which our Saviour Christ Jesus suffered pain and passion for our redemption; that he by his might and mercy bring it out of the hands of unbelievers into the royal governance and respect of Christian men, when it is his will and the sooner for prayer. (EN-13. London 15th c)

National and diocesan church

You shall pray also ... for our lord and father the archbishop of Canterbury and for our father and lord the bishop of London and all other archbishops and bishops, especially of this land, that Jesus Christ give them might and strength to maintain the state and law of holy Church and to rule well himself ... to serve and please Jesus... (EN-13. London 15th c)

Other clergy

Also you shall pray especially for the patron and for the parson of this church and for all the priests and clerks which serve God in this church or in any other, that God of his great mercy help and maintain them to his honor and grant them grace so to act in this world, that it may be the salvation of their souls and of all Christian folk. (EN-13. London 15th c)

Religious orders and similar groups

Also you shall pray for abbots and priors, abbesses and prioresses; for monks, canons, friars and nuns and for all other men and women of religion, that Jesus Christ give them grace to serve him and to keep their rule well and to end life in purity. (EN-13. London 15th c)

for all men and women of religion (EN-39. Shrewsbury 1484)

Si prions nomeément pour les frères et les sereurs de la maison (FR-16. Amiens l'Hotel Dieu 1275)

proies por tous les confreires de l'Hospital et por tous les consors (RO-1 Hospitallers 1260)

Ye shall bidde for ... Ancris [anchoresses] (EN-5. Worchester 1349)

vor all epte und eptissenne (GR-18. Bohemia 1378)

Confraternities

And also you shall pray especially for the brothers and the sisters of Saint Peter minster of York and of Saint John of Beverley and of Saint Wilfrid of Ripon... (EN-23. York 1405)

Enapres, faisons priere a Nostre Segnor Jesu Crist por toz les conferes et les confraresses de Nostre-Dame-Saincte-Marie et por ceaus de Saint-Nicolas et por ceaus et celes qui en ceste yglise... (FR-8. Poitiers 1260)

Wider Political and Social Communities

Medieval general intercessions also prayed for civic society in all its political and social dimensions:

the nation and its rulers

nobility and commoners

towns and cities, their leaders, citizens and inhabitants

civic benefactors

persons who were taken captive

persons who defended society in war

Nation and its rulers

Also you shall pray heartily for our liege lord, King of England, for our lady the Queen, and for our prince, whom Christ save spiritually; [for nobility, see below] that God give them all grace to act and legislate so that it be greatly pleasing to them and to the benefit and salvation of this land. (EN-13. London 15th c)

Nobility and Commoners

Also you shall pray ... for dukes, earls, barons, knights, squires, and for all good commoners of this land (EN-13. London 15th c)

et pour touz les princes seigneurs et damez de leur noble sang royal (FR-22. Paris St Andre des Arcs 15th c)

City or town

You shall also pray specially for the welfare and prosperity of this worshipful city of London, for my right worship and reverent master our mayor, with all my masters his brother aldermen; for the sheriffs and all other officers and dwellers in the same. (EN-13. London 15th c)

Pour tous bourgoys et bourgoises, et en especial de ceste paroisse (FR-30. Argenton 1493)

pour ceulx et celles qui demeurent et habitent (FR-22. Paris St Andre des Arcs 15th c)

Captives

Y mas rogaremos por los cativos christianos que estan en tierra de infiedes (SP-6 Lerida 1567)

Priez aussi de le Seigneur Dieu pou ces gens qui sont prisonniers aux mains de paiens (PO-19 Gniezno St James 15th c)

Apres nous prierons dieu pour tous ceulz qui sont en charté et en prison. Et par espécial pour ceulx qui sont entre les mains des mescréans (FR-22. Paris St Andrè des Arcs 15th c)

Warfare

Oracio pro deffensions gencium et terre istius frontierie.(SP-1 Cuixa 1388.)

Eciam oretis o.d. pro omnibus terragenis vel nobilebus huius corone, qui terram aut provinciam hanc a violencia et bello defendunt... (PO-20. Poznan B 1510)

Benefactors

Also you shall pray... for men and women who build or repair bridges and roads. (EN-13. London 15th c)

Wider Economic Communities

Medieval general intercessions prayed for Christian civil society in its several economic dimensions as well:

one of these was agriculture, which produced food for all and depended on good weather
business was represented by merchants and by sailors;
workers or laborers did both agricultural work and were employed by merchants.

Agriculture

Also ye shall pray for the fruit that is in the earth, and that which is to be planted, that God grant it fructification unto Christian folk's sustenance. (EN-13. London 15th c)

Also we shall pray especially for the weather, that God of his great grace would send such weather, that corn might be gotten and saved unto men's sustenance and food. (EN-27. York 1440 margin)

Merchants and Sailors

Nous prierons pour tous lealz marchans et marchandes... (FR-25. Paris Saint-Jean-en-Greve 1405)

Ye shall pray for all true shipmen and merchants wherever they be on land or on water that God keep them from all perils and bring them home in safety with their goods, ships and merchandise to the help, comfort and profit of this realm. (EN-37. Caxton 1483)

Workers

Also you shall pray for all tillers of land and those who plough the earth (EN-13. London 15th c)

Pro laborantibus, tam uiris quam mulieribus (FR-12. Paris Beguinage D 1273)

Après nous priérons dieu pour tous loyaulx laboureurs et labourresses (FR-22. Paris St Andrè des Arcs 15th c)

Vmb all trew arbaiter vnd arbaiterin (GR-19. Lambach 15th c)

CONCLUSIONS

The general intercessions were regular and significant parts of the Sunday liturgy of the medieval church. They were also used, though less frequently, on other occasions and by local church communities other than the parish. They were not written in place in the missal, but in a variety of place and their exact formulation varied with time and place. The present study is simply an introduction and a number of aspects deserve further attention. The following points come to mind.

1. How many different places in the mass liturgy were the general intercessions used? What were the consequences of each for the flow, dynamics and appreciation of the mass liturgy? What were the consequences of each on the meaning and impact of the intercessions themselves?

2. The diverse local church communities and wider communities identified in the general intercessions need to be analyzed and described in greater detail. Why did each individual intercession name these in different ways, and what consequences might this have had on the communities and individuals that used them?

3. What events and circumstances led in individual local church communities to the revision or rewriting of the general intercession? How often was this done?

4. What do the general intercessions tell us about the sensitivity of individual communities and priests to changes in church and society? What do they say about their social, political or theological sophistication and about their writing skills.

5. In what ways might these texts tell us about the evolution of the several vernacular languages used and their dialects?

6. The interplay in the medieval liturgy between Latin and the vernacular, as represented in part by the general intercessions, deserves further analysis and discussion.

7. The general intercessions also deserve further discussion from the perspective of lay participation in the liturgy. How did this compare with other dimensions and opportunities for lay participation in the medieval liturgy?

8. Variability among sets of intercessions and local church communities with respect to the participation and visibility of women also deserves further analysis and discussion. Why were women more visible in some intercessions than others? What consequences might this have had on communities and on individual women -- and men?

9. What led to the development of the general intercessions about the ninth century and what led to their demise or reformulation at and after the Reformation?

10. Some of the intentions of the general intercessions resemble some of the suffrages found in some litanies of the saints; this apparent overlap in content might be studied further. Which text influenced the other?

11. It would also be of interest to identify and analyze further the diverse contexts in which the individual general intercessions were written down.

12. It would be helpful to publish the intercessions that have so far been identified only as bibliographic citations.