

Queens and the Use of the Early Anglican Litany

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Frank Henderson's Page on Liturgy and Medieval Women

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Introduction

The Anglican litany was composed by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer and published by King Henry VIII in the summer of 1544. The medieval litany of the saints, as well as Luther's 1529 litanies, provided models and precedents, though the Anglican litany is unique in many ways.

I have considered the relationship of women, especially queens, to the *text* of the new Anglican litany in a separate article, "[Women and the Text of the Early Anglican Litany: Queens, Childbirth, Widows](#)," on this website. See also my article, "Anglican and Catholic Litanies and Primers 1544-1560: Web Resources" on this website.

Here I deal with the *use* of the Anglican litany, and especially how it was used by and on behalf of women, particularly queens. Because of its close historical relationship, I also consider briefly the use of the medieval litany of the saints by and for women.

The Medieval Litany of the Saints

In the liturgy of the medieval church the litany of the saints had both “regular” and “special” uses. Thus it was included in the liturgies of baptism, anointing the sick, commendation of the dying, dedication of a church, penitential processions such as the rogation days, and could be appended to one of the daily offices. These I consider “regular” uses. “Special” uses include any occasion of special need (such as going to war) or time of special thanksgiving (such as victory in war) that rulers or ecclesiastical authorities thought important. See Michael Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Litanies of the Saints*. Henry Bradshaw Society 106. London 1991.

It is important to note that the litany of the saints was often sung during liturgical processions – the physical movement of clergy alone or clergy and laity together from one place to another (and usually, back again). Indeed, the two terms, litany (the text) and procession (the action), were each sometimes used to include the other, so that litany meant litany plus procession, and procession meant procession plus litany. In addition, they were sometimes used as synonyms, so that procession really meant litany (the text) and litany sometimes meant procession (the action). The potential for confusion in studying texts containing these terms is obvious.

It is also important to note that the medieval liturgy also included many processions that did not involve the litany of the saints; a large body of other music existed for use in such cases. These processions and their music are not considered here. However, see the following references.

Terrence Bailey, *The Processions of Sarum and the Western Church*. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies 1971

W. G. Henderson, ed., *Manuale et Processionale ad Usus Insignis Ecclesie Eboracensis* [“York Processional”]. Surtees Society 63, 1875.

The Processional of the Nuns of Chester. Henry Bradshaw Society 18, London 1899.

Queens and the Litany of the Saints

Women worshipers could – indeed were expected to – participate in the praying of the litany of the saints by singing or saying ora pro nobis / pray for us and the other responses, which were easily learned.

The particular needs of women – especially queens – might also be the occasion for the “special” uses of the litany of the saints. For example, litanies were prayed in connection with queens giving birth. The following such accounts were recorded by contemporary chroniclers.

On St eustachius' Day, which was in the Year of our Lord M.CCCC.LXXXVI... the Prince Arture was born at Winchester, whiche was the first begotten Sone of our said Sourveraigne Lorde King Henry the VII th [and Queen Elizabeth of York]. Incontynent after the Birth, Te Deum with Procession was songe in the Cathedrall Chirche, and in all the Chyrches of that Citie...

John Leland, *In Rebus Brittanibus Collectanea*. London: Benj. White 1774, vol 4, p 204

This yeare, the 11th daie of October, Anno 1537, and the 29th yeare of the raigne of King Henrie the Eight, being Thursdaie, there was a solmpne generall procession in London, with all the orders of friars, priestes, and clarkes going all in copes, the major and aldermen, with all the craftes of the cittie, following in their liveries, which was donne to pray for the Queene [Jane Seymour] that was then in labour of chielde.

Charles Wriothesley, *Chronicle of England*. Camden Society, new series, vol 11. London 1875. Reprint New York: Johnson Reprint Corp 19xx, vol I, pp 65-66.

Also, the 19th daie of October [1537], there was a solempne generall procession in London, with all the orders of friars and chanons, the monkes of Towre Hill, with all the priestes and clarkes of everie church in London, with Powles [St Paul's cathedral] quire, and the best crosse of everie parish in London, with the baner for the same borne in the same procession, all the friars, monkes, canons, priests, and clarkes going in their best copes of everie church, the Bishop of London following Powles quire with his mitre, the major and aldermen, with all the craftes of the citie following in their lyveries, which procession was donne for the preservation and welfater of the Prince and the health of the Queene.

Wriothesley, *Chronicle of England*, vol I, p 69

Uses of the Litany of the Saints 1540 -- 1544

So far as is known, the “regular” use of the medieval litany of the saints continued until the early summer of 1544. Thus it would have been used at the Easter Vigil and its associated baptisms a few months earlier as well as other baptisms that may have been celebrated recently. It would have been used as persons lay sick and as death was anticipated; it would have been used on the rogation days forty days after Easter.

The following are examples of types of “special” needs that might lead to the use of the litany and procession. In particular, we have records of several special processions held on occasions of bad weather in the early 1540s.

This yeare [1540-41] was a hott sommer and drie, so that no raine fell from June till eight daies after Michaelmas, so that in divers partes of this realme the people caried their cattle six or seven miles to watter them, and also much cattle died; and also their rayned strang sicknes among the people in this rellame, as laskes and hott agues, and also

pestilence, wherof many people died: wherefore the Kinges Majestie sent out commissions through this realme to everie particular bishoppe to exhort the people to fall to prayer and to go in procession in everie parish in the howl realme; and also my Lord Mayer and the Bishopp of London caused general procession to be once in the weeke through the cittie, which beganne the 17th daie of September, being Fridaie in the Ember weeke, and had a sermon made in Paules quire before the procession went, and used it so everie Fridie, which was a godlie waie.

Wriothesley, *Chronicle of England*, vol I, p 123

[1543]: And forasmuch as there hath been now a late and still continued much rain, and other unseasonable weather, whereby is like to ensure great hurt and damage to the corn, and fruits now ripe upon the ground . . . we command you . . . to cause such general rogations and processions to be made incontinently . . . as in like case heretofore hath been accustomed in this behalf.

“Literae regis, et archiepiscopi Cantuar. Mandatum episcopo London, pro orationibus pro cessatione pluviae” [1543] in David Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*, vol 3, pp 868-869. London 1737; reprint Bruxelles: Culture et Civilisation 1954.

Perhaps the last record of the use of the litany of the saints for “special needs” is the following.

This yeare [1544] the 22nd day of May, beinge Ascention day, there were great fyers made in the cite of London and the suburbes, and wine set in divers places of the cite, for the victorie that the Kinges Majesties armie had in Scotland, and the morrowe after there was a sermon made in Pawles to the laude of God and prayse of the Kinges Majestie, with Te Deum, songe, and after a generall procession.

Wriothesley, *Chronicle of England*, vol I, p 147

Though there was considerable discontinuity between the texts of the medieval litany of the saints and the subsequent Anglican litany, there was also considerable continuity between them in terms of use. In what follows I describe the evidence for the involvement of English queens in the use of this litany during the reigns of King Henry VIII, King Edward VI, and Queen Elizabeth I.

Queens and the Use of the Anglican Litany

Queens first of all participated in the praying of the litany, together with other female and male worshipers.

Regular Use

What may be regarded as the “regular” use of the new Anglican litany changed and

developed over the years following its composition in 1544. This situation is described well by Procter and Frere. Line divisions are my own; I have also added some dates to make it more clear.

The English Litany was put out originally as a separate service; both in 1544 and 1545 it was used as a procession on the accustomed days, i.e., Wednesdays and Fridays, similarly to the Lenten use of the Litany [of the saints].

It was first brought into permanent relation with other services when the Edwardine Injunctions [1547] ordered that it should be sung immediately before High Mass by the priests with other of the quire kneeling in the midst of the church, and should supersede for the time all other processions or Litanies in church or churchyard.

This was in itself a considerable change, for the Litany [of the saints] had long ceased to be a normal preliminary of Mass, and was so only upon the Rogation days, or such special occasions as the Processions in time of war, when a Votive Mass naturally followed. Moreover, the new Injunction abolished the ordinary Sunday Procession before High Mass, which was a popular form of service.... It was now intended... to prefix to Mass a more complete form of vernacular intercessions. The [Anglican] Litany was ready to hand and had been proved successful in this position by constant use on Wednesdays and Fridays at intervals during the preceding three years.

The only inconvenience that had been found was that some disorder attended its recital in procession, and therefore in this respect a change was made, and the Litany was to be sung kneeling.

but When the First Prayer Book [1549] was issued it did not originally include the Litany, only a rubric that upon Wednesdays and Fridays it should be sung according to the Injunction and should be followed by at least the Ante-communion Service. This implies that the people were still to use it as ‘a Procession on their knees.’

The earliest editions had the Litany appended as a supplement, while in later editions it was regularly incorporated in the book and stood next after the Communion. It was clearly not intended that the Litany should wholly sweep away the old Processions, for a rubric at the end of the book provided thus: ‘Also upon Christmas Day, Easter Day, the Ascension Day, Whit Sunday, and the feast of the Trinity may be used, any part of the Holy Scripture hereafter to be certainly limited and appointed in the stead of the Litany.’ This shows that Cranmer had not yet given up his hopes of a Processional in English. But in fact the work was never accomplished.

be In the Second Book [1552] the Litany was moved to its present place, and it remains as a solitary and stationary ‘Procession’ preparatory to the Eucharist. The rubric of 1552 merely ordered it for Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays and at other times when it shall commanded by the Ordinary.

The 18th Elizabethan Injunction [1559] repeated the Edwardine Injunction with slight verbal changes, again expressly connecting the Litany with ‘the time of communion of the sacrament,’ while the 48th ordered the saying of the Litany and prayers in Church on Wednesdays and Fridays with no mention of the Ante-communion service.

In time the connection with the Liturgy was lost sight of: this was mainly the result of the massing together of three services into one, as when Grindal, archbishop of York, in his visitation (1571), directed ‘the minister not to pause or stay between the Morning Prayer, Litany, and Communion, but to continue and say the Morning Prayer, Litany and Communion, or the Service appointed to be said when there was no Communion, together, without any intermission: to the intent the people might continue together in prayer, and hearing the Word of God; and not depart out of the church during all the time of the whole Divine Service.’

Francis Procter and William Howard Frere, *A New History of the Book of Common Prayer*. London: Macmillan 1910, pp 422-424

I shall not dwell on this matter further. The following sixteenth-century documents do illustrate something of the “regular” use of the litany, however. Thus a chronicler reports as follows:

The eighteenth of October [1545], being Saint Lukes daie and Soundaie, Paules quire song the procession in English by the Kinges injunction, which shall be song in everie parish church throughout England everie Soundaie and festivall daie, and non other.

Wriiothesley, *Chronicle of England*, vol I, p 161

In addition, the litany or procession was one of the “Articles to be inquired of in the King’s Majesty’s visitation” of 1547, as follows:

First, Whether the Bishop, Archdeacons, and others, having jurisdiction ecclesiastical, have caused only to be sung or said the English procession in their cathedral church, and other churches, of their diocese. (p 75)

Item, Whether they have the Procession book in English. And in their processions use none other litany but that which is set forth in the same book. And whether they omit the same English litany at any time in their processions. And whether they have had the same litany as oft as they were commanded. (p 80).

‘Injunctions given in the King’s Majesty’s visitation by ... Commissioners specially appointed by the King’s Majesty...’ [1547], in John Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, vol 2, part I, pp 74-83.

The reference to “Procession book” is interesting. The language makes one think of the Sarum and York Processionals. Yet it is supposed that such ‘processionals’ were not printed under Henry VIII because there was only one litany, not a large body of processional music. The only other possibility is the Primer of King Henry VIII, yet this is usually referred to simply as *The*

Primer or The King's Primer.

Special Uses

Special needs and opportunities still arose and led to continued use of the litany on “special” occasions, as this chronicle entry indicates.

The 24th daie of September [1545] there was a solempne generall procession kept at Powles with a sermon, the bishoppe of London in his pontificalibus singing Te Deum, and after the procession, with all the priestes and clarkes going in rytch copes, and 70 crosses of silver gilt of the parishes of the citte borne before them, which procession was geaven to give laude and prayse to God for the victorie that God had sent the Kinges Majestie in Scotland, and that the French armie was departed from Bolloyne [Boulogne].
Wriothesley, *Chronicle of England*, vol I, p 161

A letter of Archbishop Cranmer also describes the special use of a procession with litany.

[In December 1547], to give thanks to God [for a victory over the Scots in which] 15,000 Scots were killed, 2000 taken prisoners ... [with] all their ordinance and baggage, [the king ordered] the procession in English, and Te Deum ... to be openly and directly sung.
[Letter of Thomas Cranmer] To the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's. *The Works of Thomas Cranmer*, vol 2, pp 417-418. Cambridge: University Press 1846; reprint 1968.

Influence of the Litany on Queen Katherine Parr's Prayers and Meditations

Queens were associated with the use of the litany in many ways. In the first example described here, the composition of the new litany was an inspiration and opportunity for Queen Katherine Parr to compose a prayerful work of her own.

Thus the same summer that Archbishop Cranmer was writing the new English litany, Queen Katherine Parr wrote a fine “Praier for men to saie enteryng into battayle” for her husband who was with the English army in France. The fact that these two prayers were written at the same time and on the same occasion – the war in France – has led to some intriguing suggestions and conclusions. Thus Anthony Martienssen states that “Henry VIII’s directive to Cranmer to prepare the new litany and associated prayers (commonly called suffrages) in English... was taken by Cranmer as an invitation not only to translate the old Latin prayers, but also to add new simpler prayers which would be more in tune with the spirit of the times.” He continues, “his [Cranmer’s] work aroused [Queen] Katherine’s interest, and one of the first new special prayers – to be said for the soldiers going to France – appears under her name.”

Anthony Martienssen, *Queen Katherine Parr*. New York et al., McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1973, pp 179-180

Janel Mueller (1990), has carried this idea further. She states, "Strype's *Ecclesiastical Memorials* records a report that Parr wrote 'a prayer for the kyng' and 'A praier for men to saie entryng into battayle' for inclusion in Cranmer's issue of a vernacular Letanie with Suffrages to be Said or Song that duly saw two editions in 1544. Although both these editions and subsequent ones from Henry's reign introduce bidding prayers for the king, Queen Katherine and Prince Edward, none in fact includes Parr's prayers, which found their own way into print at the end of her *Prayers or Meditations...* dated 6 November 1545" (p 176). As a general conclusion she says; "[I]t seems Queen Katherine undertook to complement the vernacular service books for public church worship then being advocated to Henry VIII by archbishop Thomas Cranmer. She would assemble a vernacular manual for the private devotion of individuals in the new national Church of England" (p 174). See also McConica, pp 233-234.

Janel Mueller, "Devotion as Difference: Intertextuality in Queen Katherine Parr's *Prayers or Meditations* (1545)", in *Huntington Library Quarterly* 53 (1990) 171-197

Janel Mueller, ed., *Katherine Parr. The Early Modern Englishwomen: A Facsimile Library of Essential Works. Part I: Printed Writings, 1500-1640*. Scholar Press 1996. Introductory Note, pp ix-xii and *Prayers or Medytacions*. unpaginated.

James Kelsey McConica, *English Humanists and Reformation Politics under Henry VIII and Edward VI*. Oxford: Clarendon Press 1965. See chapter 7, "The Last Years of the Reign: The Role of Catherine Parr," pp 200-234

The possibilities raised here deserve further study.

Queen-Regent Katherine Parr Orders the Use of the Litany

During the late summer of 1544, Queen Katherine Parr was queen regent while Henry VIII was in France with his army; as regent, she had the authority to order special uses of the litany. When the English were victorious in the battle over Boulogne, therefore, she did just this -- through her council, she ordered that a special litany be celebrated in thanksgiving for this victory and cessation of hostilities.

[Henry VIII's] council in England, by command of the queen-regent, issued a general order, September 19, "that a public thanksgiving should be offered up to almighty God in all the towns and villages throughout England, for the taking of Boulogne," This was one of the last acts of queen Katherine's Parr's regency....

Agnes Strickland, "Katherine Parr." In *Lives of the Queens of England*, 8 vols. London: Longmans, Green, Reader & Dyer 1876. Here vol 3, p 221.

The corresponding chronicle entry is as follows.

This yeare [1544] ... the Kinges Majestie entred the sayd towne [Boulogne] the 18 of September with great tryumphe; and the 20 day there was a solempne generall procession kept at Pawles [St Paul's, the cathedral of London] with Te Deum songe, for the victorie of the Kinges Majestie...

Wriothesley, *Chronicle of England*, vol I, p 149.

Another special litany of thanksgiving was celebrated a few days after the triumphant return of king Henry VIII, as indicated here:

The last daye of Septmeber [1544] the Kinges Majestie landed at Dover at midnight; and the thirde daye of October the Bishop of London in his pontificalibus beganne Te Deum in Pawles, which was songe for the good returne of the Kinges Majestie, and generall procession afater.

Wriothesley, *Chronicle of England*, vol I, p 149.

This might have been decreed by Queen Regent Katherine Parr in advance of Henry VIII's return. Alternatively it might have been ordered by the king himself or even by the Archbishop of Canterbury or Bishop of London; we do not know.

Queen-Dowager Katherine Parr and the Discontinuation of the Procession

Another development of note with respect to the use of the Anglican litany was the suppression or discontinuation of the procession – that is, the movement or action – early in the reign of King Edward VI. The relevant section of the royal injunction is quoted below.

Also, To avoid all contention and strife, which heretofore hath risen among the king's majesty's subjects in sundry places of his realms and dominions, by reason of fond courtesy, and challenging of places in procession, and also that they may the more quietly hear that which is said or sung to their edifying, they shall not from henceforth in any parish church at any time use any procession about the church or churchyard, or other place; but immediately before high mass the priests, with other of the quire, shall kneel in the midst of the church, and sing or say plainly and distinctly the Litany, which is set forth in English, with all the suffrages following; and none other procession or Litany to be had or used but the said Litany in English, adding nothing thereto, but as the king's grace shall hereafter appoint: and in cathedral or collegiate churches, the same shall be done in such places as our commissaries in our visitation shall appoint. And in the time of the Litany, of the mass, of the sermon, and when the priest readeth the scripture to the parishioners, no manner of persons, without a just and urgent cause, shall depart out of the church; and all ringing and knolling of bells, shall be utterly forborne at that time, except one bell in convenient time to be rung or knolled before the sermon.

“Injunctions of King Edward VI” [excerpt] (1547), In: *The Works of Thomas Cranmer*. Parker Society. vol. 2, pp 496-504, here 502. Cambridge: University Press 1846. Reprint New York: Johnson Reprint Corp 1968

Also David Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*, vol 4, p 3.
London 1737. Reprint Bruxelles: Culture et Civilisation 1964

This change is noted by the following chronicle entry.

This yeare [1547], in August, the Kinges Majestie, with the advise of my Lord Protector and other of his Counsell, sent out throughe this realme of Englande certain godlie injunctions for reformation of the cleargie, the true preaching and setting fourth of Godes worde, and utter abolishing of idolatrie, which were clene putt downe in everie parish church of this realme of Englande, *and also the going in procession was left [off]*, the gospell and epistle read in Englishe everie holidiaie, with divers other, as in the said proclamation or injunction appeareth.

Wriothesley, *Chronicle of England*, vol I, p 185. [emphasis added]

The important point for the present discussion is that. from then on the litany was to be said or sung kneeling, not while moving. Queen Elizabeth I later [1559] reiterated this injunction of Edward VI. It may be noted that the word “procession” was retained, now simply meaning “the litany”, even though nobody moved. The following chronicle entries make a point of telling us that the “procession” was said kneeling.

The 20th daie [1547], being Saint Matthewes Eaven, was a solemne sermon made in Poules by the Bishopp of Lincolne, with procession, kneeling with their copies in the quire, and after that Te Deum song with the organns playenge to give laude to God for the said victorie, my lord major, with his brethren the aldermen, being present, with all the commens in their lyveries, and that night great fiars were made in everie streete with banqueting for joy of the said victorie.

And the morrow, being Saint Matthewes daie, all the parishe churches within the citie, and the suburbes of the same, kept a solumpne procession on their knees in English, with Te Deum after for the said victory.

Wriothesley, *Chronicle of England*, vol I, p 186

This daie [1549] procession was song according to the Kinges booke, my lord [archbishop] and the quire kneling, my lord singing the collectes and praying and adding one other prayer which he had written for this plage...

Wriothesley, *Chronicle of England*, vol II, pp 17-18

Queen Katherine Parr may possibly have been involved, at least indirectly, in the decision to suppress the procession. This is suggested in the rationale given for suppressing the procession. The relevant text of the injunction says, “To avoid all contention and strife . . . by reason of fond courtesy, and challenging of places in processions....” I imagine “fond courtesy” as indicating that people were inviting each other to move ahead of their assigned places in the procession, which was ordered according to strict hierarchical principles. Thus some were

saying, “After you sir, madam.” “No, after you.”

The “challenging of places in procession” seems to mean that others were jumping the line – butting in where they were not supposed to be. One wonders if the latter situation does not have to do, at least in part, with the jealousy of the Lord Protector’s wife towards Queen Dowager Katherine Parr. Though Queen Katherine had been designated as first woman of the realm by the will of Henry VIII, the Duchess claimed that position and sometimes tried to get ahead of Queen Katherine in processions. Though the occasions on which this happened are not specified in the sources, they may have included the liturgical procession with litany. I tell this story in greater detail in my “Queen Katherine Parr and Early Anglican Bidding Prayer,” on this website

Such disruptions of liturgical processions -- and their consequent discontinuation -- happened elsewhere as well. Thus in 1661 Bishop Francois Laval suppressed liturgical processions in Quebec [City], New France (for a while) because the proper order of precedence was not being observed. Thus on Palm Sunday 1661, the Jesuit Superior wrote:

At the parish church there was neither procession nor solemn distribution of the palms, to avoid the contention respecting precedence; for Monsieur the Governor desired to make several bodies [persons] pass before [go ahead of] the churchwardens, while Monseigneur the Bishop maintained the right of the Churchwardens. Then followed the Interdiction of processions and the suspension of similar Ceremonies....

[R. G. Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, vol 46 (1661)
Cleveland: Burrows 1899, p 167.

The Anglican Litany in the Royal Chapel of Queen Elizabeth I

At the beginning of her reign, Queen Elizabeth I did not rush to re-introduce reformed liturgical practices, preferring to wait until Parliament could convene. She therefore urged the continued use of the existing (Catholic) liturgy for a while. However, a few exceptions were permitted or required immediately, including the use of the English (Anglican) litany. In addition, a version of the litany then used in the Queen’s chapel was to come into general, public use immediately.

It is implied, then, that a special form of the Anglican litany had been prepared for use in the Queen’s chapel from the very beginning of her reign, that this was used there on a regular basis, and that the Queen favored this version. The royal-chapel text of the litany was now to be offered to or imposed on the entire country. On this matter, see:

“Preface” in William Keatinge Clay, ed., *Liturgical Services: Liturgies and Occasional Forms of Prayer set forth in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*. Parker Society. Cambridge: University Press 1847, pp ix-xii

F. E. Brightman, *The English Rite*, vol I, pp clxvi-clxvii.

Queen Elizabeth I Removes the Prayer Against the Pope

The 1544 litany contained a section that contained the words, “from the tyranny of the bishop of Rome, and all his detestable enormities. . . Good lord deliver us.” This was included in all editions of the litany down to and including the first text (1558) from the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. (see Clay, *Liturgical Services*, p 4). The next printing, identified as being “used in the Queen’s Majesty’s chapel” (1559) does not include these words. They continued to be omitted in the litanies published in the Book of Common Prayer (1559) and Liber Precum Publicarum (1560); see Clay, *Liturgical Services*, pp 70 and 340).

I interpret this textual alteration as being a kind of “use” of the litany in the sense that the original wording had been intended as a “polemical” use, and Queen Elizabeth I now no longer wished to employ the litany in that way.

The Anglican Litany and the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth I

The original simple text, “That it maye please thee to keep Elisabeth our Queen in thy faith, fear and love, that she may always have affiance in thee and ever seek thy honor and glory“ was soon expanded to “That it may please thee to keep and strengthen in the true worshipping of thee, in righteousness and holiness of life, thy Servant Elizabeth our most gracious Queen and governor.”

F. E. Brightman (*The English Rite*, vol I, p clxvii) refers to the latter text as “the proper suffrage used at Coronations.” This seems to suggest that it was customary to use a special text at coronations, though I am not at all familiar with the evidence on this point. Was this a medieval practice, meaning some form of the litany of the saints? Or did this tradition begin with the coronation of King Edward VI?

Brightman then makes the specific conclusion, “It would appear that this Litany was prepared for Elizabeth’s coronation on Jan 15, 1558-59.” The question then becomes, how was the litany actually used in the coronation of Queen Elizabeth I? How did it fit with the many other texts and the elaborate ceremony of the coronation liturgy?

Special Uses of the Litany during the Reign of Queen Elizabeth I

From 1560 to 1601, a number of special liturgies survive for use on particular occasions, many include the litany. In these cases the text of the litany was not altered, but it was included with prayers that were composed for the occasion; often all these prayers would follow morning prayer. These “Occasional Forms of Prayer and Services” occupy pp 457-695 in the following source.

William Keatinge Clay, ed., *Liturgical Services: Liturgies and Occasional Forms of Prayer set forth in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*. Parker Society. Cambridge: University Press 1847

Here I simply list the titles of such special prayers and occasions that include the special uses of the litany.

A Prayer to be used for the present estate in [the] churches, at the end of the litany, on Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays, through the whole Realm, pp 476-477

A form to be used in Common prayer twice a week, and also an order of public fast, to be used every Wednesday in the week, during this time of mortality, and other afflictions, wherewith the Realm at this present is visited, pp 478-490

A Short Form of Thanksgiving to God for ceasing the contagious sickness of the plague, to be used in Common prayer, on Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, instead of the Common prayers, used in the time of mortality. Set forth by the Bishop of London, to be used in the City of London, and the rest of his diocese, and in other places also at the discretion of the ordinary Ministers of the Churches, pp 513-518

A Form to be used in common prayer every Wednesday and Friday, within the city and Diocese of Sarum: to excite all godly people to pray unto God for the delivery of those Christians that are now invaded by the Turk, pp 519-523

A Short Form of Thanksgiving to God for the delivery of the Isle of Malta from the invasion and long siege thereof by the great army of the Turke both by sea and land, and for sundry other victories lately obtained by the christians against the said Turks, to be used in the common prayer within the province of Canterbury, on Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, for the space of six weeks next ensuing the receipt hereof, pp 524-526

A Form to be used in common prayer, every Sunday, Wednesday, and Friday, through this whole Realm: To excite and stir all godly people to pray unto God for the preservation of those Christians and their Countries, that are now invaded by the Turk in Hungary, or elsewhere, pp 527-535

A Form of common Prayer to be used, and so commanded by authority of the Queen's Majesty, and necessary for the present time and state, pp 540-547

A Form of Prayer with Thanks giving, to be used every year, the 17th of November, being the day of the Queen's Majesty's entry to her reign, pp 548-561

The Order of Prayer upon Wednesdays and Fridays to avert and turn God's wrath from us threatened by the late terrible earthquake, to be used in all Parish Churches, pp 562-575

An Order for Public Prayers to be used on Wednesdays and Fridays in every Parish Church within the Province of Canterbury, convenient for thie present time, pp 561-594

A Prayer and Thanksgiving fit for this present: and to be used in the time of Common prayer, pp 604-607

A Form of Prayer, thought fit to be daily used in the English Arm in France, pp 626-631

Conclusions

Queens were referred to by name in the early Anglican litany, they used it as their personal prayer, and they influenced its use by other persons and by the English church in general.

Thus the new litany was important especially to Queen Katherine Parr and Queen Elizabeth I. Perhaps for them, as for a contemporary chronicler, “it was the Godlyest hearing that ever was.” (Charles Wriotheslay, *Chronicle of England*, vol I, p 148). It served to inspire Queen Katherine Parr to write prayers of her own, and it inspired Queen Elizabeth I to improve on Henry VIII’s original text.

Queens regent and regnant had the power to order the use of the litany for special occasions; indeed it was their responsibility to do so. It was also one of the few liturgical prayers open to such control and influence by women. And they did not hesitate to use this power. The medieval litany of the saints offered fewer opportunities for the influence of queens, though it was used on occasions of royal childbirth.