



# ***The Christmas Collects***

*Two Meditations for the Season of Christmas  
for SATB Choir and Chamber Organ*

*Words from the 1662 Book of Common Prayer  
Music by Nigel Morgan*

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## *The Collect*

The collect, if not the oldest, is at least a very ancient form of prayer. It seems that out of the generalized and largely extempore prayers of the early church there developed three clearly recognizable types. There was the Litany, which was a form of prayer in dialogue between minister and congregation. There was the Sursum Corda ('Lift up your hearts'), which was a liturgical thanksgiving, specially appropriate in the Eucharist. And there was the Collect. This last was a good deal shorter than the other two and was intended to 'collect', that is, gather together into one and sum up the petitions, silent or expressed, that had gone before.

The chief characteristics of the collect have been described as variety and terseness. The latter quality we shall have frequent occasions to admire. The former does not imply that any one collect dealt with a number of different themes. In fact, there is normally only one specific point to each collect. It means that owing to its peculiar form the collect could be adapted to almost any occasion.

In its essential structure the collect is threefold. Any prayer built properly on these lines must contain an address, a petition, an ascription. This can be clearly seen for instance, in the collect for Trinity XVII: Lord, we pray thee - that thy grace may always prevent and follow us, and make us continually to be given to all good works; - through Jesus Christ our Lord.

... most of the collects in our Book of Common Prayer descend from them through the Sarum Missal, which was the most popular liturgical book in mediaeval England. They were beautifully translated by Cranmer and his helpers for the first English book of common prayer in 1549, and were often considerably adapted in translating. Where the ancient collects were not considered suitable, new ones were composed, as for instance those of Advent I and II.

... in the composition of the daily offices, the collect found a place in the Mattins and Evensong because it gave a fixed tone of prayer for the day or the week.

It seems advisable to say at least this much about the historical and literary setting of the collects, for then we are more likely to appreciate what they set out to do and shall not expect from them something that they do not attempt. If recognition of proper limitations is true of all genuine art, then we shall be prepared to find in the collects one of the finest of literary forms.

From Wand, J. W. C. (1964) *Reflections on the Collects*. Mowbray, London

### *Performing 'The Christmas Collects'*

Performers are encouraged to regard this work as a sequence of prayers and be alive to any possibility in their performance presentation that might enhance that quality. It may be useful to remember that a prayer is, in this context, as much a meditation as an exhortation.

#### Christmas I

*Almighty God,  
who has given us thy only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him,  
and as at this time to be born of a pure Virgin:  
Grant that we being regenerate,  
and made thy children by adoption and grace,  
may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit;  
through the same our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who liveth and reigneth with thee and the same Spirit,  
ever one God, world without end.*

#### Christmas II

*Almighty God,  
who didst wonderfully create man in thine own image,  
and didst yet more wonderfully restore him:  
Grant, we beseech thee,  
that as the Son our Lord Jesus Christ was made in the likeness of men,  
so we may be made partakers of the divine nature;  
through the same thy Son,  
who with thee and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth,  
one God, world without end.*

# Christmas I - Sons of God

for Richard and Angela

meditatio e luminare ♩ = 65

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Organ

*p*

*p*

4

S.

A.

T.

B.

Org.

*p*

*p*

*p*

*p*

Al - migh - ty

God

Al - migh - ty

God

Al - migh - ty

God

Al - migh - ty

God

8 *mp* *mf*

S. *mp* *mf*  
 who has gi - ven us thy on - ly be - go - tten Son

A. *mp* *mf*  
 who has gi - ven us thy on - ly be - go - tten Son

T. *mp* *mf*  
 who has gi - ven us thy on - ly be - go - tten Son

B. *f* *mf*  
 who has gi - - ven thy Son

Org.

11 **A** *p* *p* *mf* *mf*

S. *p*  
 and as

A. *p* *p*  
 and as at this time and as

T. *p* *mf*  
 and as at this time to take our na - ture

B. *mf*  
 to take our na - ture

Org.

14

*mf*

S. at this time to be born of a pure Vir - gin

*mf*

A. at this time to be born of a pure Vir - gin

*p*

T. u - pon us and as at this time

*p*

B. u - pon us and as at this time

Org.

17

*mp*

S. to be born of a pure Vir - gin

*mp*

A. to be born of a pure Vir - gin

*mf*

T. to take our na - ture u - pon us

*mp*

B. to take our na - ture u - pon us

Org.

20 **B**

S. *f* Grant that we be - ing

A. *f* Gra - nt that we be - ing

T. *f* Gra - - - nt that we be - ing

B. *f* that we be - ing

Org.

*resonare e poco allargando*

23

S. re - - ge - ne - rate

A. re - - ge - ne - rate *mp* semplice and made thy

T. *mf* poco semplice re - - ge - ne - rate and made thy chil - dren by

B. re - ge - - - ne - rate by

Org.



27 *mp poco a poco ritardando* *a tempo mf*

S. *and grace Grant that we*

A. *mp mf chil - dren by grace Grant that we*

T. *mp mf a - dop - tion and grace Grant that we*

B. *mp f a - dop - tion and grace Grant that*

Org.

30 *mp*

S. *may dai - ly be re - newed*

A. *mp may be re - newed by the Ho - ly Spi - rit*

T. *mp may be re - newed by the Ho - ly Spi - rit*

B. *mf we dai - ly be re - newed*

Org.

33 *poco meno* C *mf*

S. *mp* *mf* our Lord Je - sus Christ

A. *mp* *mf* through the same our Lord Je - sus Christ

T. *mp* *mf* through the same our Lord Je - sus Christ

B. *mf* Lord Je - sus Christ

Org.

36 *mp* *p* *mf* *tempo primo*

S. *mp* *p* *mf* who reig - neth with thee and the Ho - ly Spi - rit world with

A. *mp* *p* *f* who li-veth with thee and the Ho - ly Spi - rit e - ver one

T. *mp* *p* *f* who li-veth with thee and the Ho - ly Spi - rit e - ver one

B. *mp* *p* *mf* who reig - neth with thee and the Ho - ly Spi - rit world with

Org.

39

*f*

*p*

S. *- out end.* *world with -out end.*

A. *God* *world with -out end.*

T. *God* *world with -out end.*

B. *- out end.* *world with -out end.*

Org.

The musical score is for a choral and organ piece. It consists of five staves: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), Bass (B.), and Organ (Org.). The Soprano, Alto, and Tenor parts are in treble clef, and the Bass part is in bass clef. The Organ part is in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The score is divided into four measures. The first measure is in 2/4 time, the second in 7/16, the third in 3/4, and the fourth in 5/8. The lyrics for the vocal parts are: Soprano: "- out end." and "world with -out end."; Alto: "God" and "world with -out end."; Tenor: "God" and "world with -out end."; Bass: "- out end." and "world with -out end.". The organ part provides a continuous accompaniment throughout the piece. Dynamics include forte (f) and piano (p).

# Christmas II - Partakers of Thy Divine Nature

*leggiero e meditatio* ♩ = 85

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Organ

4

*mp*

S.

*mp*

A

*mp*

T

*mp*

B

Org.

Al - migh - - ty

God

Al - migh - - ty

God

Al - migh - ty

God

Al - migh - - - ty

God

6 D

S. *mp* who didst won - der - fu - lly *mf* cre - ate

A. *mp* who didst won - der - fu - lly *mf* cre - ate

T. *mf* and didst

B. *mf* and

Org.

9

S. *mf* cre - ate

A. *mf* cre - ate

T. *f* cre - ate

B. *f* cre - ate

Org.

12

S. *re - store man in his own*

A. *re - store man in his own*

T. *re - store man in his own* *mf*

B. *re - store man in his own* *mf*

Org.

15

*poco rallentando a tempo secundo* **E** *mp* *75* *supplichevolmente*

S. *i - - mage Grant, we be -*

A. *i - - mage Grant, we be -*

T. *i - - mage Grant, we*

B. *i - mage Grant, we*

Org.

19

S. *seech thee, that as our Lord Je - sus*

A *seech thee, that as our Lord Je - sus*

T *be - seech that as the Son that as Je - sus*

B *be - seech that as the Son that as Je - sus*

Org.

23

S. *Christ was made in the like - ness of men par - ta - kers*

A *Christ was made in the like - ness of men par - ta - kers*

T *so may we be made par - ta - kers*

B *so may we be made par - ta - kers*

Org.

26 *poco rall.* *mp* *tempo primo* **F**

S. *mp*  
of thy di - vine na - ture

A. *mp*  
of thy di - vine na - ture

T. *mp*  
of thy di - vine na - ture through the

B. *mp*  
of thy di - vine na - ture through the

Org.

29 *mp*

S. *mp*  
who with thee and the Ho - ly Ghost li - veth and

A. *mp*  
who with thee and the Ho - ly Ghost li - veth and

T. *mp*  
same thy Son through the same thy Son

B. *mp*  
same thy Son through the same thy Son

Org.



32

*poco a poco ritardando, senza diminuendo*

S. *reig - neth one God, world with - out end.*

A *reig - neth one God, world with - out end.*

T *world with - out end.*

B *world with - out end.*

Org.