

essential addition to the library of any pastor, parish, or lay reader seeking to engage the classics and apply their insights to today's world.

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The Anglican Office Book, 2nd Edition. Edited by Charles Lance Davis. Lake Almanor, CA: Whithorn Press, 2023. 2,247 pp. \$125.

One of the greatest fruits of the catholic revival in England was their renewal of liturgical life. This most often focused on supplementing and enriching the *Book of Common Prayer's* Holy Communion to put back on many of the riches of its catholic heritage, which had been pruned back for a season at the reformation. The Divine Office received relatively less of the enriching zeal that was directed towards renewing the Mass. *The Anglican Office Book* (herein abbreviated to AOB), represents the continuation of this living tradition of liturgical renewal. Released in Second Edition in 2023, the book has been compiled and edited by Fr. Lance Davis, a priest in the Anglican Catholic Church. His contribution is an excellent enrichment of Anglican worship in our day.

Drawing significantly on *The Prayer Book Office*, a similar work by Fr. Paul Hartzell published in 1944 and 1963, one of the defining features of the AOB is its ease of use in comparison to its predecessor. The AOB allows one to pray the offices “of the 1928 American Book of Common Prayer, supplemented with an expanded Kalendar, anthems, hymns, responses, and collects from the Sarum Breviary, other regional Books of Common Prayer, and the wider Western liturgical tradition.”¹ Just as various Missals allowed Anglo-Catholics of earlier generations to celebrate Mass drawing from the Prayer Book but enriched by supplements, so the AOB allows Anglicans today to pray the offices in a more fulsome way.

The AOB is bookended by the Old Testament at the front and the New Testament and the Books called Apocryphal at the back, all in the Authorized Version. The offices, Psalter, and other material can be found sandwiched in the center of the book. The offices are prefaced with the General Rubrics, the Kalendar along with Prayers and Thanksgivings, the Litany, an Office of the

¹ <https://store.standrewsalmanor.org/products/the-anglican-office-book-2nd-edition-with-the-holy-bible-authorized-version>

Dead, Meal Prayers, an Itinerary for travellers, Prayers and Suffrages for Ordinations, Commendations of the Dead, and various other prayers and supplements. Following this is the order for Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer, along with Prime, Terce, Sext, Nones, and Compline, with anthems for some of these offices. Finally within this section is contained the Propers, with its variable hymns, collects and antiphons (for the psalms and canticles). The Propers are divided into the *Temporale* (the moveable liturgical cycle fixed by Easter) and the *Sanctorale* (the liturgical cycle fixed to calendar days).

The AOB is a physically handsome object inside and out. It is bound in red leatherette with a beautiful debossed IHS front cover and filled throughout with beautiful illustrations. In its external beauty it conveys the significance of that to which its text points. Here it should be noted one disappointment is that its debossing wears away very quickly. Its IHS frontage began to wear off within a week or so of use, and after a couple of months of regular use it was almost entirely gone. It may therefore give onlookers the sense that whoever is praying using this book is more pious than in reality.

The AOB is structured so that one could simply pray Morning and Evening Prayer according to the BCP with supplemented propers, or pray a full cycle of the little offices. This makes it particularly useful for clergymen, who on any given day may not be able to pray the little hours, but who may wish on particular days of devotion or on retreats to keep them. For those who wish to pray all the offices, there is a two-week psalter cycle instead of the Cranmerian monthly psalter cycle. By allowing one to pray only two offices, or all the old offices, the AOB sets forward the “Monkhood of all believers” that Cranmer sought as a spirituality for the whole English church, to bring the rich worship of the cloister within reach of ordinary Christians.

The theology of the AOB sits between a more “Prayer-Book catholic” and “Anglo-papalist” churchmanship. On the one hand, it is distinctively Anglican throughout, maintaining the theological and poetic cadences of Cranmer and the English Divines. This identification begins in its name with the choice of “Office Book” rather than the more identifiably Roman term of breviary. Requests for intercession by the Saints as part of the great cloud of witnesses are present throughout the AOB. Rooted as it is in the *consensus fidelum* this will sit comfortably with many Anglican users who consent to a moderate “advocation” by the saints rather than invocation (which the *Thirty-Nine Articles* at least in some sense condemn). Yet on the other hand, the frequency of requests for Saintly intercession, the celebration of the Sacred Heart, and the Assumption (rather than the falling asleep of the Blessed Virgin Mary) place it

more closely to contemporary Roman Catholic piety. However, it is of interest to note that the Conception of the Mother of God in the AOB is not defined as “Immaculate.” Despite this, some Anglicans may balk at the phraseology of its requests for intercession of the saints, though as Bishop Ray Sutton states in his foreword, these need not be prayed by all.

It is sometimes commented that within the Church of England many Anglo-Catholics have jettisoned Anglican liturgy for the *Novus Ordo*, though it is probable that an even higher proportion pray the Roman Office than celebrate the Roman Mass. It seems this is often due to the Roman Breviary’s relative ease of use while maintaining variety. A wider dissemination of the AOB in the Church of England may be a helpful resource for those who wish for a simple and usable breviary while holding on to the riches of the Anglican inheritance.

The Anglican Office Book is thoroughly catholic in orientation, while also making a practical addition to the Anglican tradition. In this sense it is the best of Anglo-Catholicism: principle in praxis, particular and local, yet according with the teaching and practice of the whole.

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Jim Davis and Michael Graham, *The Great Dechurching*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. 2023. ISBN 978-0310147435 xxiv+247, hbk \$30; also audiobook, Gloze, Kindle, Nook.

While many Anglicans with an evangelically-minded heart seek to call souls to Christ, the reality is that in some mission fields, the greater opportunity is calling souls *back* to Christ.

The Great Dechurching is about why people left (mostly evangelical) churches, which ones might come back, and how to avoid dechurching your own members. The authors estimate that about 40 million American adults (15.5%) have dechurched since the 1990s.

The Great Dechurching is written by two evangelicals with ties to The Gospel Coalition and its late co-founder, Tim Keller. Davis is the lead pastor of a Baptist-leaning Orlando nondenominational church, and Graham is a parishioner and program director for the Keller Center for Cultural Apologetics.