

## Scripture

Who shall climb the mountain  
of the Lord?  
Who shall stand in his holy place?  
The man with clean hands  
and pure heart,  
who desires not worthless things,  
(who has not sworn so as to deceive  
his neighbour.)

He shall receive blessings  
from the Lord  
and reward from the God  
who saves him.  
Such are the men who seek him,  
seek the face of the God of Jacob.

O gates, lift high your heads;  
grow higher, ancient doors.  
Let him enter, the king of glory!

Who is the king of glory?  
The Lord, the mighty, the valiant,  
the Lord, the valiant in war.

O gates, lift high your heads;  
grow higher, ancient doors.  
Let him enter, the king of glory!

Who is he, the king of glory?  
He, the Lord of armies,  
he is the king of glory.

Psalm 23: 3-10

## Prayer

*O thou, full of compassion,  
I commit and commend myself unto  
thee, in whom I am, and live, and  
know.*

*Be thou the goal of my pilgrimage,  
and my rest by the way.*

*Let my soul take refuge from the  
crowding turmoil of worldly  
thoughts beneath the shadow  
of thy wings;*

*let my heart, this sea of restless waves,  
find peace in thee, O God.*

*Thou bounteous giver of all good gifts,  
give to him who is weary  
refreshing food;*

*gather our distracted thoughts and  
powers into harmony again;  
and set the prisoner free.*

*See, he stands at thy door and knocks;  
be it opened to him,  
that he may enter with a free step,  
and be quickened by thee.*

*For thou art the well-spring of life,  
the light of eternal brightness,  
wherein the just live who love thee.*

*Be it unto me according to thy word.*

St Augustine

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**Liturgy  
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ENGLAND  
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Consecrated for Worship



**W**e praise you,  
Lord God,  
Father all-holy,  
you sent your only Son  
into our world  
to gather by the shedding of  
his blood  
those whom the destructive power  
of sin had scattered.  
You sent him to unite us all  
in the one sheepfold.  
He is the Good Shepherd;  
he is the door through whom  
those who follow him enter  
and are safe,  
go in and out, and find pasture.

From the Prayer of Blessing of new Church Doors, Book of Blessings

# Church Doors

## A threshold

The doors of the church, particularly the main doors, and the narthex, the space at the entrance to the church building, together form a threshold which people cross as they make the transition from the ordinary world to the worshipping community. They mark out a place where the stranger will begin their encounter of the Church at prayer and the place where the Church will formally welcome the stranger who seeks admission not just to the building but to the community of the Church.

Thus it is at the entrance to the church that those seeking membership of the Christian community are admitted into the Order of Catechumens; that baptismal and wedding parties are welcomed as they approach the sacraments; here too families grieving the loss of a loved one are greeted and the coffins of the deceased are sprinkled with holy water as a reminder of their first dying in Christ in baptism which contains the promise that in this second death they will rise with him in glory.

Every Sunday this place of entry to the church is a place of welcome and greeting for the community. Here the community provides itself and its visitors with hymnbooks and service sheet to aid participation in its Liturgy. Here the community provides information of other dimensions of its common life; parish newsletters are distributed and notices displayed.

## The Doors

The main doors of the church should be substantial. This may be achieved through size and through the materials they are made from. Provision should be made that the size and weight of the doors do not make access difficult to any of those who may wish to enter the church. Particular consideration should be given to access of those with restricted mobility. Electronic systems for opening doors can be of great assistance. It is usually more suitable that these be operated manually than by an automatic system.



An open door is a potent sign of welcome. The use of glass doors can also be inviting but care should be taken with regard to safety.

Traditionally the surround of the door and the door itself have proved suitable for rich adornment alerting those entering of the significance of the church and the faith celebrated within it.

## The Narthex

The narthex should well let, preferably with natural light. It should be large enough to allow not just the priest and ministers but a group of the faithful to gather for the rites of entry set out in different celebrations; the Church 'goes out to meet' those coming through its doors. The processional route through the narthex should be clear and unobstructed; the way in and out of the church building should in any case give safe access for large numbers of people entering and leaving.

Unless the font stands at or near the entrance there should be one or more holy water stoups close to the entrance for people to bless themselves as a reminder of their baptism. The water in these should be kept clean and replenished regularly. During the Triduum holy water stoups are emptied, cleaned and dried.

When the narthex is also used as an 'information point', with noticeboards and newspapers for sale, care should be taken to ensure that clutter is kept in check, that information is kept up-to-date and in good condition, and that there are safe receptacles for money and alms which are emptied regularly. Often a parish's life is reflected in the state of its notices! Where a church is visited or worshipped in by different language groups it is appropriate that some of the information about the church and the parish should be in relevant languages.

