

COMPLINE

ALSO KNOWN AS NIGHT PRAYER



The Burghill Benefice

THE ANCIENT OFFICE OF COMPLINE DERIVES ITS NAME FROM A LATIN WORD MEANING 'COMPLETION' (COMPLETORIUM). IT IS ABOVE ALL A SERVICE OF QUIETNESS AND REFLECTION BEFORE REST AT THE END OF THE DAY. IT IS MOST EFFECTIVE WHEN THE ENDING IS INDEED AN ENDING, WITHOUT ADDITIONS, CONVERSATION OR NOISE. IF THERE IS AN ADDRESS, OR BUSINESS TO BE DONE, IT SHOULD COME FIRST. IF THE SERVICE IS IN CHURCH, THOSE PRESENT DEPART IN SILENCE; IF AT HOME, THEY GO QUIETLY TO BED.

SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM WRITES:

"PRAYER IS THE BEGINNING OF EVERY GOOD THING, AND THE MEDIATOR OF SALVATION AND ETERNAL LIFE...THE GREATEST THING WE HAVE TO SAY ABOUT PRAYER IS THAT EVERY PRAYING PERSON CONVERSES WITH GOD HIMSELF, AND THIS TO THE EXTENT THAT BEING HUMAN, ONE CAN SPEAK WITH GOD...ONE CANNOT ADEQUATELY EXPRESS IN WORDS THIS HONOR. FOR THIS HONOR EXCEEDS EVEN THE MAGNIFICENCE OF THE ANGELS THEMSELVES...AT THE TIME OF PRAYER WE ARE FORGETFUL OF OUR HUMAN NATURE, CONSIDERING OURSELVES TO BE IN THE MIDST OF ANGELS AND CARRYING OUT THE SAME WORSHIP AS THEY. FOR ALL THE OTHER THINGS ARE VERY DIFFERENT AND SEPARATED-I MEAN BETWEEN US AND THE ANGELS-BUT THE WORK OF PRAYER IS COMMON TO BOTH ANGELS AND HUMANS".

NIGHT PRAYER (Compline)

PREPARATION

The Lord almighty,
grant us a quiet night and a perfect end.

All Amen.

Our help is in the name of the Lord

All who made heaven and earth.

*A period of silence for reflection on the past day may follow.
The following or other suitable words of penitence may be used*

All Most merciful God,

we confess to you, before the whole company of heaven
and one another, that we have sinned in thought, word
and deed and in what we have failed to do. Forgive us our
sins, heal us by your Spirit and raise us to new life in
Christ. Amen.

O God, make speed to save us.

All O Lord, make haste to help us.

All Glory to the Father and to the Son

and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.

Alleluia.

The following or another suitable hymn may be sung

Before the ending of the day,
Creator of the world, we pray
That you, with steadfast love, would keep
Your watch around us while we sleep.
From evil dreams defend our sight,
From fears and terrors of the night;
Tread underfoot our deadly foe
That we no sinful thought may know.
O Father, that we ask be done
Through Jesus Christ, your only Son;
And Holy Spirit, by whose breath
Our souls are raised to life from death.

THE WORD OF GOD

Psalmody

One or more of the following psalms may be used.

Psalm 4

- 1 Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness;
you set me at liberty when I was in trouble;
have mercy on me and hear my prayer.
- 2 How long will you nobles dishonour my glory;
how long will you love vain things and seek after falsehood?
- 3 But know that the Lord has shown me
his marvellous kindness;
when I call upon the Lord, he will hear me.

- 4 Stand in awe, and sin not;
commune with your own heart upon your bed,
and be still.
- 5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness
and put your trust in the Lord.
- 6 There are many that say, 'Who will show us any good?'
Lord, lift up the light of your countenance upon us.
- 7 You have put gladness in my heart,
more than when their corn and wine and oil increase.
- 8 In peace I will lie down and sleep,
for it is you Lord, only, who make me dwell in safety.

Psalm 91

- 1 Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High
and abides under the shadow of the Almighty,
- 2 Shall say to the Lord, 'My refuge and my stronghold,
my God, in whom I put my trust.'
- 3 For he shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler
and from the deadly pestilence.
- 4 He shall cover you with his wings
and you shall be safe under his feathers;
his faithfulness shall be your shield and buckler.
- 5 You shall not be afraid of any terror by night,
nor of the arrow that flies by day;
- 6 Of the pestilence that stalks in darkness,

nor of the sickness that destroys at noonday.

- 7 Though a thousand fall at your side
and ten thousand at your right hand,
yet it shall not come near you.
- 8 Your eyes have only to behold
to see the reward of the wicked.
- 9 Because you have made the Lord your refuge
and the Most High your stronghold,
- 10 There shall no evil happen to you,
neither shall any plague come near your tent.
- 11 For he shall give his angels charge over you,
to keep you in all your ways.
- 12 They shall bear you in their hands,
lest you dash your foot against a stone.
- 13 You shall tread upon the lion and adder;
the young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot.
- 14 Because they have set their love upon me,
therefore will I deliver them;
I will lift them up, because they know my name.
- 15 They will call upon me and I will answer them;
I am with them in trouble,
I will deliver them and bring them to honour.
- 16 With long life will I satisfy them
and show them my salvation.

Psalm 134

- 1 Come, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord,
you that by night stand in the house of the Lord.
- 2 Lift up your hands towards the sanctuary
and bless the Lord.
- 3 The Lord who made heaven and earth
give you blessing out of Zion.

At the end of the psalmody, the following is said or sung

All Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

One of the following short lessons or another suitable passage is read

You, O Lord, are in the midst of us and we are called by your name; leave us not, O Lord our God.

Jeremiah 14.9

(or)

Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil is prowling round like a roaring lion, seeking for someone to devour. Resist him, strong in the faith.

1 Peter 5.8, 9

(or)

The servants of the Lamb shall see the face of God, whose name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night: they will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for God will be their light, and they will reign for ever and ever.

Revelation 22.4, 5

The following responsory may be said

Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

All Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

For you have redeemed me, Lord God of truth.

All I commend my spirit.

Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit.

All Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

Or, in Easter

Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

Alleluia, alleluia.

All Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

Alleluia, alleluia.

For you have redeemed me, Lord God of truth.

All Alleluia, alleluia.

Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit.

All Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Keep me as the apple of your eye.
All Hide me under the shadow of your wings.

Gospel Cantic

The Nunc dimittis (The Song of Simeon) is said or sung

All Save us, O Lord, while waking,
and guard us while sleeping,
that awake we may watch with Christ
and asleep may rest in peace.

- 1 Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace:
your word has been fulfilled.
- 2 My own eyes have seen the salvation
which you have prepared in the sight of every people;
- 3 A light to reveal you to the nations
and the glory of your people Israel.

Luke 2.29-32

All Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen

All Save us, O Lord, while waking,
and guard us while sleeping,
that awake we may watch with Christ
and asleep may rest in peace.

PRAYERS

Intercessions and thanksgivings may be offered here.

THE COLLECT

Silence may be kept.

Visit this place, O Lord, we pray,
and drive far from it the snares of the enemy;
may your holy angels dwell with us and guard us in peace,
and may your blessing be always upon us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE CONCLUSION

In peace we will lie down and sleep;
All **for you alone, Lord, make us dwell in safety.**

Abide with us, Lord Jesus,
All **for the night is at hand and the day is now past.**

As the night watch looks for the morning,
All **so do we look for you, O Christ.**

[Come with the dawning of the day
All **and make yourself known in the breaking
of the bread.]**

The Lord bless us and watch over us;
the Lord make his face shine upon us and be gracious to us;
the Lord look kindly on us and give us peace.
All **Amen.**

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