A Service of the Word

An Order for Night Prayer
(Compline) in Traditional Language

Note

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.

Preparation

The Lord almighty grant us a quiet night and a perfect end.
All **Amen.**

[Brethren,] be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist, steadfast in the faith.
1 Peter 5.8,9
But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us.
All **Thanks be to God.**

Our help is in the name of the Lord
All **who hath 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 **We confess to God almighty,**
the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost,
that we have sinned in thought, word and deed,
through our own grievous fault.
Wherefore we pray God to have mercy upon us.

Almighty God, have mercy upon us,
forgive us all our sins and deliver us from all evil,
confirm and strengthen us in all goodness,
and bring us to life everlasting;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

A priest may say

May the almighty and merciful Lord
grant unto you pardon and remission of all your sins,
time for amendment of life,
and the grace and comfort of the Holy Spirit.
All **Amen.**

O God, make speed to save us.
All **O Lord, make haste to help us.**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Ghost;
All **as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,**
world without end. Amen.

Praise ye the Lord.
All **The Lord's name be praised.**

The following or another suitable hymn may be sung

Before the ending of the day,
Creator of the world we pray,
That with thy wonted favour thou
Wouldst be our guard and keeper now.

From all ill dreams defend our eyes,
From nightly fears and fantasies;
Tread underfoot our ghostly foe,
That no pollution we may know.

O Father, that we ask be done,
Through Jesus Christ, thine only Son;
Who, with the Holy Ghost and thee,
Doth live and reign eternally.

The Word of God

Psalmody

One or more of the following psalms may be used

Psalm 4

1 Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness **:**
thou hast set me at liberty when I was in trouble;
have mercy upon me, and hearken unto my prayer.

2 O ye sons of men, how long will ye blaspheme mine honour **:**
and have such pleasure in vanity, and seek after leasing?

3 Know this also, that the Lord hath chosen to himself
the man that is godly **:**
when I call upon the Lord, he will hear me.

4 Stand in awe, and sin not **:**
commune with your own heart, and in your chamber, and be still.

5 Offer the sacrifice of righteousness **:**
and put your trust in the Lord.

6 There be many that say **:**
Who will shew us any good?

7 Lord, lift thou up **:**
the light of thy countenance upon us.

8 Thou hast put gladness in my heart **:**
since the time that their corn, and wine, and oil increased.

9 I will lay me down in peace, and take my rest **:**
for it is thou, Lord, only, that makest me dwell in safety.

Psalm 31.1-6

1 In thee, O Lord, have I put my trust **:**
let me never be put to confusion, deliver me in thy righteousness.

2 Bow down thine ear to me **:**
make haste to deliver me.

3 And be thou my strong rock, and house of defence **:**
that thou mayest save me.

4 For thou art my strong rock, and my castle **:**
be thou also my guide, and lead me for thy name's sake.

5 Draw me out of the net, that they have laid privily for me **:**
for thou art my strength.

6 Into thy hands I commend my spirit **:**
for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth.

Psalm 91

1 Whoso dwelleth under the defence of the Most High **:**
shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

2 I will say unto the Lord, Thou art my hope, and my stronghold **:**
my God, in him will I trust.

3 For he shall deliver thee from the snare of the hunter **:**
and from the noisome pestilence.

4 He shall defend thee under his wings,
and thou shalt be safe under his feathers **:**
his faithfulness and truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

5 Thou shalt not be afraid for any terror by night **:**
nor for the arrow that flieth by day;

6 For the pestilence that walketh in darkness **:**
nor for the sickness that destroyeth in the noonday.

7 A thousand shall fall beside thee, and ten thousand at thy right hand **:**
but it shall not come nigh thee.

8 Yea, with thine eyes shalt thou behold **:**
and see the reward of the ungodly.

9 For thou, Lord, art my hope **:**
thou hast set thine house of defence very high.

10 There shall no evil happen unto thee **:**
neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

11 For he shall give his angels charge over thee **:**
to keep thee in all thy ways.

12 They shall bear thee in their hands **:**
that thou hurt not thy foot against a stone.

13 Thou shalt go upon the lion and adder **:**
the young lion and the dragon shalt thou tread under thy feet.

14 Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him **:**
I will set him up, because he hath known my name.

15 He shall call upon me, and I will hear him **:**
yea, I am with him in trouble;
I will deliver him, and bring him to honour.

16 With long life will I satisfy him **:**
and shew him my salvation.

Psalm 134

1 Behold now, praise the Lord **:**
all ye servants of the Lord;

2 Ye that by night stand in the house of the Lord **:**
even in the courts of the house of our God.

3 Lift up your hands in the sanctuary **:**
and praise the Lord.

4 The Lord that made heaven and earth **:**
give thee blessing out of Sion.

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

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son **:**
and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be **:**
world without end. Amen.

Scripture Reading

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

Thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name;
leave us not, O Lord our God.
Jeremiah 14.9

(or)

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.
Matthew 11.28-30

(or)

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight; through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.
Hebrews 13.20,21

All **Thanks be to God.**

The following responsory may be said

Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.
All **Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.**
For thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth.
All **I commend my spirit.**
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.
All **Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.**

Or, in Easter

Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.
Alleluia, alleluia.
All **Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.**
Alleluia, alleluia.
For thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth.
All **Alleluia, alleluia.**
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.
All **Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.**
Alleluia, alleluia.

Keep me as the apple of an eye.
All **Hide me under the shadow of thy wings.**

Gospel Canticle

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

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

1 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace **:**
according to thy word.

2 For mine eyes have seen **:**
thy salvation;

3 Which thou hast prepared **:**
before the face of all people;

4 To be a light to lighten the Gentiles **:**
and to be the glory of thy people Israel.
Luke 2.29-32
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son **:**
and to the Holy Ghost;

as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be **:**
world without end. Amen.

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

Prayers

Lord, have mercy upon us.
All **Christ, have mercy upon us.**
Lord, have mercy upon us.

All **Our Father, which art in heaven,**
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done,
in earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Blessed art thou, Lord God of our fathers:
All **to be praised and glorified above all for ever.**

Let us bless the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost:
All **let us praise him and magnify him for ever.**

Blessed art thou, O Lord, in the firmament of heaven:
All **to be praised and glorified above all for ever.**

The almighty and most merciful Lord guard us and give us his blessing.
All **Amen.**

[Wilt thou not turn again and quicken us;
All **that thy people may rejoice in thee?**

O Lord, shew thy mercy upon us;
All **and grant us thy salvation.**

Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this night without sin;
All **O Lord, have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us.**

O Lord, hear our prayer;
All **and let our cry come unto thee.**]

Let us pray.

One or more of the following Collects is said

Visit, we beseech thee, O Lord, this place,
and drive from it all the snares of the enemy;
let thy holy angels dwell herein to preserve us in peace;
and may thy blessing be upon us evermore;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
All **Amen.**

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord;
and by thy great mercy defend us
from all perils and dangers of this night;
for the love of thy only Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.
All **Amen.**

O Lord Jesus Christ, son of the living God,
who at this evening hour didst rest in the sepulchre,
and didst thereby sanctify the grave
to be a bed of hope to thy people:
make us so to abound in sorrow for our sins,
which were the cause of thy passion,
that when our bodies lie in the dust,
our souls may live with thee;
who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost,
one God, world without end.
All **Amen.**

Look down, O Lord, from thy heavenly throne,
illuminate the darkness of this night with thy celestial brightness,
and from the sons of light banish the deeds of darkness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
All **Amen.**

Be present, O merciful God,
and protect us through the silent hours of this night,
so that we who are wearied
by the changes and chances of this fleeting world,
may repose upon thy eternal changelessness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
All **Amen.**

The Conclusion

We will lay us down in peace and take our rest.
All **For it is thou, Lord, only that makest us dwell in safety.**

Abide with us, O Lord,
All **for it is toward evening and the day is far spent.**

As the watchmen look for the morning,
All **so do we look for thee, O Christ.**

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

The Lord be with you
All **and with thy spirit.**

Let us bless the Lord.
All **Thanks be to God.**

The almighty and merciful Lord,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost,
bless us and preserve us.
All **Amen.**