

An Order for Night Prayer (Compline)

Introduction

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.

Structure

Preparation

The minister asks a blessing on the life of all God's holy people.

Authorized Prayers of Penitence may be used.

The Word of God

This includes

- ¶ **psalmody**
- ¶ *a short reading from Holy Scripture*
- ¶ *a responsory, committing oneself into the hands of God*
- ¶ *the Gospel Canticle: Nunc dimittis*

Prayers

Intercessions and thanksgivings may be offered.

The Collect is said.

The Lord's Prayer may be said.

The Conclusion

The service concludes with

- ¶ *a calling on God for protection through the coming night*
- ¶ *a simple blessing*

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.

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.

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

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.

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:

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

A sabbath rest still remains for the people of God; for those who enter God's rest also cease from their labours as God did from his. Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest.
Hebrews 4.9-11a

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 Canticle : 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.

**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.

All 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.

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.