

St Laurence Northfield



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.

Preparation

The following may be said:

Blessed are you, Lord God of our salvation,
to you be glory and praise for ever.

In the darkness of our sin you have shone in our hearts
to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God
in the face of Jesus Christ.

Open our eyes to acknowledge your presence,
that freed from the misery of sin and shame
we may grow into your likeness from glory to glory.

Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Blessed be God for ever.

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

Amen.

Our help is in the name of the Lord
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

**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.**

○ God, make speed to save us.
○ Lord, make haste to help us.

**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.

○ 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.

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.

Psalm 139:1-18 (in Lent)

1. O Lord, you have searched me out and known me; •
you know my sitting down and my rising up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.
2. You mark out my journeys and my resting place •
and are acquainted with all my ways.
3. For there is not a word on my tongue, •
but you, O Lord, know it altogether.

4. You encompass me behind and before •
and lay your hand upon me.
5. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, •
so high that I cannot attain it. **R**
6. Where can I go then from your spirit? •
Or where can I flee from your presence?
7. If I climb up to heaven, you are there; •
if I make the grave my bed, you are there also.
8. If I take the wings of the morning •
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
9. Even there your hand shall lead me, •
your right hand hold me fast.
10. If I say, 'Surely the darkness will cover me •
and the light around me turn to night,'
11. Even darkness is no darkness with you; the night is as clear as the day; •
darkness and light to you are both alike. **R**
12. For you yourself created my inmost parts; •
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
13. I thank you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; •
marvellous are your works, my soul knows well.
14. My frame was not hidden from you, •
when I was made in secret and woven in the depths of the earth.
15. Your eyes beheld my form, as yet unfinished; •
already in your book were all my members written,
16. As day by day they were fashioned •
when as yet there was none of them.
17. How deep are your counsels to me, O God! •
How great is the sum of them!
18. If I count them, they are more in number than the sand, •
and at the end, I am still in your presence.

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

**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 or more 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

or in Lent

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Isaiah 58:6, 7

The following responsory may be said

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

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

For you have redeemed me, Lord God of truth.

I commend my spirit.

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

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

Keep me as the apple of your eye.

Hide me under the shadow of your wings.

Gospel Canticle

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

Refrain

**Christ died for us,
so that, whether we wake or sleep, we might live with him.**

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

**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.**

Refrain

**Christ died for us,
so that, whether we wake or sleep, we might live with him.**

Prayers

Intercessions and thanksgivings may be offered here.

The Collect

Silence may be kept.

Visit this place and all our homes, O Lord, we pray,
and drive far from them 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.

and in Lent

Almighty God, may we, by the prayer and discipline of Lent,
enter into the mystery of Christ's sufferings;
that by following in the Way,
we may come to share in the glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Lord's Prayer

Trusting in the compassion of God,
let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

The Conclusion

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

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

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

Blessing

May God bless us,
that in us may be found love and humility,
obedience and thanksgiving,
discipline, gentleness and peace.

The Archbishops' Council of the Church of England: *The Prayer Book as Proposed in 1928*; *The Alternative Service Book 1980*; *The Promise of His Glory* (1991); *Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England*; *Common Worship: Pastoral Services* (2000); *Common Worship: Daily Prayer* (2001), all of which are copyright The Archbishops' Council of the Church of England.