Compline

An Order for Night Prayer
Compline is the seventh and last hour of divine service, and it is as much to say as a ‘fulfilling’: for, in the end thereof, the seven hours of divine service are fulfilled. And therewith also is ended, and fulfilled, speaking, eating, and drinking, and labouring, and all bodily businesses. So that after that time ought to be kept great stillness and strait silence, not only from words, but also from all noises and deeds save only privy and soft prayer, and holy thinking, and bodily sleep. For compline betokeneth the end of man’s life, or the end of the world, when the chosen of our Lord shall be delivered from all travail and woe, and be brought to endless quiet and rest. And therefore each person ought to dispose him to bed-ward, as if his bed were his grave.

— Thomas Fishbourne [attrib.], The Myrroure of Oure Lady, 1420s (ed. Richard Fawkes, 1530, fol. 89v)

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**MUSIC**  W.H. Frere and G.H. Palmer, *The Order of Compline Throughout the Year* (Wantage: St Mary’s Convent, 1896)


Compline

Preparation

\textit{\P.} The Lord almighty grant us a quiet night and a perfect end.

\textit{\R.} Amen.

\textit{\B.} 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. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us. \textit{\R.} Thanks be to God.
Our help is in the name of the Lord;

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

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. Amen.

God, make speed to save us;

O Lord, make haste to help us.
Ψ. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;

Ῥ. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world

without end. Amen.

Ψ. Praise ye the Lord; Ῥ. The Lord’s name be praised.

Hymn: *Te lucis ante terminum*

*Here may follow this or some other hymn.*

**Festal melody, for Saturday, Sunday, and feast days**

Before the ending of the day, Cre-ator of the world we
pray, That with thy wont-ed favour thou Wouldst be our guard
and keeper now.
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.

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

3 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.

Psalmody

Have mercy upon me, O God, and hearken unto my prayer.
Or, from Easter until Trinity Sunday

Ant. VIII.i

A


One or more of the following psalms may be used

Psalm 4, Cum inuocarem

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 god-ly: 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 a-ny_good?

7 Lord, lift thou_up: the light of thy counten-ance upon us.

8 Thou hast put gladness in my heart: since the time that their corn and wine and oil in-creas-ed.

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, In te Domine sperauí

In thee, O Lord, have I put my trust * let me never be put to confusion, de-liv-er me in thy righteousness.

2 Bow down thine ear to me: make haste to de-liv-er me.

3 And be thou my strong rock, and house of de-fence: that thou may-est save me.

4 For thou art my strong rock, and my cas-tle: 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 spi-rit: for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth.
Psalm 91, Qui habitat

who so 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 strong-hold: 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 defense very high.
There shall no evil happen unto thee: neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

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

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

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

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

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.

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

Psalm 134, Ecce nunc

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

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

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

The Lord that made heaven and earth: give thee blessing out of Sion.
At the end of the psalms

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.

Ant.

H
ave mercy upon me, O God, and hearken unto my prayer.

Or, from Easter until Trinity Sunday

Ant.

A

Scripture Reading

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

Jeremiah 14.9

T
hou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by
thy name. Leave us not, O Lord our God.

or

C
ome 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

The following responsory may be used

Resp. I n-to thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.  

R. In-to thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.  

For thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth. R. I commend my spirit.  

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. R. In-to thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.
Or, in Easter

Resp. vi

In-to thy hands, \* O Lord, I commend my spirit. Al-le-
lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia. R\*. In-to thy hands, O Lord, I commend my
spirit. Al-le- lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia. V. For thou hast redeemed me, O
Lord, thou God of truth. R\*. Al-le- lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia. V. Glory be to
the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. R\*. In-to thy

After the responsory

K

keep me as the apple of an eye;

R\*. Hide me under the shadow of thy wings.
Luke 2.29–32, Nunc dimittis

Ant.

P

reserve us, * O Lord, while waking, and guard us while

sleeping, that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we

may rest in peace. In Easter: Al-le- lu-ia.

L

ord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace * accord-

ing to thy word.

2 For mine eyes have seen: thy sal-va-tion,

3 Which thou hast pre-par-ed: before the face of all people;

4 To be a light to light-en the Gentiles: and to be the glory of thy peo-ple Is-ra-el.

Glory be to the Fa-ther, and to the Son: and to the Ho-ly Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ev-er shall be: world with-

out end. Amen.

The antiphon is repeated
Prayers

Lord, have mercy upon us. \( \text{R.} \) Christ, have mercy upon us.

\( \text{V.} \) Lord, have mercy upon us.

O ur 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 in-to temptation; But deliv-er us from e-vil.

Amen.

B lessed art thou, Lord God of our fathers; \( \text{R.} \) To be praised

and glorified above all for e-ver. \( \text{V.} \) Let us bless the Father, the
Son, and the Holy Ghost; \( \text{R.} \) Let us praise him and magnify him for ever. \( \text{V.} \) Blessed art thou, O Lord, in the firmament of heaven; \( \text{R.} \) To be praised and glorified above all for ever.

\( \text{V.} \) The almighty and most merciful Lord guard us and give us his blessing. \( \text{R.} \) Amen.

\( \text{[V.} \) Wilt thou not turn again and quicken us; \( \text{R.} \) That thy people may rejoice in thee? \( \text{V.} \) O Lord, shew thy mercy upon us;

\( \text{R.} \) And grant us thy salvation. \( \text{V.} \) Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us
this night without sin; \textit{R.} O Lord, have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us. \textit{V.} O Lord, hear our prayer; \textit{R.} And let our cry come un-to thee.] \textit{V.} Let us pray.

\textit{One or more of the following collects is used}

\textbf{V} is-it, we beseech thee, O Lord, this place, and drive from it all the snares of the en-emy; let thy ho-ly angels dwell here-in to preserve us in peace; and may thy blessing be upon us ev-ermore; through Jesus Christ our Lord. \textit{R.} Amen.

\textbf{L} ighten 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. \textbf{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. 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. 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. Amen.

Conclusion

V. We will lay us down in peace and take our rest. R. For it is thou, Lord, only that makest us dwell in safety. V. Abide with us, O Lord. R. For it is toward evening and the day is far spent. V. As the watchmen look for the morning, R. So do we look for thee,
O Christ. [V. Come with the dawning of the day, R⁷. And make thyself known in the breaking of bread.] V. The Lord be with you; R⁷. And with thy spirit. V. Let us bless the Lord. R⁷. Thanks be to God. V. The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, bless us and preserve us. R⁷. Amen.

The conclusion alternatively begins

V. We will lay us down in peace and take our rest. R⁷. For it is thou, Lord, on-ly that mak-est us dwell in safe-ty.