# The Office of Compline

## An Alternative Order

### INTRODUCTION

The early Christians took over from the Jews the practice of offering prayer at fixed hours of the day. By the end of the fifth century the work of Saint Benedict had formalised the structure of seven ‘Day Hours’ and a ‘Night Office.’ The last of the ‘Day Hours’ - Compline - was absorbed into Evening Prayer by Archbishop Cranmer, but Anglican spirituality has consistently shown signs of a need for an act of worship before retiring for the night. This need, together with the need for a simple service which might be used in connection with retreats, or courses of sermons in Lent, led to the provision of an order for Compline in the 1928 Prayer Book.

This new order for Compline, compiled by Bishop R.D. Silk, uses the traditional material and takes account of modern developments in the Roman Catholic Church and the Episcopal Church of the United States of America.

#### STAND

# 1 The Preparation

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

**Amen.**

Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith.

##### 1 Peter 5. 8

*Te lucis ante terminum, or another appropriate hymn, is sung.*

**1** To you before the end of day,

 Creator of the world, we pray:

 In love unfailing hear our prayer,

 Enfold us in your watchful care.

**2** Keep all disturbing dreams away,

 And hold the evil foe at bay.

 Repose untroubled let us find

 For soul and body, heart and mind.

**3** Almighty Father, this accord

 Through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord:

 Who reigns with you eternally

 In your blest SpiritÕs unity. Amen.

Let us confess our sins to Almighty God:

*Silence may be kept.*

####  KNEEL

 **Most merciful God,**

 **we have sinned in thought and word and deed:**

 **we are truly sorry and we ask you to forgive.**

 **Help us by your Spirit**

 **to live the new life in Christ,**

 **loving you with all our heart,**

 **and our neighbours as ourselves;**

 **for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.**

Almighty God have mercy upon us,

 forgive us our sins,

 and keep us in life eternal.

 **Amen.**

####  STAND

# 2 The Office Psalm

 O Lord, open our lips;

 **and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

 Let us worship the Lord.

 **All praise to his Name.**

 **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.**

One or more of the following psalms:

###### Psalm 4\*

**1** Answer me when I call, O God, defender of my cause; \*

 you set me free when I am hard-pressed;

 have mercy on me and hear my prayer.

**2** ‘You mortals, how long will you dishonour my glory; \*

 how long will you worship dumb idols

 and run after false gods?’

**3** Know that the Lord does wonders for the faithful; \*

 when I call upon the Lord, he will hear me.

**4** Tremble, then, and do not sin; \*

 speak to your heart in silence upon your bed.

**5** Offer the appointed sacrifices \*

 and put your trust in the Lord.

**6** Many are saying,

 ‘O that we might see better times!’ \*

 Lift up the light of your countenance upon us, O Lord.

**7** You have put gladness in my heart, \*

 more than when grain and wine and oil increase.

**8** I lie down in peace; at once I fall asleep; \*

 for only you, Lord, make me dwell in safety.

 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.

###### Psalm 134\*

**1** Behold now, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord, \*

 you that stand by night in the house of the Lord.

**2** Lift up your hands in the holy place and bless the Lord; \*

 the Lord who made heaven and earth bless you out of Zion.

 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.

####  SIT

# 3 The Word

*This or another appropriate reading:*

Jesus said: ‘Watch, therefore - for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning - lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Watch!’ *Mark 13. 35-37*

*Silence follows the reading.*

*The reader may then say:*

*Either* Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.

 **Thanks be to God.**

*Or* This is the word of the Lord.

 **Thanks be to God.**

#### STAND

 Into your hands, O Lord, I commit my spirit

 **Into your hands, O Lord, I commit my spirit**

You will redeem me, O Lord God of truth.

 **I commit my spirit**

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

 **Into your hands, O Lord, I commit my spirit**

*The Song of Simeon, (the Nunc Dimittis), is said with its antiphon:*

Save us, Lord, while we are awake; guard us while we are asleep; that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep may rest in his peace.

**1 Lord you now have set your servant free \***

 **to go in peace as your have promised.**

**2 For these eyes of mine have seen the Saviour \***

 **whom you have prepared for all the world to see;**

**3 a light to reveal you to the nations, \***

 **and the glory of your people Israel.**

 **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.**

Save us, Lord, while we are awake; guard us while we are asleep; that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep may rest in his peace. (Alleluia).

*The Apostles’ Creed may be said:*

 **I believe in God, the Father almighty,**

 **creator of heaven and earth.**

 **I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord.**

 **He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit**

 **and born of the Virgin Mary.**

 **He suffered under Pontius Pilate,**

 **was crucified, died, and was buried.**

 **He descended to the dead.**

 **On the third day he rose again.**

 **He ascended into heaven,**

 **and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

 **He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,**

 **the holy catholic Church,**

 **the communion of saints,**

 **the forgiveness of sins,**

 **the resurrection of the body,**

 **and the life everlasting. Amen.**

# 4 The Prayers KNEEL

 Lord, have mercy on us. Lord, have mercy on us.

 **Christ, have mercy on us.**  **Christ, have mercy on us.**

 Lord, have mercy on us. Lord, have mercy on us.

Let us pray with confidence As our Saviour taught us,

to the Father: we boldly pray:

**Our Father in heaven, Our Father who art in heaven,**

**hallowed be your name, hallowed be thy name,**

**your kingdom come, thy kingdom come,**

**your will be done, thy will be done,**

**on earth as in heaven. on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us today Give us this day**

 **our daily bread. our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins And forgive us our trespasses**

**as we forgive those as we forgive those**

**who sin against us. who trespass against us.**

**Save us from And lead us not**

 **the time of trial into temptation,**

**and deliver us from evil. but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power For thine is the kingdom,**

**and the glory are yours, the power and the glory,**

**now and for ever. Amen. for ever and ever. Amen.**

*These versicles and responses may be said:*

 Bless the Lord, the God of our fathers; \*

 **sing his praise, and exalt him for ever.**

 Bless the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: \*

  **sing his praise, and exalt him for ever.**

 Bless him in the heights of heaven; \*

 **sing his praise, and exalt him for ever.**

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

 **Amen.**

 Will you not give us life again, O Lord \*

 **that your people may rejoice in you?**

 Show us your mercy, O Lord, \*

 **and grant us your salvation.**

 Keep us tonight, Lord, from all sin. \*

 **Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy.**

 Lord, hear our prayer,

  **for we put our trust in you.**

# 5 The Collect

Visit this house, we pray you, Lord; drive far from it all 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.**

*One or more of these collects:*

Lighten our darkness, Lord, we pray; and in your mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of your only Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

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

Look down, Lord, from your throne in heaven: let the light of your presence dispel the shadows of the night; and from the children of light banish the deeds of darkness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Living God, at this evening hour your Son our Lord Jesus Christ lay in the tomb and so hallowed the grave to be a bed of hope for all who put their trust in you; give us such sorrow for our sins, which were the cause of his passion, that, when our bodies lie in the dust, our souls may live with him, for he is now alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Lord is here:

 **His Spirit is with us.**

 Let us bless the Lord.

 **Thanks be to God.**

The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve us.

 **Amen.**

# Acknowledgements

The text of this rite conforms to the texts in **An Alternative Order for Morning and Evening Prayer**, © Church in Wales Publications, 1992.