



Compline for the Season of Lent

Christ in the Desert or Christ in the Wilderness is an 1872 painting by Russian artist Ivan Kramskoi,

The Office of Compline

An Alternative Order

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. It has been adopted for use in the context of an evening devoted to scripture reflection and prayer for Lent and Holy week across the Old Hills Malvern Churches.

Notes

- 1. Posture** Wherever a certain posture is particularly appropriate, it is indicated in the left-hand margin. At other points local custom may be established.
- 2. Hymns** The traditional Compline office hymn, *Te lucis ante terminum*, is provided;
- 3. Psalms** Seven psalms are provided; they may be used for variety according to the day of the week, or the season of the year.
Psalms 4, 91 and 134 have always been used at Compline and will form the basis of our Lenten prayer each week during Lent.
- 4. Lessons** One lesson is provided; others are to be found in the Appendix.
- 5. Brackets** When section numbers are in brackets, the sections may be omitted.
- 6. Alleluia** The Alleluia is added or substituted from Easter Day until the Day of Pentecost only.

Additional season provisions are provided

STAND

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,

s sung or said.

- 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 Spirit's unity. Amen.

The Confession

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

The Office Psalmody

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. (those **marked** are said together each week). Remember the pause on the asterisk (*):*

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 91*

- 1 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, *
abides under the shadow of the Almighty,
- 2 He shall say to the Lord,
'You are my refuge and my stronghold, *
my God in whom I trust.'
- 3 He shall deliver you from the snare of the hunter *
and from the deadly pestilence.
- 4 He shall cover you with his pinions,
and you shall find refuge under his wings; *
his faithfulness shall be a 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 plague that stalks about in the darkness, *
nor of the sickness that lays waste at midday.
- 7 A thousand shall fall at your side
and ten thousand at your right hand, *
but it shall not come near you.
- 8 Your own 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 habitation.
- 10 There shall no evil happen to you, *
neither shall any plague come near your dwelling.
- 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; *
you shall trample the young lion and the serpent under your feet.
- 14 Because he is bound to me in love,
therefore I will deliver him; *
I will protect him, because he knows my name.
- 15 He shall call upon me and I will answer him; *
I am with him in trouble, I will rescue him and bring him to honour.

- 16 With long life will I satisfy him, *
and show him my salvation.

**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.**

***Additional Psalms for use as required,
especially during Holy week***

Psalm 16. 7 - 11

- 7 I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel; *
my heart teaches me, night after night.
- 8 I have set the Lord always before me; *
because he is at my right hand I shall not fail.
- 9 My heart, therefore, is glad and my spirit rejoices; *
my body also shall rest in hope.
- 10 For you will not abandon me to the grave, *
nor let your holy one see the Pit.
- 11 You will show me the path of life, *
in your presence there is fullness of joy,
and in your right hand are pleasures for evermore.
- 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 17. 1-8

- 1 Hear my plea of innocence, O Lord; give heed to my cry; *
listen to my prayer, which does not come from lying lips.
- 2 Let my vindication come forth from your presence; *
let your eyes be fixed on justice.
- 3 Weigh my heart, summon me by night, *
melt me down; you will find no impurity in me.
- 4 I give no offence with my mouth as others do; *
I have heeded the words of your lips.
- 5 My footsteps hold fast to the ways of your law; *

in your paths my feet shall not stumble.
6 I call upon you, O God, for you will answer me; *
incline your ear to me and hear my words.
7 Show me your marvellous loving-kindness, *
O Saviour of those who take refuge at your right hand
from those who rise up against them.
8 Keep me as the apple of your eye; *
hide me under the shadow of your wings.
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 31. 1-5

1 In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge; *
let me never be put to shame; *
deliver me in your righteousness.
2 Incline your ear to me; *
make haste to deliver me.
3 Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe,
for you are my crag and my stronghold; *
for the sake of your name, lead me and guide me.
4 Take me out of the net that they have secretly set for me, *
for you are my tower of strength.
5 Into your hands I commend my spirit, *
for you have redeemed me, O Lord, O God of truth.
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 139. 1-11, 17, 18

1 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 trace my journeys and my resting-places *
and are acquainted with all my ways.
3 Indeed, there is not a word on my lips,
but you, O Lord, know it altogether.
4 You press upon me behind and before *
and lay your hand upon me.
5 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; *
it is so high that I cannot attain to it.
6 Where can I go then from your Spirit?
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 will lead me *
and 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 Darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day; *
darkness and light to you are both alike.
16 How deep I find your thoughts, O God! *
how great is the sum of them!
17 If I were to count them,
they would be more in number than the sand; *
to count them all, my life span would be like yours.
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 Word

This or another appropriate reading:

Lord, you are in our midst, we are called by your name.
Do not desert us, O Lord our God.

Jeremiah 14. 9

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, 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

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
(Alleluia, alleluia).

**Into your hands, O Lord, I commit my spirit
(Alleluia, alleluia).**

You will redeem me, O Lord God of truth.
I commit my spirit (or Alleluia, alleluia)

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

**Into your hands, O Lord, I commit my spirit
(Alleluia, alleluia).**

The Song of Simeon

(the Nunc Dimittis), is said with its antiphon:

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. (Alleluia).

- 1 Lord you now have set your servant free *
to go in peace as you 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.

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. (Alleluia).

The Apostles' Creed

**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.

The Prayers

A time for stillness as we bring our prayers and needs to the Lord. After a time of stillness, a short set of general intercessions will be offered.

KNEEL

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

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

Let us pray with confidence
to the Father:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today
our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from
the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

As our Saviour taught us,
we boldly pray:

**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.**

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.

The Collects

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.**

or in Easter Week:

Pour upon us, Lord, the Spirit of your love, that, as we are nourished by your Easter sacraments, so of your mercy we may be knit together in peace and concord; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **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 Dismissal

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 this night and always.

Amen.



Notices

Appendix

Lent

God chose us to possess salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us in order that we might live together with him, whether we are alive or dead when he comes.

1 Thessalonians 5. 9-10

Holy Week

Christ Jesus humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2. 8-11

Easter Eve to the Second Sunday of Easter

On the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.

John 20. 1

Easter

May the God of peace, who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, make you perfect in all goodness so that you may do his will, and may he make of us what he would have us be through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever!

Hebrews 13. 20, 21

Ascension

Since in Jesus, the Son of God, we have the supreme high priest who has gone through to the highest heaven, we must never let go of the faith that we have professed. Let us be confident in approaching the throne of grace, that we shall have mercy from him and find grace when we are in need of help.

Hebrews 4. 14, 16

Day of Pentecost

Jesus said: 'Your Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and will call to mind all that I have told you. Peace is my parting gift to you, my own peace, such as the world cannot give. Set your troubled hearts at rest, and banish your fears.'

John 14. 26, 27

Saints' Days

They will see the Lord face to face, and his name will be written on their foreheads. It will never be night again and they will not need lamplight or sunlight, because the Lord God will be shining on them. They will reign for ever and ever.

Revelation 22. 4, 5

General

Jesus said: 'Come to me, all who labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light'.

Matthew 11. 28-30

Do not let anger lead you into sin; do not let sunset find you still nursing it; leave no loop-hole for the

devil.

Ephesians 4. 26, 27

Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4. 6, 7

May the God who gives us peace make you holy in every way and keep your whole being - spirit, mind and body - free from every fault at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5. 23