

NIGHT PRAYER & REFLECTIONS

*(Compline from
The Divine Office)*

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INTRODUCTION

The Office of Night Prayer (*Compline*) is celebrated through the Church and forms part of the *Divine Office*. It is the final formal prayer of the day and is celebrated before going to bed either alone or with others. The Psalms and readings are those found in the *Divine Office* published by Collins (1975). The Reflections which accompany the prayer for each night were written by Patrick Burke, O.Carm., for a series for the periodical *Carmelite Family*.

SUNDAYS & SOLEMNITIES

(After Evening Prayer II)

Verse O God, come to our aid.
Response O Lord, make haste to help us.
 Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
 as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
 world without end. Amen. (Alleluia).

Hymn

A suitable hymn may be sung, or said.

Psalmody:

Antiphon: He will conceal you with his wings; you will not fear the terror of the night.

Eastertide: *Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*

Psalm 90(91)

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
and abides in the shade of the Almighty,
says to the Lord: "My refuge,
my stronghold, my God in whom I trust!"

It is he who will free you from the snare
of the fowler who seeks to destroy you;
he will conceal you with his pinions
and under his wings you will find refuge.

You will not fear the terror of the night,
nor the arrow that flies by day,
nor the plague that prowls in the darkness
nor the scourge that lays waste at noon.

A thousand may fall at your side,
ten thousand fall at your right,
you, it will never approach;
his faithfulness is buckler and shield.

Your eyes have only to look
to see how the wicked are repaid,
you who have said: "Lord, my refuge!"
and have made the Most High your dwelling.
Upon you no evil shall fall,
no plague approach where you dwell.
For you has he commanded his angels,
to keep you in all your ways.
They shall bear you upon their hands
lest you strike your foot against a stone.
On the lion and the viper you will tread
and trample the young lion and the dragon.

Since he clings to me in love, I will free him;
protect him for he knows my name.
When he calls I shall answer: "I am with you."
I will save him in distress and give him glory.

With length of life I will content him;
I shall let him see my saving power.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Antiphon: He will conceal you with his wings; you will not fear the terror of the night.
Eastertide: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Scripture Reading

Revelation 22:4-5

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.

Short Responsory

Outside Eastertide

Response Into your hands, Lord I commend my spirit. R/
Verse You have redeemed us, Lord God of truth. R/
Verse Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. R/

Holy Thursday

Christ humbled himself for us, and, in obedience, accepted death.

Good Friday

Christ humbled himself for us, and, in obedience, accepted death, even death on a cross.

Holy Saturday

Christ humbled himself for us, and, in obedience, accepted death, even death on a cross. Therefore God raised him to the heights and gave him the name which is above all other names.

Easter Octave

This is the day which was made by the Lord: let us rejoice and be glad, alleluia.

Eastertide

Response Into your hands, Lord I commend my spirit, alleluia, alleluia. R/
Verse You have redeemed us, Lord God of truth. R/
Verse Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. R/

The Nunc Dimittis

Luke 2:29-32

Antiphon: Save us, Lord, while we are awake; protect us while we sleep; that we may keep watch with Christ and rest with him in peace. (*Alleluia*)

At last, all powerful Master,
you give leave to your servant
to go in peace, according to your promise.

For my eyes have seen your salvation

which you have prepared for all nations,
the light to enlighten the Gentiles
and give glory to Israel, your people.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Antiphon: Save us, Lord, while we are awake; protect us while we sleep; that we may keep watch with Christ and rest with him in peace. (*Alleluia*)

Concluding Prayer

Sunday and the Easter Octave

God our Father,
as we have celebrated today the mystery of the Lord's resurrection,
grant our humble prayer:
free us from all harm
that we may sleep in peace
and rise in joy to sing your praise.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Solemnities not on a Sunday, and during the Easter Triduum

Visit this house, we pray you, Lord:
drive far away from it all the snares of the enemy.
May your holy angels stay here and guard us in peace,
and let your blessing be always upon us.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessing

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

Anthem to our Blessed Lady

The Office usually concludes with an anthem to our Lady, such as the Salve Regina or the Flos Carmeli.

REFLECTION I

IN THE HOME OF GOD – Psalm 90 (91)

Our world today, certainly society today generally, is very conscious of the presence of evil and the extent of its influence everywhere. Christ's followers must rally to wipe it out or curb its progress or success, whenever possible. God assures us of divine protection and victory; no matter what the personal pain and suffering, all of us are in His care. We remember with thanks and joy that:

**“He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
and abides in the shade of the Almighty
says to the Lord: ‘My refuge, my stronghold,
my God in whom I trust.’”**

Throughout the ages, God's faithful know that He is always near and that:

**“He will free you from the snare of
the fowler who seeks to destroy you.”**

I can rely on His care and protection for He will hold me

“with His pinions and protect me under His wings”;

by day or night you protect me:

**“By day or by night He protects me;
so that I will not fear the horrors
that frighten me
nor the deadly diseases that attack at will.”**

Lord, strengthen our trust in you. Assure us every moment, at the beginning of our day until our retiring at night, that you will keep me safe under your loving care and protection.

Against our smallness and very limited life, the psalmist reminds us of God’s awesomeness, His greatness, His timelessness. “Because you are my refuge, no evil shall befall me”.

**“For you He has commanded His angels
to keep you in all His ways.”**

We may not need to be protected by wild dogs but evil attacks will always beset us, sinister threats of evil not only for our bodies but more particularly for our spirit. But you Lord are our refuge and strength. You are with us to fight earthly evils, to withstand all that tries to destroy God in our lives.

**“Since he clings to me in love, I will free him
protect him for he knows my name.”**

May I feel this homeliness with God like the great figures in the psalms and respond as He “hugs” me; and protects me. My faith in God uplifts me when He treats me with such intimate friendship assuring me as a true friend the “He will save me in distress and give me glory.” He goes further with his protection and assurance.

**“With length of life I will content him;
I shall let him see my saving power.”**

Jesus promised: “I came that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10). The psalmist promises us a similar blessing, full of life. My hope, like any believer, is to see God’s saving love – with God for all eternity.

REFLECTION II

NIGHT PRAYER IN THE TEMPLE – Psalm 133 (134)

Of all the Compline or Night Prayer Psalms this one seems the most appropriate. It is for praying at night-time, and is for night workers whether it is the night shift in factories, staff in hospitals or

institutions, whose work continues no matter what the hour. You have too the maintainers, those especially who keep our world ticking, those who clean our buildings, our streets, those who repair or maintain essential facilities, so that life can be normal and that humans can function in a normal world. This psalm is one of the ascent” psalms, used by those “going up” to the Temple to worship the Lord. As such, it is for all those finishing their day’s work but also for those who are going to night work, which continues until daybreak or sunrise. The psalm is a prayer of thanks, our praise to God at the end of one day and the beginning of the next and a prayer for the time that will see sunrise and the light for a new day, another beginning.

**O Come, bless the Lord,
all you who serve the Lord
who stand in the house of the Lord
in the courts of the house of our God.**

Across our world where shrines exist, there are always men and women committed by the Church to God to pray for us – saints and sinners. They proclaim God’s holy name, contemplate the Word of God and his truths, and remember in prayer those especially who are suffering physically or mentally, unable to pray themselves as well as all who are miserable and tired of life.

**Lift up your hands to the holy place
and bless the Lord through the night.**

Here the psalmist reminds people to pray, to “lift up your hands” and plead with the Lord for his blessing before one applies oneself to the work around us, to do the various jobs that life demands of us. Everything we do should have his blessing. The prayers and work of those engaged through the night will bring many blessings for their brothers and sisters during the day.

**May the Lord bless you from Sion.
He who made both heaven and earth.**

Indeed the psalmist implies that we know how to bless the Lord. Teach us, Lord, how to bless you throughout our day and night and life, in sunshine and rain, in darkness and in light, at work and at play. Let us not wonder or be perplexed at our human presentation or sometimes at the confusing bewilderment of our celebrations.

St. Augustine in a commentary on this psalm refers to another, which prays: “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is that brothers should dwell together in unity”. In his Rule, he applied the relevance of this psalm for a monastic group. “By this sound were stirred up the brothers who longed to dwell together. This verse was their trumpet. It sounded through the whole world, and they, who had been divided, were gathered together. The summons of God, the summons of the Holy Spirit, the summons of the prophets were heard in Judah, yet were heard through the whole world. They were deaf to the sound amid whom it was sung; they were found with their ears open, of whom it was said, “They shall see him who were not told of him; they shall understand who heard not”. Then comes St Augustine’s criticism. “If they wish to pray together, they must dwell together in harmony and love. Wherever two or three gather together in the Lord’s name, there is he in their midst. Can he be there if one doesn’t love another of the group?”

MONDAY

Verse O God, come to our aid.
Response O Lord, make haste to help us.
 Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
 as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
 world without end. Amen. (Alleluia).

Hymn

A suitable hymn may be sung, or said.

Psalmody:

Antiphon: You, Lord God, are slow to anger, abounding in love.
Eastertide: *Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*

Psalm 85(86)

Turn your ear, O Lord, and give answer
for I am poor and needy.
Preserve my life, for I am faithful:
save the servant who trusts in you.

You are my God, have mercy on me, Lord,
for I cry to you all the day long.
Give joy to your servant, O Lord,
for to you I lift up my soul.

O Lord, you are good and forgiving,
full of love to all who call.
Give heed, O Lord, to my prayer
and attend to the sound of my voice.

In the day of distress I will call
and surely you will reply.
Among the gods there is none like you, O Lord;
nor work to compare with yours.

All the nations shall come to adore you
and glorify your name, O Lord:
for you are great and do marvellous deeds,
you who alone who are God.

Show me, Lord, your way
so that I may walk in your truth.
Guide my heart to fear your name.

I will praise, Lord my God, with all my heart
and glorify your name for ever;
for your love to me has been great:
you have saved me from the depths of the grave.

The proud have risen against me;
ruthless men seek my life:
to you they pay no heed.

But you, God of mercy and compassion,
slow to anger, O Lord,
abounding in love and truth,
turn and take pity on me.

O give your strength to your servant
and save your handmaid's son.
Show me a sign of your favour
that my foes may see to their shame
that you console me and give me your help.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Antiphon: You, Lord God, are slow to anger, abounding in love.

Eastertide: *Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*

Scripture Reading

1Thessalonians 5:9-10

God choose 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.

Short Responsory

Outside Eastertide

Response Into your hands, Lord I commend my spirit. R/
Verse You have redeemed us, Lord God of truth. R/
Verse Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. R/

Eastertide

Response Into your hands, Lord I commend my spirit, alleluia, alleluia. R/
Verse You have redeemed us, Lord God of truth. R/
Verse Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. R/

The Nunc Dimittis

Luke 2:29-32

Antiphon: Save us, Lord, while we are awake; protect us while we sleep; that we may keep watch with Christ and rest with him in peace. (*Alleluia*)

At last, all powerful Master,
you give leave to your servant
to go in peace, according to your promise.

For my eyes have seen your salvation
which you have prepared for all nations,
the light to enlighten the Gentiles
and give glory to Israel, your people.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Antiphon: Save us, Lord, while we are awake; protect us while we sleep; that we may keep watch with Christ and rest with him in peace. (*Alleluia*)

Concluding Prayer

Lord,
give our bodies restful sleep;
and let the work we have done today
be sown for an eternal harvest.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessing

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

Anthem to our Blessed Lady

The Office usually concludes with an anthem to our Lady, such as the Salve Regina or the Flos Carmeli.

REFLECTION

PRAYER OF A POOR MAN IN DISTRESS – Psalm 85 (86)

**Turn your ear, Lord, and give answer
For I am poor and needy.
Preserve my life, for I am faithful
Save the servant who trusts in you.**

Lord, I need your help at all times, more so when I am worried about the state of our world and of our country. The news at home and abroad depresses me. Then I feel my own inadequacies, my helplessness in seeing what we, your loved ones, should be doing. Lord, enlighten me at all times and in all the daily problems I have to face.

**O Lord, you are good and forgiving,
Full of love to all who call.
Give heed, O Lord, to my prayer
And attend to the sound of my voice.**

When I think of your goodness to all, even to those who have been offensive to you and in need of your forgiveness, and you show them abounding love, I realise that without you there can be no true happiness in life.

**In the days of distress I will call
And surely you will reply.
Among the gods there is none like you, O Lord
Nor work to compare with yours.**

I need to see you in my life, in the people around me; to handle the pressures, to know what others say or do; with confidence in you, Lord, to listen to the reports in the newspapers and on radio. Strengthen me, trusting your strength and in your concern for all in need.

**Show me, Lord, your way
So that I may walk in your truth.
Guide my heart to fear your name.**

Lord, I am asking for your guidance because I feel helpless, or rather confused. It is really my lack of faith in your love. Help me to strengthen our relationship so that I will praise you with all my heart. Ruthless people seem to appear everywhere. They wish to destroy our lives and take away the things that are precious to us. When I am confused, guide me in the way that I should go, in the choices I should make, in the work that I should undertake. It is for your greater glory and for others' welfare.

**But you, God of mercy and compassion,
Slow to anger, O Lord,
Abounding in love and truth,
Turn and take pity on me.**

But you are holy and infinitely above my comprehension. With your gifts of faith by which I know you, and of hope by which you free me, and of love by which I want what you want, you give us life. With these gifts we can be happy in the Lord.

**O give your strength to your servant
And save your handmaid's son.
Show me a sign of your favour
That my foes may see to their shame
That you console me and give me your help.**

Give me the strength to meet my problems with confidence in you and in your power to resolve all our difficulties. Increase the gift of your Spirit within us. Without you, Lord, who is always good and forgiving, there can be no true joy in life.

**God of mercy and compassion,
Abounding in love and truth,
Turn and take pity on me.**

TUESDAY

Verse O God, come to our aid.
Response O Lord, make haste to help us.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen. (Alleluia).

Hymn

A suitable hymn may be sung, or said.

Psalmody:

Antiphon: Do not hide your face from me, for in you have I put my trust.
Eastertide: *Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*

Psalm 142(143)

Lord, listen to my prayer:
turn your ear to my appeal.
You are faithful, you are just; give answer.
Do not call your servant to judgement
for no one is just in your sight.

The enemy pursues my soul;
he has crushed my life to the ground;
he has made me dwell in darkness
like the dead, long forgotten.
Therefore my spirit fails;
my heart is numb within me.

I remember the days that are past:
I ponder all your works.
I muse on what your hand has wrought
and to you I stretch out my hands.
Like a parched land my soul thirsts for you.

Lord, make haste and answer;
for my spirit fails within me.
Do not hide your face
lest I become like those in the grave.

In the morning let me know your love
for I put my trust in you.
Make me know the way I should walk:
to you I lift up my soul.
Rescue me, Lord, from my enemies;
I have fled to you for refuge.
Teach me to do your will
for you, O Lord, are my God.
Let your good spirit guide me

in ways that are level and smooth.

For your name's sake, Lord, save my life;
in your justice save my soul from distress.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Antiphon: Do not hide your face from me, for in you have I put my trust.

Eastertide: *Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*

Scripture Reading

1Peter 5:8-9

Be calm but vigilant, because your enemy the devil is prowling round like a roaring lion, looking for someone to eat. Stand up to him, strong in faith.

Short Responsory

Outside Eastertide

Response Into your hands, Lord I commend my spirit. R/

Verse You have redeemed us, Lord God of truth. R/

Verse Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. R/

Eastertide

Response Into your hands, Lord I commend my spirit, alleluia, alleluia. R/

Verse You have redeemed us, Lord God of truth. R/

Verse Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. R/

The Nunc Dimittis

Luke 2:29-32

Antiphon: Save us, Lord, while we are awake; protect us while we sleep; that we may keep watch with Christ and rest with him in peace. (*Alleluia*)

At last, all powerful Master,
you give leave to your servant
to go in peace, according to your promise.

For my eyes have seen your salvation
which you have prepared for all nations,
the light to enlighten the Gentiles
and give glory to Israel, your people.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Antiphon: Save us, Lord, while we are awake; protect us while we sleep; that we may keep watch with Christ and rest with him in peace. (*Alleluia*)

Concluding Prayer

In your mercy, Lord,
dispel the darkness of this night.
Let your household so sleep in peace,
that at the dawn of a new day,
they may, with joy, waken in your name.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessing

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

Anthem to our Blessed Lady

The Office usually concludes with an anthem to our Lady, such as the Salve Regina or the Flos Carmeli.

REFLECTION

PRAYER IN DESOLATION – Psalm 142 (143).

A humble appeal.

With the countless thousands who throughout the centuries have recited this psalm as the day fades and night comes on, we ask you, Lord, to help us with your Spirit to have strength and light in our difficulties.

**Lord, listen to my prayer;
turn your ear to my appeal.
You are faithful, you are just; give answer.
Do not call your servant to judgement,
For no one is just in your sight.**

I am tired, Lord, and depressed, tired of hoping, of building castles, of dreaming that everything will improve. I need your grace, your blessings, your assurance, and faith to keep on going.

**The enemy pursues my soul;
he has crushed my life to the ground;
he has made me dwell in darkness
like the dead, long forgotten. Therefore my spirit fails;
my heart is numb within me.**

I should remember the many who suffer from incurable diseases, others whose lives are a walking death. How terrible to live in darkness, now long forgotten like the dead, even by the living. I am like them all and my heart is numb.

**I remember the days that are past:
I ponder all your works.
I muse on what your hand has wrought
And to you I stretch out my hands.
Like a parched land my soul thirsts for you.**

My confidence in my life is failing. Maybe I am forgetting you? But I need you more than anything in the world. Do not hide your face for I need your love.

**In the morning let me know your love.
For I put my trust in you.
Make me know the way I should walk;
To you I lift up my soul.**

When I wake up in the morning to a new trying day, let me feel your support and presence in your love. Lift my spirit and give me the strength to do your will. Show me the way I should go to choose rightly, to decide correctly, to overcome doubts and darkness, trials and temptations.

**Rescue me, Lord, from my enemies;
I have fled to you for refuge.
Teach me to do your will
For you, O Lord, are my God.
Let your good spirit guide me
In ways that are level and smooth.**

Dear God, you are my GOD. Be with me always. Teach me to hear you and listen, to do your will so that I may follow you at all moments of the day. May I be enlivened by your love that will help me to keep things right with you always. In my sense of desolation, give me faith like flowers that open their petals to the Sun. Give me strength to rely on you and never let you down. Take pity on all who, though living in the light, experience only darkness

**For your name's sake, Lord, save my life;
In your justice save my soul from distress.**

WEDNESDAY

Verse O God, come to our aid.
Response O Lord, make haste to help us.
 Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
 as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
 world without end. Amen. (Alleluia).

Hymn

A suitable hymn may be sung, or said.

Psalmody:

Antiphon: O God, be my protector and my refuge.
Eastertide: *Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*

Psalm 30(31)

In you, O Lord, I take refuge.
Let me never be put to shame.
In your justice, set me free,
hear me and speedily rescue me.

Be a rock of refuge for me,
a mighty stronghold to save me,
for you are my rock, my stronghold.
For your name's sake, lead me and guide me.

Release me from the snares they have hidden
for you are my refuge, Lord.
Into your hands I commend my spirit.
It is you who will redeem me, Lord.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Antiphon: O God, be my protector and my refuge.
Eastertide: *Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*

Antiphon: Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.
Eastertide: *Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*

Psalm 129(130)

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord,
Lord, hear my voice!
O let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my pleading.
If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt,
Lord, who would survive?
But with you is found forgiveness:
for this we revere you.

My soul is waiting for the Lord,
I count on his word.
My soul is longing for the Lord
more than watchman for daybreak.
Let the watchman count on daybreak
and Israel on the Lord.

Because with the Lord there is mercy
and fullness of redemption,
Israel indeed he will redeem
from all its iniquity.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Antiphon: Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.
Eastertide: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Scripture Reading

Ephesians 4:26-27

Do not let resentment lead you into sin; the sunset must not find you still angry. Do not give the devil his opportunity.

Short Responsory

Outside Eastertide

Response Into your hands, Lord I commend my spirit. R/
Verse You have redeemed us, Lord God of truth. R/
Verse Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. R/

Eastertide

Response Into your hands, Lord I commend my spirit, alleluia, alleluia. R/
Verse You have redeemed us, Lord God of truth. R/
Verse Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. R/

The Nunc Dimittis

Luke 2:29-32

Antiphon: Save us, Lord, while we are awake; protect us while we sleep; that we may keep watch with Christ and rest with him in peace. (*Alleluia*)

At last, all powerful Master,
you give leave to your servant
to go in peace, according to your promise.

For my eyes have seen your salvation
which you have prepared for all nations,
the light to enlighten the Gentiles
and give glory to Israel, your people.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Antiphon: Save us, Lord, while we are awake; protect us while we sleep; that we may keep watch with Christ and rest with him in peace. (*Alleluia*)

Concluding Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
meek and humble of heart,
you offer to those who follow you
a yoke that is good to bear,
a burden that is light.
Accept, we beg you,
our prayer and work of this day,
and grant us the rest we need
that we may be ever more willing to serve you,
who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

Blessing

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

Anthem to our Blessed Lady

The Office usually concludes with an anthem to our Lady, such as the Salve Regina or the Flos Carmeli.

REFLECTION I

PRAYER IN TIME OF ORDEAL – Psalm 30 (31).

On the Cross Jesus looked to the Father, remembering the plea in this Psalm: “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” At this time I too take refuge in that same plea, for I am distressed, feeling trapped and helpless. Rescue me from this plight, Lord, for you alone are my hope. You alone can set me free.

**In you, O Lord, I take refuge.
Let me never be disgraced.
In your justice set me free.
Hear me and speedily rescue me.**

Throughout the centuries, Lord, people have relied on you, because you were their rock, their place of safety. The Israelites, trapped between the Egyptian Army, intent on their extermination, and the deep Red Sea in front of them impossible to cross, showed extraordinary trust in God. “Trust in Him”

**Be a rock of refuge for me;
A mighty stronghold to save me.
For you are my rock, my stronghold.**

Lord, I put my trust in you. Please, deliver me from the hands of those who enslaved me. I am no more than a slave, imprisoned, not free to do what I should do or want to do. My spirit is crushed and lifeless.

**For your name ‘s sake lead me and guide me.
Release me from the snares they have hidden.
For you are my refuge, Lord.**

Remember, Lord, you have given us the freedom to choose, but that means little when I feel helpless - constrained by fear, sickness, age, even the situation of my daily life. These, I feel, diminish me; fill me with anxiety and a worry that threatens to crush me.

**Into your hands I commend my spirit.
It is you who will redeem me, Lord.**

Nature seems at one with those who wish to destroy me. Did Jesus feel that too in his ordeal? His prayer gives me heart for the world around seems to contradict this hope or belittle it - famine and floods, disease and diminishment and much enslaving of people

**I put my trust in the Lord.
I will exult and rejoice in his love.
His anger lasts a moment, his favour all through life.**

Lord, may I truly know myself and let others know me as I am. Let me be honest, sincere and wholesome. Free me from my ordeal and I will praise God forever.

REFLECTION II

DE PROFUNDIS (OUT OF THE DEPTHS) – Ps 129 (130)

This is a well-known psalm to Christians throughout the ages because of its use in funeral liturgies. It reflects the humble attitude of a self-conscious sinner pleading with a merciful God who hears our cries with encouraging openness - sursum corda "lift up your hearts." Its Latin title "De Profundis" (Out of the depths) expresses the traditional mind of the psalmist as "one in the dumps," hopelessly lost, distant from God, incurable.

**Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.
Lord, hear my voice.
O, Let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my pleading.**

From the depths of my heart, I beg of you, Lord. You see the urgency of my needs, the terrible nature of my affliction, the result of my sinfulness. With the consciousness of my sin, there is the ultimate picture of damned rejection. There is nothing, absolutely nothing, that one like me can do to get back to square one.

**If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt,
Lord, who would survive?
But with you is found forgiveness,
for this we revere you.**

Before your majesty and goodness, my plight seems hopeless. Yet my soul is longing for help, praying and pleading that you will not take note of my badness. Please, free me from my prison. You, God, are my only hope. You alone can see in my misery the possibility of rescuing me, curing and forgiving

me; the possibility of enlivening my soul to goodness once more – transforming my despairing cry into praise and thanksgiving and joy.

**My soul is waiting for the Lord.
I count on his word.
My soul is longing for the Lord
More than watchman for daybreak.
Let the watchman count on daybreak
and Israel on the Lord.**

My self-loathing drains me. Only the Lord can help me. He is the only one who is concerned enough to rescue me and heal me of my evil. My longing is tiring me, so that I feel like a watchman on night work or a nurse on night duty who waits, listens and checks for “daybreak.” Like the watchman, the coming of light instils new energy and hope. With the Lord, there is much more. I must trust Him with my life; I must let go to Him, let Him shape my future.

**Because with the Lord there is mercy
And fullness of redemption.
Israel indeed he will ransom
From all its iniquity.**

Jesus suffered the hell of Calvary to rescue sinners – all sinners – and lead them back to the fullness of new life. Here is the love of our Saviour who willingly went down to the depths of hell to free me. I should lift up my heart and rely on his goodness. My sins are an occasion for Christ’s forgiveness and grace.

God’s steady love explodes into creative mercy that ransoms our punishment, transforms our bitterness and gives voice to our joy and thanks. That is the hope of everyone, no matter how incurable you are, how bad your trouble, how long your prison sentence. “Because with the Lord there is fullness of redemption.” Literally a ransom that can cover all demands, secure anyone’s freedom and cure all ills.

THURSDAY

Verse O God, come to our aid.
Response O Lord, make haste to help us.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen. (Alleluia).

Hymn

A suitable hymn may be sung, or said.

Psalmody:

Antiphon: My body shall rest in safety.
Eastertide: *Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*

Psalm 15(16)

Preserve me, God, I take refuge in you.
I say to the Lord: "You are my God.
My happiness lies in you alone."

He has put into my heart a marvellous love
for the faithful ones who dwell in his land.
Those who choose other gods increase their sorrows.
Never will I offer their offerings of blood.
Never will I take their name upon my lips.

O Lord, it is you yourself who are my portion and cup;
it is you yourself who are my prize.
The lot marked out for me is my delight:
welcome indeed the heritage that falls to me!

I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel,
who even at night directs my heart.
I keep the Lord ever in my sight:
since he is at my right hand, I shall stand firm.

And so my heart rejoices, my soul is glad;
even my body shall rest in safety.
For you will not leave my soul among the dead,
nor let your beloved know decay.

You will show me the path of life,
the fullness of joy in your presence,
at your right hand happiness for ever.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Antiphon: My body shall rest in safety.
Eastertide: *Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*

Scripture Reading*1Thessalonians 5:23*

May the God who gives us peace make you completely his, and keep your whole being, spirit, soul and body, free from all fault, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Short Responsory*Outside Eastertide*

Response Into your hands, Lord I commend my spirit. R/
 Verse You have redeemed us, Lord God of truth. R/
 Verse Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. R/

Eastertide

Response Into your hands, Lord I commend my spirit, alleluia, alleluia. R/
 Verse You have redeemed us, Lord God of truth. R/
 Verse Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. R/

The Nunc Dimittis*Luke 2:29-32*

Antiphon: Save us, Lord, while we are awake; protect us while we sleep; that we may keep watch with Christ and rest with him in peace. (*Alleluia*)

At last, all powerful Master,
 you give leave to your servant
 to go in peace, according to your promise.

For my eyes have seen your salvation
 which you have prepared for all nations,
 the light to enlighten the Gentiles
 and give glory to Israel, your people.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Antiphon: Save us, Lord, while we are awake; protect us while we sleep; that we may keep watch with Christ and rest with him in peace. (*Alleluia*)

Concluding Prayer

Lord our God,
 restore us again by the repose of sleep
 after the fatigue of our daily work:
 so that, continually renewed by your help,
 we may serve you in body and soul.
 Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessing

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

Anthem to our Blessed Lady

The Office usually concludes with an anthem to our Lady, such as the Salve Regina or the Flos Carmeli.

REFLECTION

THE LORD IS MY PORTION – Psalm 15(16)

**Preserve me, God, I take refuge in you.
I say to the Lord: 'You are my God.
My happiness lies in you alone.'**

This prayer has the freshness and joy of someone who perhaps has been in trouble and suffered darkness. But he or she has now found relief and hope in God. This prayer is for me too. The world as featured on TV and newspapers promises everything but in my situation, the reality is worry and concern. In the darkness of my own loneliness, other people proclaim power, possession, pleasure. God alone can help me. God alone is absolute. You must be absolute for me. Nobody and nothing matters. Help me to see that my happiness lies in you alone.

**He has put into my heart a marvellous love
for the faithful ones who dwells in his land.
Those who choose other gods increase their sorrows.
Never will I offer their offerings of blood.
Never will I take their names upon my lips.**

I know that in God alone is my happiness: My whole wellbeing depends on Him. The world around me is false. The more people ignore God, the more sadness and tragedy there is in life. Other people have chosen the idols of the world. Lord, I will never offer what they want. Lord, give me the grace to choose you as my love, only you.

**Lord, it is you who are my potion and cup;
it is you yourself who are my prize.
The lot marked out for me is my delight:
welcome indeed the heritage that falls to me!**

With the evils that beset me and the troubles that surround me, I yet know in my heart that you have given your faithful that special portion. We belong to you. All my words praise your goodness and kindness, truly you are my refuge, my inheritance, my prize, my cup, my joy and delight, my happiness. It is clear that God wishes all peoples to come to Him. May we all discover the language of love.

**I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel,
who even at night directs my heart.
I keep the Lord ever in my sight:
since he is at my right hand, I shall stand firm.**

I thank you Lord for your kindness to me. Even in my spiritual weakness you guide my thoughts to look to you, to rely on you from my heart. The whole of my being, my feelings, my imagination and my faith strain to be truly yours, the way you want me to be - and no one will move me.

**And so my heart rejoices, my soul is glad;
even my body shall rest in safety.
For you will not leave my soul among the dead,**

nor let your beloved know decay.

Would that I had this blessing to ignore or overcome my plight and see God as the psalmist does, the Lord of the Universe. That faith enables him to depend on God, to accept that He will save us, no matter who we are or even how bad. That faith transforms all sorrows, curses, all pain because God assures me and everyone, who relies on Him that “I will never let you go.” That promise extends beyond death. “Never let me go.”

**You will show me the path of life,
the fullness of joy in your presence,
at your right hand happiness for ever.**

Life comes from the living God and being always true to Himself, He will not take back this gift in me, I must be full of your happiness and overcome the pains that remind me always of earth. Lord give me the grace to be faithful to you, to choose you and you alone.

FRIDAY

Verse O God, come to our aid.
Response O Lord, make haste to help us.
 Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
 as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
 world without end. Amen. (Alleluia).

Hymn

A suitable hymn may be sung, or said.

Psalmody:

Antiphon: Lord, my God, I call for help by day; I cry at night before you.
Eastertide: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Psalm 87(88)

Lord my God, I call for help;
I cry at night before you.
Let my prayer come into your presence.
O turn your ear to my cry.

For my soul is filled with evils;
my life is on the brink of the grave.
I am reckoned as one in the tomb:
I have reached the end of my strength,

like one alone among the dead;
like the slain lying in their graves;
like those you remember no more,
cut off, as they are, from your hand.

You have laid me in the depths of the tomb,
in places that are dark, in the depths.
Your anger weighs down upon me:
I am drowned beneath your waves.

You have taken away my friends
and made me hateful in their sight.
Imprisoned, I cannot escape;
my eyes are sunken with grief.

I call to you, Lord, all the day long;
to you I stretch out my hands.
Will you work your wonders for the dead?
Will the shades stand and praise you?

Will your love be told in the grave
or your faithfulness among the dead?
Will your wonders be known in the dark

or your justice in the land of oblivion?

As for me, Lord, I call to you for help:
in the morning my prayer comes before you.
Lord, why do you reject me?
Why do you hide your face.

Wretched, close to death from my youth,
I have borne your trials; I am numb.
Your fury has swept down upon me;
your terrors have utterly destroyed me.

They surround me all the day like a flood,
they assail me all together.
Friend and neighbour you have taken away:
my one companion is darkness.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Antiphon: Lord, my God, I call for help by day; I cry at night before you.
Eastertide: *Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*

Scripture Reading

Jeremiah 14:9

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

Short Responsory

Outside Eastertide

Response Into your hands, Lord I commend my spirit. R/
Verse You have redeemed us, Lord God of truth. R/
Verse Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. R/

Eastertide

Response Into your hands, Lord I commend my spirit, alleluia, alleluia. R/
Verse You have redeemed us, Lord God of truth. R/
Verse Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. R/

The Nunc Dimittis

Luke 2:29-32

Antiphon: Save us, Lord, while we are awake; protect us while we sleep; that we may keep watch with Christ and rest with him in peace. (*Alleluia*)

At last, all powerful Master,
you give leave to your servant
to go in peace, according to your promise.

For my eyes have seen your salvation
which you have prepared for all nations,
the light to enlighten the Gentiles
and give glory to Israel, your people.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Antiphon: Save us, Lord, while we are awake; protect us while we sleep; that we may keep watch with Christ and rest with him in peace. (*Alleluia*)

Concluding Prayer

Give us grace, almighty God,
so to unite ourselves in faith with your only Son,
who underwent death and lay buried in the tomb
that we may rise with again in newness of life with him,
who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

Blessing

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

Anthem to our Blessed Lady

The Office usually concludes with an anthem to our Lady, such as the Salve Regina or the Flos Carmeli.

REFLECTION

LONELINESS, SICKNESS AND DARKNESS – Psalm 88

**Lord, my God, I call for help by day;
I cry at night before you.
Let my prayer come into your presence.
O turn your ear to my cry.**

I am a person afflicted by AIDS. I am someone deserted by family and friends or one suffering a terminal disease. I am a prisoner whose life is fading into darkest nothingness or just one of the many anonymous others who exists in a land of oblivion. This prayer is for them. Let us join them in their fear or anger or terror; and pray in their stead.

**My soul is filled with evils;
my life is on the brink of the grave.
I am reckoned as one in the tomb;
I have reached the end of my strength.**

Despair is destroying me. Depression turns me in on myself all the time. I feel like Job when he cried: "My one companion is darkness – I shall never see happiness again. "This is terrible; but Job in the end was rewarded. For me life is a misery, a reality. The plight of the homeless, the poor or abused women – and yes, for the children who are unloved.

**You have taken away my friends
and made me hateful in their sight.
Imprisoned, I cannot escape;
my eyes are sunken with grief.**

Loneliness is a curse. No one is concerned about me. I feel really deserted and now forgotten. Have they annihilated my existence? My world is dark, full of black emptiness and pain; and nothing but fears. All my dreams turn into nightmares and my prayers die on my lips.

**I call to you, Lord, all the day long;
to you I stretch out my hands,
Will you work your wonders for the dead?
Will the shades stand and praise you**

○ God, where are you? I need you, need your help. Will you show some kindness to those who are lost and forgotten? Will you work some wonders for those lifeless in despair? Is there any justice in a land of oblivion? ○ God, where are you?

**As for me, Lord I call to you for help:
in the morning my prayer comes before me?
Lord, why do you reject me?
Why do you hide your face?**

Lord, I am beginning to feel that I am at fault. My own darkness prevents me from seeing you. Yet there is no one else who can help me. It is my faith and trust in you that makes me speak so boldly. But why do you hide your face? My God, My God why have you forsaken me? My hope is in you.

**Wretched, close to death from my youth,
I have borne your trials; I am numb.
Your fury has swept down upon me;
Your terrors have utterly destroyed me.**

The story of my life, Lord, is of suffering, sadness and pain. Since you are the living God, you know how helpless people like me are, in gang violence and in the haunts of drug affliction. Despite your awe, you are still my only hope.

**They surround me all the day like a flood,
they assail me all together.
Friend and neighbour you have taken away:
my one companion is darkness.**

My sufferings in mind and body engulf me like a flood. They absorb my very life. Lord, while in faith I make my complaints, it is because of your existence that I hope. My one companion is darkness – but “dark is not dark for you and night is as bright as day.” With confidence and hope, I ask you to shorten my sentence and restore my life.

SATURDAY & EVE OF SOLEMNITIES

(After Evening Prayer I)

Verse O God, come to our aid.
Response O Lord, make haste to help us.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen. (Alleluia).

Hymn

A suitable hymn may be sung, or said.

Psalmody:

Antiphon: Lord, have mercy and hear me.

Eastertide: *Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*

Psalm 4

When I call, answer me, O God of justice;
from anguish you released me, have mercy and hear me!

O men, how long will your hearts be closed,
will you love what is futile and seek what is false?

It is the Lord who grants favours to those whom he loves;
the Lord hears me whenever I call him.

Fear him; do not sin: ponder on your bed and be still.
Make justice your sacrifice and trust in the Lord.

‘What can bring us happiness?’ many say.
Let the light of your face shine on us, O Lord.

You have put into my heart a greater joy
than they have from abundance of corn and new wine.

I will lie down in peace and sleep comes at once
for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Antiphon: He will conceal you with his wings; you will not fear the terror of the night.

Eastertide: *Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*

Antiphon: Bless the Lord through the night.

Eastertide: *Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*

Psalm 133(134)

O come, bless the Lord,
all you who serve the Lord,

who stand in the house of the Lord,
in the courts of our God.

Lift up your hands to the holy place
and bless the Lord through the night.
May the Lord bless you from Sion,
he who made both heaven and earth.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Antiphon: Bless the Lord through the night.
Eastertide: *Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*

Scripture Reading

Deuteronomy 6:4-7

Hear, O Israel: the Lord your God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down and when you rise.

Short Responsory

Outside Eastertide

Response Into your hands, Lord I commend my spirit. R/
Verse You have redeemed us, Lord God of truth. R/
Verse Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. R/

Eastertide

Response Into your hands, Lord I commend my spirit, alleluia, alleluia. R/
Verse You have redeemed us, Lord God of truth. R/
Verse Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. R/

The Nunc Dimittis

Luke 2:29-32

Antiphon: Save us, Lord, while we are awake; protect us while we sleep; that we may keep watch with Christ and rest with him in peace. (*Alleluia*)

At last, all powerful Master,
you give leave to your servant
to go in peace, according to your promise.

For my eyes have seen your salvation
which you have prepared for all nations,
the light to enlighten the Gentiles
and give glory to Israel, your people.

Glory be to the Father . . .

Antiphon: Save us, Lord, while we are awake; protect us while we sleep; that we may keep watch with Christ and rest with him in peace. (*Alleluia*)

Concluding Prayer

Saturdays

Come to visit us, Lord, this night,
so that by your strength we may rise at daybreak
to rejoice in the resurrection of Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Solemnities not occurring on Sundays

Visit this house, we pray, you Lord:
drive far away from it all the snares of the enemy.
May your holy angels stay here and guard us in peace,
and let your blessing be always upon us.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessing

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

Anthem to our Blessed Lady

The Office usually concludes with an anthem to our Lady, such as the Salve Regina or the Flos Carmeli.

REFLECTION

SLEEP IN PEACE – Psalm 4

**When I call, answer me, O God of Justice.
From anguish you released me,
have mercy and hear me.**

My day is nearly over. I now lie down in peace and thankfulness. It has been a busy day and there have been at times anxiety and worry, times when I felt really down. Lord, I depend on you to help me recover. For my failings forgive me and have mercy. Before I have your blessing of sleep, help me to be at peace, at ease with you and my world.

**O men, how long will your hearts be closed?
Will you love what is futile and seek what is false?**

Are you reproving me, Lord, for the way I have behaved, always thinking of myself and my situation, and hardly a thought for you? Thinking out plans and possibilities. I now see the futility of this effort. Am I seeking what is false and futile? Lord, sleep is your gift, your blessing, your way of helping us to recover and get over such a day as I've had.

**It is the Lord who grants favours to those whom he loves.
The Lord hears me whenever I call him.**

Those who composed the Psalms lived in a desert land where at night the loneliness was matched by the fear of wild beasts. I have my own fears, the fear of facing another day, fear of failure in what I try, fear of not being able to face the strain of the coming days and months – and of my health. I cannot

survive except with the Lord's help. And I call and call and call him always. Lord, send me a peaceful rest, so that I can face the morrow with a better spirit.

**Fear him, do not sin, ponder on your bed and be still.
Make justice your sacrifice and trust in the Lord.**

My life is uncertain in so many ways: Time that seems endless yet passes; friends who are not really so; neighbours I can't trust; and my prospects look bad. Send me, Lord, the sleep that refreshes and raises my hope for I trust in you, Lord.

**"What can bring us happiness" many say.
Let the light of your face shine on us, O Lord.**

Too many people around us seek their happiness in dreams or drugs or demons: I mean living in a fantasy world or appeasing the pressures of social pains through drugs or suppressing the persecution of mind in other hazes. All bring about a new hell. Lord, give me courage to face myself. Make me strong in mind when all around shakes and crumbles and falls to the ground. May the light of your face, O Lord, enlighten me, raise my spirit and give me strength.

**You have put into my heart a greater joy,
than they have in abundance of corn and new wine.**

Despite the negative things that I complain about, there is the strength of Christ's presence and love in the dark hours of our human condition. Your joy, O Jesus, breathes a serenity that helps us to face with confidence the worst that lies ahead. Even resigned acceptance in sickness and the pain itself bring their own contentment. Your joy, O Lord, is my hope and strength. My happiness at heart exceeds the satisfaction of any feast of food and wine.

**I will lie down in peace and sleep comes at once.
For you alone, Lord, make me live without concern.
You watch my sleep and protect my soul.
In you, Lord, I can rest at ease and sleep.
Thank you for this blessing.**