



GOOD

FRIDAY

Dans

GAUCHARD BRUNO

INTRODUCTION

The ancient office of Compline, or Night Prayer, derives its name from a Latin word meaning 'completion' (completorium). It is above all a service of quietness and reflection before rest at the end of the day. It is most effective when the ending is indeed an ending, without additions, conversation or noise. If the service is in church, those present depart in silence.

The service is designed to be used easily by one person. If there is more than one person participating, either everyone present may join in with all the words, or the words may be divided up into different sections. If so, it is wise to work out before starting, who is doing what.

Consider how you have set up your space: check you are going to be free from interruptions. You may wish to light a candle, if it is safe to do so. Some may wish to play some music before the service and at the end. Take time to be quiet before you begin and read the service in an unhurried way. Similarly, when you are asked to pause and reflect, consider allowing yourself a good thirty minutes to do this.

The sections in *red italics* are rubrics: these explain what needs to happen at various points.

NIGHT PRAYER

The eternal God is your refuge,
and underneath are the everlasting arms. *Deuteronomy 33.27*

OPENING SENTENCES

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

Our help is in the name of the Lord
who made heaven and earth.

Pause and reflect on the day that is past and anything else that is on your mind at this moment.

Save us, O Lord, while waking,
and guard us while sleeping,
that awake we may watch with Christ
and asleep may rest in peace.

BIBLE READING

LUKE 22:39-46

³⁹ And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. ⁴⁰ And when he came to the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." ⁴¹ And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, ⁴² saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." ⁴³ And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. ⁴⁴ And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. ⁴⁵ And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, ⁴⁶ and he said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation."

**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.**

REFLECTION: A DAY THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

Today is a day that changed the world. The world might not have known it back then, in fact they almost certainly didn't, but they do now. On this day, in the most humiliating way possible, one man was beaten, flogged, mocked, and crucified; the consequences of which would be felt for the rest of time. In Jerusalem, God's son, Jesus Christ, the one who came to save the world (Jn 3:16-17), was executed.

IT ALL STARTED WITH A KISS

It all started with a kiss, a kiss from someone once considered a brother, a kiss that would set into motion the events of this dark day. Once marked with this kiss, the authorities arrested Jesus and his disciples scattered out of fear - no wonder Jesus spent his last hours praying for them. The authorities took Jesus to Annas first, a high priest, and the father-in-law of Caiaphas - the designated high priest for that year (Jn 18: 12-13). Jesus was then sent to Caiaphas and the rest of the council of the Sanhedrin who were seeking 'false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, but they found none' (Mk 14:55). When all their underhand and deceitful methods had failed the Sanhedrin were left with one option - to directly ask Jesus "Are you the Son of God then?" (Lk 22:70). Jesus' response of "you have said so" was all the Sanhedrin needed to send Jesus to Pilate to continue his journey towards the cross for the Jews could not put someone to death (Jn 18:21).

THE FALL OF THE DISCIPLES

Whilst Jesus is being questioned and put through show trials by the Jewish authorities his disciples were going through their own trials. Firstly, Peter, who under questioning much less intense than that experienced by Jesus, denies his association with Jesus three times. Peter highlights the weakness of the human heart compared to that of Jesus Christ. When given the opportunity to align with the views of the rest of the world and thereby escape retribution Peter denies three times whilst Christ stays true to the

path God has laid out before him. No wonder humanity could not save themselves from the consequences of sin; no doubt that Jesus was that Saviour.

Secondly, Judas who did not face a trial by any human, rather he faced a trial by his own conscience. Seeing he has condemned an innocent man and unable to remove his guilt by returning the blood money, Judas condemns himself and hangs himself. Even after three years with Jesus Judas could not understand the gift of grace and forgiveness that Christ brought to this world, the gift that would be fully revealed in a few hours time.

THE POWERLESSNESS OF PILATE

Jesus was delivered to Pilate who could find “no guilt in him” (Jn 19:4) but still condemned him to death purely ‘to satisfy the crowd’ (Mk 15:15). Pilate’s one real attempt to save Jesus came through the tradition of releasing a prisoner at the time of the Passover feast (Mk 15:6) but here the crowd that had once cried out “Hosanna!” now cried out “Crucify him!”. In an act that would foreshadow our own salvation, Barabbas, the guilty man, was set free and Jesus was condemned in his place.

A TRANSFORMATIVE DEATH

The rest, as they say, is history. Jesus Christ was taken out to Golgotha, a hill outside Jerusalem, and was crucified and died a criminal’s death. But there was hope. Jesus’ death was in fulfilment of a multitude of Old Testament prophecies, prophecies about God’s messiah, humanity’s saviour. It may not have seemed that way but everything was going according to God’s divine plan. Out of this darkness there would be light.

A glimmer of this light can be seen in two people. After Jesus’ death, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, two members of the Sanhedrin (and secret followers of Jesus), who would have been involved as in Jesus’ trial earlier that day (probably as silent voices) take it upon themselves to bury Jesus’ body. It is in these two people that we see a shred of hope, for if the death of Jesus can bring two members of the Sanhedrin out of the darkness they had

been hiding in and out into the open as supporters of Christ then the death of Jesus truly was transformative - although the magnitude of this transformation for all of mankind, the fact that this day had changed the world, would not be known for a few days...

PRAYERS

Merciful God,
we entrust to your unfailing and tender care this night
those who are ill or in pain,
knowing that whenever danger threatens
your everlasting arms are there to hold us safe.
Comfort and heal them,
and restore them to health and strength;
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 rest upon your eternal changelessness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Visit this place, O Lord, we pray,
and drive far from it the snares of the enemy;
may your holy angels dwell with us in peace,
and may your blessing be always upon us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father,
who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from Evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

THE CONCLUSION

The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil,
and keep us in eternal life.

Amen.

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.