



H O L Y

T U E S D A Y

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

MARK 11:27-33

²⁷ And they came again to Jerusalem. And as he was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to him, ²⁸ and they said to him, “By what authority are you doing these things, or who gave you this authority to do them?” ²⁹ Jesus said to them, “I will ask you one question; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. ³⁰ Was the baptism of John from heaven or from man? Answer me.” ³¹ And they discussed it with one another, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ ³² But shall we say, ‘From man’?”—they were afraid of the people, for they all held that John really was a prophet. ³³ So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.”

**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: WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE?

A PLACE OF CONFLICT

On Holy Tuesday, as with every day so far in Holy Week, Jesus made the journey from Bethany, a place of comfort and friendship (for that is where his good friend Lazarus lived with his sisters Mary and Martha) into Jerusalem, a place that Jesus knew was turning against him and would eventually lead to his death. On Monday, Jesus revealed his messianic authority when he challenged the corruption of the temple and overturned their tables; today, he faces people questioning this authority and trying to find any way to arrest him. His Father's house had become a place of conflict, a battleground over who ultimately had authority.

JEWISH AUTHORITY

Jesus had no sooner walked into the temple before he was confronted by the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders who asked "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?"

Jesus' response was one that turned the tables. Instead of being belittled and his authority brought into disrepute, Jesus brings into doubt the authority of the Jewish leaders by their inability to answer his simple question. Jesus brings their authority further into question when he pointedly tells the Parable of the Tenants alluding to the parallels between the behaviour of the chief priests and that of the tenants who reject their master. This exposes the hypocrisy within the Jewish leaders and their lack of authority and Christ's wisdom in his answer only affirms his authority further not even requiring to answer by what authority he does such things.

ROMAN AUTHORITY

With their lack of wisdom and authority thoroughly shaken by Jesus' response, the Jewish leaders call upon their allies, the Pharisees and the Herodians, in an attempt to undermine Jesus' authority. Taking a more subtle approach they try to set Jesus against the Roman authorities, they attempt to show that even if Jesus has greater authority than the Jewish leaders, he still has to submit to Rome.

Again though, Jesus surpasses expectation, he does not fall into their trap. When asked if it is 'lawful to pay taxes to Caesar' Jesus responds "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." Christ shows that his authority is not of the same kind as the politics that occur on Earth, he is not someone who has come to set himself up as a social revolutionary here to overthrow the Romans but as the one who has the authority to bring people back into a right relationship with God. The Jews failed again to undermine Christ's authority and in fact 'marvelled at him' (Mark 12:17) because of the wisdom he had shown.

CHRIST'S AUTHORITY

The questions keep coming at Jesus like a barrage from leaders all across the religious spectrum. The next up were the Sadducees, who asked about marriage and the resurrection. Jesus answers their riddle with ease and tells the Sadducees that they "know neither the scriptures nor the power of God" (Mark 12:24) for the Bible testifies to the power of the resurrection and how that life will not just be the same as the life we have on Earth.

Even after the Sadducees had been silenced by Jesus' wisdom and authority still more people were sent to question Jesus including that famous discussion over "which commandment is the most important of all" to which Jesus responds loving God and loving others (Mark 12:28-31). No matter who asks the questions no one can succeed in disputing Jesus' authority and the episode ends stating "After that no one dared to ask him anymore questions." (Mark 12:34).

Jesus Christ has authority over all things, he is God's messiah. In showing the wisdom that he has over the Jewish authorities Jesus is affirming the messianic vision of Isaiah 11:1-2.

There shall come forth a shoot from the
stump of Jesse, and a branch shall bear
fruit. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest

upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

Rather than destroying Jesus' messianic authority the Jews series of questions, traps, and riddles have only served to further affirm his authority and messianic identity. The question for us this Holy Tuesday is by whose authority do we live our lives? The message of the cross may seem foolish to some and they may try to undermine our faith and attempt to show that God has no authority here anymore. But if the story of Holy Tuesday tells us anything it is that Jesus has authority; his life, his teachings, his death and resurrection are not things that can be undermined by the authorities of this world. Christ should be the authority that we live our lives by.

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.