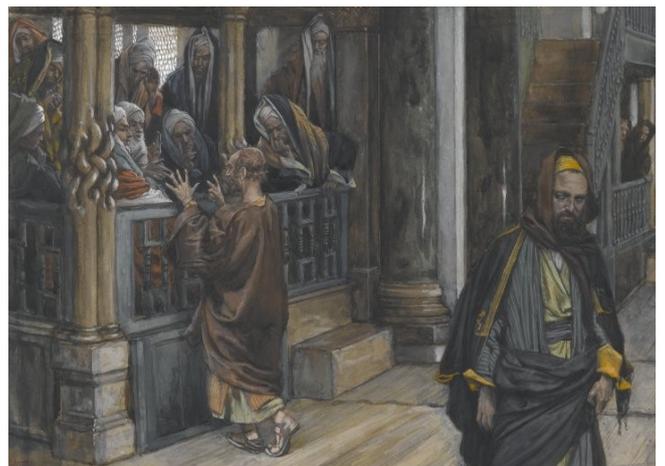
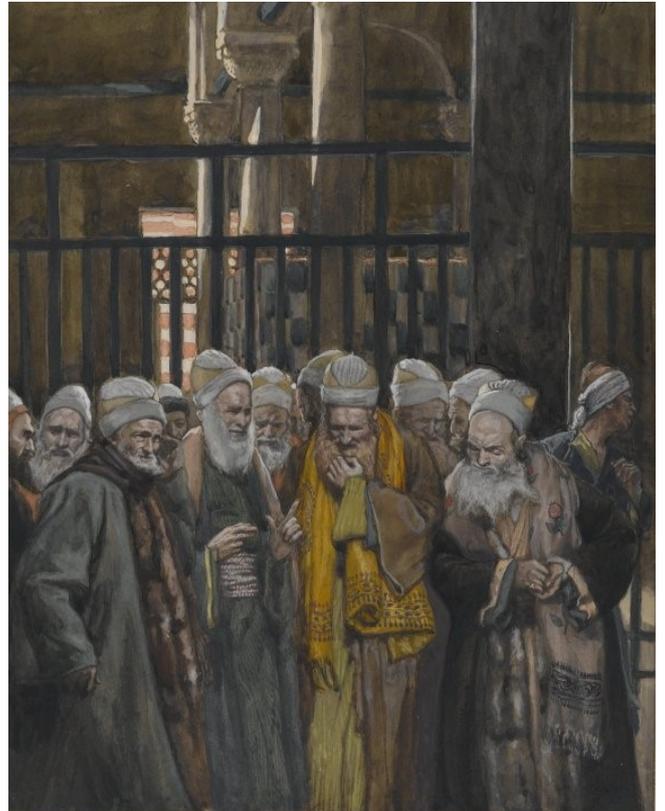


The Parish of
**STONY
STRATFORD**
with
CALVERTON

The Office of Readings & Morning Prayer
The Office of Evening Prayer

Wednesday in Holy Week
'Spy Wednesday'
31st March AD 2021



Can daily prayers change your life? Absolutely! You can develop a fuller relationship with God and live a better life through prayer. You have a better chance at finding fulfilment, from daily prayers than from the many distractions bombarding us these days!

Think of all the promises we hear on TV and elsewhere: you'll find happiness if you buy this car, this book, this exercise bike, or this pill (after checking with your doctor first on that last one)! Yet many times our souls feel as empty as our wallets or purses afterwards.

Developing a good prayer life can really change you for the better. Praying can become a most satisfying routine in many ways. It might not be an easy habit to start at first, but it's definitely one you won't want to break! Daily prayers can give you a sense of peace and purpose.

Prayer has often been called "the raising up of the mind and heart to God". We engage in a literally divine conversation with Him. You get a wonderful opportunity from prayer to strengthen and deepen your relationship with our Creator and with your fellow human beings by praying for their needs as well as your own.

"Those who have truly decided to serve the Lord God should practice the remembrance of God and uninterrupted prayer to Jesus Christ, mentally saying: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner." ' (St. Seraphim of Sarov)

THE SEAL

Through the prayers of our holy Fathers and Mothers,
Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us.

TRISAGION PRAYERS

O Heavenly King, the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth,
who are present everywhere, filling all things,
Treasury of Good and Giver of Life, come and dwell in us,
cleansing us of every stain, and save our souls, O Good One.

✠ Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal have mercy on us.
(three times)

✠ Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
Now and ever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

All-Holy Trinity, have mercy on us.

Lord forgive us our sins.

Master, pardon our transgressions.

Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for your name's sake.

Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison.

✠ Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
Now and ever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

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 Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, of the
Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and
to the ages of ages.) ✠ Amen.

Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison.

Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison.

✠ Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
Now and ever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

a godly and righteous life, blameless and peaceful, ever serving thee, that I may be accounted worthy at the last to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Be mindful, O Lord, of all those who have fallen asleep in the hope of resurrection unto life eternal, especially N., NN.; pardon all their transgressions both voluntary and involuntary, whether in word, or deed, or thought. Shelter them in a place of brightness, a place of verdure, a place of repose, whence all sickness, sorrow and sighing have fled away, and where the sight of thy countenance rejoiceth all thy Saints from all the ages. Grant them thy heavenly Kingdom, and a portion in thine ineffable and eternal blessings, and the enjoyment of thine unending Life.

Hear my prayer, O Lord, for thou art merciful and compassionate, and lovest mankind, and to thee are due all glory, honour, and worship: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

The watercolour paintings on the front and back covers of this Booklet are by James Tissot and depict the events of this Wednesday in Holy Week.

In order they are:

The Conspiracy of the Jewish Leaders

Judas goes to find the Jewish Leaders

Christ retreats to the Mountain at Night

All were painted between 1886-1894, and are very small in size. The maximum height of these paintings is just under 10" and the maximum width is just under 12" - some are much smaller.

James Tissot painted 350 Watercolour Paintings of the Life of Christ. For small paintings, the detail is remarkable.

the company of thy blessed Saints, may praise and glorify thee with thy Eternal Father and Life-giving Spirit. Amen.

Thanksgiving After Recovery from Sickness

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, Source of life and Fountain of all good things, I bless thy Holy Name, and offer to thee most hearty thanks for having delivered me from my sickness and restored me to health. Grant me thy continuing grace, I pray thee, that I may keep my good resolutions and correct the errors of my past life, and improve in virtue, and live a new life in dutiful fear of thee, doing thy will in all things, and devoting this new life which thou has given me to thy service: that thus living for thee, I may be found ready when it pleaseth thee to call me to thee, O heavenly Father, to whom with thine Only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and thine all-holy and Life-giving Spirit, is due all honor, praise, glory, and thanksgiving: now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

A Prayer for the Sick

O holy Father, heavenly Physician of our souls and bodies, who hast sent thine Only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ to heal all our ailments and deliver us from death: do thou visit and heal thy servant *N.*, granting *him/her* release from pain and restoration to health and vigour, that *he/she* may give thanks unto thee and bless thy holy Name, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

A Prayer for the Dead

Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend the souls of thy servants, *NN.*, and beseech thee to grant them rest in the place of thy rest, where all thy blessed Saints repose, and where the light of thy countenance shineth forever. And I beseech thee also to grant that our present lives may be godly, sober, and blameless, that we too may be made worthy to enter into thy heavenly Kingdom with those we love but see no longer: for thou art the Resurrection, and the Life, and the Repose of thy departed servants, O Christ our God, and unto thee we ascribe glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

A General Intercession

O Lord Jesus Christ our God, who in thy mercy and loving-kindness dost regard the prayers of all who call upon thee with their whole heart, incline thine ear and hear my prayer, now humbly offered unto thee:

Be mindful, O Lord, of thy One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church; confirm and strengthen it, increase it and keep it in peace, and preserve it unconquerable forever;

Be mindful, O Lord, of our Bishop *Jonathan*, and of every Bishop of the Church: of Priests and Deacons, the Religious, and Lay Ministers of thy Church, which thou has established to feed the flock of the Word: and by their prayers have mercy upon me and save me, a sinner.

Be mindful, O Lord, of all civil Authorities, of our Armed Forces, of this city in which we dwell, and of every city and land; grant us peaceful times, that we may lead a calm and tranquil life in all godliness and sanctity.

Be mindful, O Lord, of my parents, my brothers and sisters, my relatives and friends, and all who are near and dear to me, (*name those whom you wish to remember*), and grant them mercy, life, peace, health, salvation and visitation, and pardon and remission of sins; that they may evermore praise and glorify thy holy Name.

Be mindful, O Lord, of those who travel by land, and sea, and air; of the young and the old; orphans and widows; the sick and the suffering, the sorrowing and the afflicted, all captives, and the needy poor; upon them all send forth thy mercies, for thou art the Giver of all good things.

Be mindful, O Lord, of me, thy humble servant; grant me thy grace, that I may be diligent and faithful; that I may avoid evil company and influence, and resist all temptation; that I may lead

THE ANGELUS

Traditionally in the morning, at noon, and in the evening in memory of the Incarnation of God, and the faithful say the following prayers, except during Eastertide, when the Regina coeli is said.

V/. The Angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary,
R/. And she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee,
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord;
R. Be it unto me according to thy word.

Hail, Mary . . .

V. And the Word was made flesh,
R. And dwelt among us.

Hail, Mary . . .

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray:

We beseech thee, O Lord, to pour thy grace into our hearts; that as we have known the incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by his ✠ cross and passion we may be brought unto the glory of his resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Office of Readings

Introduction

✠ Lord, open our lips.
And we shall praise your name.

Invitatory Psalm

Psalm 95

*“Every day, as long as this ‘today’ lasts,
keep encouraging one another” (Heb 3:13).*

*Antiphon: Christ the Lord was tempted and suffered for us.
Come, let us adore him.*

Come, ring out our jóy to the Lórd; *
háil the Gód who sáves us.
Let us cóme before him, gíving thánks, *
with sóngs let us háil the Lórd.

A míghty Gód is the Lórd, *
a gréat king abóve all góds.
In his hánd are the dépths of the éarth; *
the héights of the móuntains are his.
To him belongs the séa, for he máde it *
and the drý land sháped by his hánds.

Come in; let us bów and bend lów; *
let us knéel before the Gód who máde us:
for hé is our Gód and wé †
the péople who belóng to his pásture, *
the flóck that is léd by his hánd.

O that todáy you would listen to his vóice! †

‘Hárden not your héarts as at Meribah, *
as on that dáy at Mássah in the désert
when your fáthers pút me to the tést; *
when they tried me, thóugh they saw my wórk.

For forty yéars I was wéaried of these péople †
and I sáid: “Their héarts are astráy, *
these péople do not knów my wáys.”
Thén I took an óath in my ánger: *
“Néver shall they énter my rést.”

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.

*Antiphon: Christ the Lord was tempted and suffered for us.
Come, let us adore him.*

Hymn

Go to dark Gethsemane,
ye that feel the tempter's power;
your Redeemer's conflict see,
watch with him one bitter hour;
turn not from his griefs away,
learn of Jesus Christ to pray.

Follow to the judgement hall;
view the Lord of life arraigned;
O the wormwood and gall!
O the pangs his souls sustained!
Shun not suffering, shame, or loss;
learn of him to bear the cross.

Calvary's mournful mountain climb;
there, adoring at his feet,
mark the miracle of time,
God's own sacrifice complete;
"It is finished!" hear him cry;
learn of Jesus Christ to die.

Psalm 39: 2-7 A prayer in sickness

*“Creation was unable to attain its purpose because of him
who kept it so in a state of hope” (Rom 8:20).*

*Antiphon: We groan inwardly and await the redemption of our
bodies.*

I sáid: ‘I will be wáitchful of my wáys *
for féar I should sín with my tóngue.
I will pút a cúrb on my líps *
when the wicked man stánds befóre me.’
I was dúmb, sílent and stíll. *
His prospérfy stírréd my gríef.

My héart was búrning wíthín me. *
At the thóught of it, the fire blazéd úp
and my tóngue búrst into spéech: *

which I have committed every day of my life, in thought, word and deed; in body and soul alike. I am heartily sorry that I have ever offended thee, and I sincerely repent; with tears I humbly pray thee, O Lord: of thy mercy forgive me all my past transgressions and absolve me from them. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy Grace, to amend my way of life and to sin no more; that I may walk in the way of the righteous and offer praise and glory to the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayer Before a Journey

O Lord Jesus Christ our God, the true and living way, be thou, O Master, my companion, guide and guardian during my journey; deliver and protect me from all danger, misfortune and temptation; that being so defended by Thy divine power, I may have a peaceful and successful journey and arrive safely at my destination. For in thee I put my trust and hope, and to thee, together with thy Eternal Father, and the All-holy Spirit, I ascribe all praise, honour and glory: now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

A Prayer in Time of Trouble

O God, our help and assistance, who art just and merciful, and who heareth the supplications of thy people; look down upon me, a miserable sinner, have mercy upon me, and deliver me from this trouble that besets me, for which, I know, I am deservedly suffering. I acknowledge and believe, O Lord, that all trials of this life are given by Thee for our chastisement, when we drift away from thee, and disobey thy commandments; deal not with me after my sins, but according to thy bountiful mercies, for I am the work of Thy hands, and thou knowest my weakness. Grant me, I beseech thee, thy divine helping grace, and endow me with patience and strength to endure my tribulations with complete submission to Thy Will. Thou knowest my misery and suffering and to Thee, my only hope and refuge, I flee for relief and comfort; trusting to thine infinite love and compassion that in due time, when thou knowest best, thou wilt deliver me from this trouble, and turn my distress into comfort, when I shall rejoice in thy mercy, and exalt and praise thy Holy Name, O Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Thanksgiving After Deliverance From Trouble

Almighty and merciful God, I most humbly and heartily thank thy divine majesty for thy loving kindness and tender mercies, that thou hast heard my humble prayer, and graciously vouchsafed to deliver me from my trouble and misery. Grant me, I beseech thee, thy helping grace, that I may obediently walk in thy holy commandments, and lead a sober, righteous and godly life, ever remembering thy mercies, and the blessings thou hast undeservedly bestowed upon me, that I may continually offer to thee the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, O Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

A Prayer of a Sick Person

O Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour, Physician of souls and bodies, who didst become man and suffer death on the Cross for our salvation, and through thy tender love and compassion didst heal all manner of sickness and affliction; do thou O Lord, visit me in my suffering, and grant me grace and strength to bear this sickness with which I am afflicted, with Christian patience and submission to thy will, trusting in thy loving kindness and tender mercy. Bless, I pray thee, the means used for my recovery, and those who administer them. I know O Lord, that I justly deserve any punishment thou mayest inflict upon me for I have so often offended thee and sinned against thee, in thought, word and deed. Therefore, I humbly pray thee, look upon my weakness, and deal not with me after my sins, but according to the multitude of thy mercies. Have compassion on me, and let mercy and justice meet; and deliver me from this sickness and suffering I am undergoing. Grant that my sickness may be the means of my true repentance and amendment of my life according to thy will, that I may spend the rest of my days in thy love and fear: that my soul, being helped by thy grace and sanctified by thy Holy Mysteries, may be prepared for its passage to the Eternal Life, and there, in

OCCASIONAL PRAYERS

Prayer on Entering the Church

I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear I will worship toward thy holy temple. Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before me, that with a clear mind I may glorify thee forever, One Divine Power worshipped in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayer on Leaving a Church

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

The "Jesus" Prayer

O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

A Prayer to Your Guardian Angel

O Angel of Christ, holy guardian and protector of my soul and body, forgive me everything wherein I have offended thee every day of my life, and protect me from all influence and temptation of the evil one. May I nevermore anger God by any sin. Pray for me to the Lord, that He may make me worthy of the grace of the All-holy Trinity, and of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, and of all the Saints. Amen.

Prayers at the Table

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
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, and the power, and the glory, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (Thrice)

Then

O Christ our God, bless the food and drink of thy servants, for thou art Holy always; now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Or

They that hunger shall eat and be satisfied, they that seek after the Lord shall praise him; their hearts shall live forever. Amen.

Or

Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts of which we are about to partake, for thou art blessed and glorified; now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

After Meals

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (Thrice)

Then

Blessed is God, who is merciful unto us and nourisheth us from His bounteous gifts by His Grace and compassion, always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Or

We thank thee, O Christ our God, that thou hast satisfied us with thy earthly gifts, deprive us not of thy Heavenly Kingdom; but as thou entered into the midst of thy disciples, O Saviour, and gave them peace, enter also among us and save us. Amen.

Or

We thank thee, O God, the Giver of all good things, for these gifts and all thy mercies, and we bless thy Holy Name, always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

A Prayer of Repentance

O Lord our God, good and merciful, I acknowledge all my sins

‘O Lórd, you have shówn me my énd,
how shórt is the léngth of my dáys. *’

Now I knów how fléeting is my life.

‘You have gíven me a shórt span of dáys; *
my life is as nóthing in your sight.

A mere bréath, the mán who stood so fírm, *
a mere shádw, the mán passing bý;

a mere bréath the ríches he hóards, *
not knówing whó will háve them.’

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.

Antiphon: We groan inwardly and await the redemption of our bodies.

Psalm 39: 8-14

Antiphon: Lord, hear my prayer: do not be deaf to my tears.

And nów, Lórd, whát is there to wáit for? *’

In yóu rests áll my hópe.

Set me frée from áll my síns, *’

do not máke me the táunt of the fóol.

I was sílent, not ópening my líps, *’

because thís was áll your dóing.

Take awáy your scóurge from mé. *’

I am crúshed by the blóws of your hánd.

You púnish mán’s síns and corréct him; *’

like the móth you devóur all he tréasures.

Mortal mán is no móre than a bréath; *’

O Lórd, héar my práyer.

O Lórd, turn your éar to my crý. *’

Dó not be déaf to my téars.

In your hóuse I am a pássing gúest, *’

a pílgim, like áll my fáthers.

Look awáy that I may bréathe agáin *’

befóre I depárt to be no móre.

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.

Antiphon: Lord, hear my prayer: do not be deaf to my tears.

Psalm-prayer

Through your Son you taught us, Father, not to be fearful of tomorrow but to commit our lives to your care. Do not withhold your Spirit from us but help us find a life of peace after these days of trouble.

Psalm 52
Against calumny

"Let the one who glories glory in the Lord" (1 Cor 1:31).

Antiphon: I trust in the goodness of God for ever and ever.

Why do you bóast of your wickedness, *
you chámpion of évil,
planning rúin áll day lóng, †
your tóngue like a shárpeneð rázor, *
you máster of decéit?

You love évil móre than góod, *
lies more than trúth.
You lóve the destrúctive wórd, *
you tóngue of decéit.

For this Gód will destróy you *
and remóve you for éver.
He will snáitch you from your tént and upróot you *
from the lánd of the living.

The júst shall sée and féar. *
They shall láugh and sáy:
'So this is the mán who refúsed *
to take Gód as his stróngthold,
but trústed in the gréatness of his wéalth *
and grew pówerful by his crímes.'

But Í am like a grówing olive trée *
in the hóuse of Gód.
I trúst in the góodness of Gód *
for éver and éver.

I will thank you for évermóre; *
for this is your dóing.
I will procláim that your náme is góod, *
in the présence of your friends.

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.

Antiphon: I trust in the goodness of God for ever and ever.

Psalm-prayer

Father, you cut down the unfruitful branch for burning
and prune the fertile to make it bear more fruit. Make us
grow like laden olive trees in your domain, firmly rooted in
the power and mercy of your Son, so that you may gather
from us fruit worthy of eternal life.

Ÿ. When I am lifted up from the earth,
Ŕ. I shall draw all things to myself.

and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

*Antiphon: The Master says: My time is near. It is at your house
that I am keeping the Passover with my disciples.*

Prayers and intercessions

Let us turn in prayer to the Saviour of all men. By dying he
destroyed our death and by rising he restored our life.

- **Sanctify the people you redeemed by your blood.**
Christ, our Redeemer, let us share in your passion by works
of penance,

let us attain the glory of your resurrection.
- **Sanctify the people you redeemed by your blood.**
Grant us the protection of your Mother, the comforter of
the afflicted,

help us to extend to others the consolation you have
given us.

- **Sanctify the people you redeemed by your blood.**
Unite the faithful to your passion in times of trouble and
distress
and let the power of your salvation shine forth in their
lives.

- **Sanctify the people you redeemed by your blood.**
You humbled yourself even to accepting death, death on a
cross;

grant to your servants obedience and patience.
- **Sanctify the people you redeemed by your blood.**
Share with the dead your bodily glory;
let us rejoice one day with them in the fellowship of
the saints.

- **Sanctify the people you redeemed by your blood.**

**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.**

Let us pray.

By your will, Lord God,
your Son underwent the agony of the cross
to break the power of Satan over man.

Give your people grace to rise again with Christ,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

The Lord bless us, and keep us from all evil, and bring us
to everlasting life.

Amen.

whether on earth or in heaven, *
making peace by the blood of his cross.

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.

Antiphon: In Christ we gain our freedom, the forgiveness of our
sins, through the shedding of his blood.

Short Reading

Ephesians 4:32-5:2

Be friends with one another, and kind, forgiving each other
as readily as God forgave you in Christ. Try to imitate God
as children of his that he loves and follow Christ loving as
he loved you, giving himself up in our place as a fragrant
offering and a sacrifice to God.

Short Responsory

We worship you, Christ, and we bless you.
- **We worship you, Christ, and we bless you.**
By your cross you have redeemed the world.
- **We worship you, Christ, and we bless you.**
Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit.
- **We worship you, Christ, and we bless you.**

Canticle

Magnificat

My soul rejoices in the Lord

Antiphon: The Master says: My time is near. It is at your house
that I am keeping the Passover with my disciples.

My soul glórífies the Lórd, *
my spirit rejóices in Gód, my Sáviour.
He looks on his sérvant in her lówliness; *
henceforth all áges will cáll me bléssed.

The Almíghty works márvels for me. *
Hóly his náme!
His mércy is from age to áge, *
on thóse who féar him.

He púts forth his árm in stréngth *
and scátters the proud-héarted.
He casts the míghty from their thrónes *
and ráises the lówly.

He fills the stárving with good things, *
sends the rich away émpy.

He protects Ísrael, his sérvant, *
remémbering his mércy,
the mércy prómised to our fáthers, *
to Ábraham and his sóns for éver.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son

First Reading

Hebrews 12: 14-29

The approach to the mountain of the Living God

Always be wanting peace with all people, and the holiness
without which no one can ever see the Lord. Be careful
that no one is deprived of the grace of God and that no *root*
of bitterness should begin to grow and make trouble; this can
poison a whole community. And be careful that there is no
immorality, or that any of you does not degrade religion
like Esau, who *sold his birthright* for one single meal. As you
know, when he wanted to obtain the blessing afterwards,
he was rejected and, though he pleaded for it with tears, he
was unable to elicit a change of heart.

What you have come to is nothing known to the senses:
not a *blazing fire*, or a *gloom* turning to *total darkness*, or a
storm; or trumpeting thunder or the great voice speaking
which made everyone that heard it beg that no more
should be said to them. They were appalled at the order
that was given: *If even an animal touches the mountain, it must*
be stoned. The whole scene was so terrible that Moses said: *I*
am afraid, and was trembling with fright. But what you have
come to is Mount Zion and the city of the living God, the
heavenly Jerusalem where the millions of angels have gath-
ered for the festival, with the whole Church in which every-
one is a 'first-born son' and a citizen of heaven. You have
come to God himself, the supreme Judge, and been placed
with spirits of the saints who have been made perfect; and
to Jesus, the mediator who brings a new covenant and a
blood for purification which pleads more insistently than
Abel's. Make sure that you never refuse to listen when he
speaks. The people who refused to listen to the warning
from a voice on earth could not escape their punishment,
and how shall we escape if we turn away from a voice that
warns us from heaven? That time his voice made the earth
shake, but now he has given us this promise: *I shall make the*
earth shake once more and not only the earth but *heaven as*
well. The words *once more* show that since the things being
shaken are created things, they are going to be changed, so
that the unshakeable things will be left. We have been giv-
en possession of an unshakeable kingdom. Let us therefore
hold on to the grace that we have been given and use it to
worship God in the way that he finds acceptable, in rever-
ence and fear. For our *God* is a *consuming fire*.

Responsory

Dt 5: 23-24; Heb 12: 22

℞. When you heard the voice coming out of the darkness,
while the mountain of Sinai was all on fire, you came
to Moses and said, * See, how the Lord our God has
shown us his glory and his greatness.

℣. Now you have come to mount Zion and the city of the
living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. * See, how the
Lord our God has shown us his glory and his great-
ness.

Second Reading

From a treatise on John by St Augustine
The perfection of love

Dear brethren, the Lord has marked out for us the fullness
of love that we ought to have for each other. He tells us: *No*

one has greater love than the man who lays down his life for his friends. In these words, the Lord tells us what the perfect love we should have for one another involves. John, the evangelist who recorded them, draws the conclusion in one of his letters: *As Christ laid down his life for us, so we too ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.* We should indeed love one another as he loved us, he who laid down his life for us.

This is surely what we read in the Proverbs of Solomon: *If you sit down to eat at the table of a ruler, observe carefully what is set before you; then stretch out your hand, knowing that you must provide the same kind of meal yourself.* What is this ruler's table if not the one at which we receive the body and blood of him who laid down his life for us? What does it mean to sit at this table if not to approach it with humility? What does it mean to observe carefully what is set before you if not to meditate devoutly on so great a gift? What does it mean to stretch out one's hand, knowing that one must provide the same kind of meal oneself, if not what I have just said: as Christ laid down his life for us, so we in our turn ought to lay down our lives for our brothers? This is what the apostle Paul said: *Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we might follow in his footsteps.*

This is what is meant by providing "the same kind of meal." This is what the blessed martyrs did with such burning love. If we are to give true meaning to our celebration of their memorials, to our approaching the Lord's table in the very banquet at which they were fed, we must, like them, provide "the same kind of meal."

At this table of the Lord we do not commemorate the martyrs in the same way as we commemorate others who rest in peace. We do not pray for the martyrs as we pray for those others, rather, they pray for us, that we may follow in his footsteps. They practised the perfect love of which the Lord said there could be none greater. They provided "the same kind of meal" as they had themselves received at the Lord's table.

This must not be understood as saying that we can be the Lord's equals by bearing witness to him to the extent of shedding our blood. He had the power of laying down his life; we by contrast cannot choose the length of our lives, and we die even if it is against our will. He, by dying, destroyed death in himself; we are freed from death only in his death. His body did not see corruption; our body will see corruption and only then be clothed through him in incorruption at the end of the world. He needed no help from us in saving us; without him we can do nothing. He gave himself to us as the vine to the branches; apart from him we cannot have life.

Finally, even if brothers die for brothers, yet no martyr by shedding his blood brings forgiveness for the sins of his brothers, as Christ brought forgiveness to us. In this he gave us, not an example to imitate but a reason for rejoicing. Inasmuch, then, as they shed their blood for their brothers, the martyrs provided "the same kind of meal" as they had received at the Lord's table. Let us then love one another as Christ also loved us and gave himself up for us.

Responsory

℞. God's love for us was revealed when he sent into the world his only Son so that we could have life through

Let the peoples praise you, O Gód; *
let all the peoples praise you.

The éarth has yielded its fruit *
for Gód, our Gód, has blessed us.
May Gód still give us his blessing *
till the ends of the éarth revére him.

Let the peoples praise you, O Gód; *
let all the peoples praise you.

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.

Antiphon: He bore the sins of many and interceded for sinners.

Psalm-prayer

Be gracious and bless us, Lord, and let your face shed its light on us, so that we can make you known with All peoples praise you, Father, because through your kindly power the earth has brought forth its fruit, the tree of the cross. We ask that this cross unite all peoples in its embrace and feed them with its fruit, everlasting life.

Canticle

(Colossians 1)

**Christ, firstborn of all creatures
and firstborn from the dead**

Antiphon: In Christ we gain our freedom, the forgiveness of our sins, through the shedding of his blood.

Let us give thanks to the Father, †
who has qualified us to share *
in the inheritance of the saints in light.

He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness *
and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,
in whom we have redemption, *
the forgiveness of sins.

He is the image of the invisible God, *
the firstborn of all creation,
for in him all things were created, in heaven and on
earth, *
visible and invisible.

All things were created *
through him and for him.
He is before all things, *
and in him all things hold together.

He is the head of the body, the Church; *
he is the beginning,
the firstborn from the dead, *
that in everything he might be pre-eminent.

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, *
and through him to reconcile to himself all things,

In God alóne be at rést, my sóul; *
for my hópe comes from him.
He alóne is my róck, my stróngthold, *
my fórtress: I stand firm.

In Gód is my sáfety and glóry, *
the róck of my stréngth.
Take réfuge in Gód, all you péople. *
Trúst him at áll times.
Póur out your héarts befóre him *
for Gód is our réfuge.

Cómmon folk are ónly a bréath, *
gréat men an illúsiún.
Pláced in the scáles, they rise; *
they weigh léss than a bréath.

Dó not put your trúst in oppréssiún *
nor vain hópes on plúnder.
Dó not set your héart on richés *
even whén they incréase.

For Gód has sáid ónly óne thing: *
ónly twó do I knów:
that to Gód alóne belongs pówer *
and to yóu, Lord, lóve;
and that yóu repáy each mán *
accórding to his déeds.

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.

Antiphon: The wicked men said: 'Let us oppress the just man,
since his ways are contrary to ours.'

Psalm-prayer

Lord God, you reward each one according to his works.
Hear us as we pour out our hearts to you, seeking your
grace and secure protection. We look to you for our stable
hope in a constantly changing world.

Psalm 67

All peoples, praise the Lord

*"Let it be known to you that this salvation from God
has been sent to all peoples" (Acts 28:28).*

Antiphon: He bore the sins of many and interceded for sinners.

O Gód, be grácious and bléss us *
and let your fáce shed its líght upón us.
So will your wáys be knówn upon éarth *
and all nátiún learn your sáving hélp.

Let the péoples práise you, O Gód; *
let áll the péoples práise you.

Let the nátiún be glád and exúlt *
for you rúle the wórld with jústice.
With fáirness you rúle the péoples, *
you gúide the nátiún on éarth.

him.* Since God loved us so much, we too should love
one another.

Ÿ. God first loved us and sent his Son to be the sacrifice
that takes our sins away.* Since God loved us so much,
we too should love one another.

*When Morning Prayer immediately follows the Office of Readings,
this recitation continues with the Psalms*

Let us pray.

By your will, Lord God,
your Son underwent the agony of the cross
to break the power of Satan over man.
Give your people grace to rise again with Christ,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spir-
it,
God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Let us praise the Lord.
– Thanks be to God.

Morning Prayer (Lauds)

Introduction

✠ O God, come to our aid.
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.

Hymn

My God! my God! and can it be
That I should sin so lightly now,
And think no more of evil thoughts
Than of the wind that waves the bough?

I walk the earth with lightsome step,
Smile at the sunshine, breathe the air,
Do my own will, not ever heed
Gethsemane and Thy long prayer.

Shall it be always thus, O Lord?
Wilt Thou not work this hour in me
The grace of Thy Passion merited,
Hatred of self, and love of Thee!

Ever when tempted, make me see,
Beneath the olives' moon pierced shade,
My God, alone, outstretched, and bruised,
And bleeding, on the earth He made;

And make me feel it was my sin,
As though no other sins there were,
That was to Him who bears the world
A load that He could scarcely bear.

L.M.

Psalm 77
Remembering the works of the Lord

*"We are in difficulties on every side,
but never consumed" (2 Cor 4:8).*

Antiphon: In the day of my distress I sought the Lord with outstretched arms.

I cry aloud to Gód, *
cry aloud to Gód that he may hear me.

In the day of my distress I sought the Lórd. †
My hands were raised at night without ceasing; *
my soul refused to be consoled.

I remembered my Gód and I gróaned. *
I pondered and my spirit fainted.

You withheld sleep from my eyes. *
I was troubled, I could not speak.
I thought of the days of long ago *
and remembered the years long past.
At night I mused within my heart. *
I pondered and my spirit questioned.

'Will the Lórd reject us for ever? *
Will he show us his favour no more?
Has his love vanished for ever? *
Has his promise come to an end?
Does Gód forget his mercy *
or in anger withhold his compassion?'

I said: 'This is what causes my grief; *
that the way of the Most High has changed.'
I remember the deeds of the Lórd, *
I remember your wonders of old,
I muse on all your works *
and ponder your mighty deeds.

Your ways, O Gód, are holy. *
What god is great as our Gód?
You are the Gód who works wonders. *
You showed your power among the peoples.
Your strong arm redeemed your people, *
the sons of Jacob and Joseph.

The waters saw you, O Gód, *
the waters saw you and trembled;
the depths were moved with terror. *
The clouds poured down rain,
the skies sent forth their voice; *
your arrows flashed to and fro.

Your thunder rolled round the sky, *
your flashes lighted up the world.
The earth was moved and trembled *
when your way led through the sea,
your path through the mighty waters *
and no one saw your footprints.

You guided your people like a flock *
by the hand of Móses and Áaron.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son

Vespers (Evening Prayer)

Introduction

✠ O God, come to our aid.
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.

Hymn

In the cross of Christ I glory,
towering o'er the wrecks of time;
all the light of sacred story
gathers round its head sublime.

When the woes of life o'ertake me,
hopes deceive, and fears annoy,
never shall the cross forsake me.
Lo! it glows with peace and joy.

When the sun of bliss is beaming
light and love upon my way,
from the cross the radiance streaming
adds more lustre to the day.

Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,
by the cross are sanctified;
peace is there that knows no measure,
joys that through all time abide.

Wychbold

Psalm 62 Peace in God

*"May the God of hope fill you with all peace
as you believe in him" (Rom 15:13).*

Antiphon: The wicked men said: 'Let us oppress the just man,
since his ways are contrary to ours.'

In God alone is my soul at rest; *
my help comes from him.
He alone is my rock, my stronghold, *
my fortress: I stand firm.

How long will you all attack one man *
to break him down,
as though he were a tottering wall, *
or a tumbling fence?

Their plan is only to destroy: *
they take pleasure in lies.
With their mouth they utter blessing *
but in their heart they curse.

To make known to his people their salvation *
through forgiveness of all their sins,
the loving-kindness of the heart of our God *
who visits us like the dawn from on high.

He will give light to those in darkness, †
those who dwell in the shadow of death, *
and guide us into the way of peace.

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.

Antiphon: May the blood of Christ, who offered himself as the perfect sacrifice to God through the Holy Spirit, purify our inner self from dead actions so that we may serve the living God.

Prayers and intercessions

Let us pray earnestly to Christ our Saviour, who redeemed us by his death and resurrection.

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

You went up to Jerusalem to endure the passion and enter into glory;

lead your Church into the paschal feast of eternal life.

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

Your heart was pierced with a lance;

heal the wounds of our human weakness.

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

You made your cross the tree of life;

share your victory with all the baptized.

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

You gave salvation to the repentant thief;

pardon all our sins.

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

**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.

Let us pray.

By your will, Lord God,

your Son underwent the agony of the cross
to break the power of Satan over man.

Give your people grace to rise again with Christ,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
it,

God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The Lord bless us, and keep us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

Antiphon: In the day of my distress I sought the Lord with outstretched arms.

Psalm-prayer

Father, you established your ancient covenant by signs and wonders, but more wondrously you confirmed the new one through the sacrifice of your Son. Guide your Church through the pathways of life, that we may be led to the land of promise and celebrate your name with lasting praise.

Canticle

1 Samuel 2

The song of Hannah, mother of Samuel

"He put down the mighty from their seats and exalted the lowly; he filled the hungry with good things" (Lk 1: 52-53).

Antiphon: If we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also come to life with him.

My heart exults in the Lord, *

I find my strength in my God;

my mouth laughs at my enemies *

as I rejoice in your saving help.

There is none like the Lord, †

there is none besides you. *

There is no Rock like our God.

Bring your haughty words to an end, *

let no boasts fall from your lips,

for the Lord is a God who knows all. *

It is he who weighs men's deeds.

The bows of the mighty are broken, *

but the weak are clothed with strength.

Those with plenty must labour for bread, *

but the hungry need work no more.

The childless wife has children now *

but the fruitful wife bears no more.

It is the Lord who gives life and death, *

he brings men to the grave and back;

it is the Lord who gives poverty and riches. *

He brings men low and raises them on high.

He lifts up the lowly from the dust, *

from the ash heap he raises the poor

to set him in the company of princes, *

to give him a glorious throne.

For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, *

on them he has set the world.

He guards the steps of his faithful, *

but the wicked perish in darkness,

for no man's power gives him victory. *

The enemies of the Lord shall be broken.

The Most High will thunder in the heavens, *
the Lord will judge the ends of the earth.

He will give power to his king *
and exalt the might of his anointed.

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.

Antiphon: If we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall
also come to life with him.

Psalm 97

The glory of God in his judgements

“This psalm tells of the salvation of the world
and of the faith all peoples would have in Christ” (St Athanasius).

Antiphon: God has made Jesus Christ our wisdom and our vir-
tue, our holiness and our freedom.

The Lord is king, let éarth rejóice, *
let áll the cóastlands be glád.
Clóud and dárkness are his ráiment; *
his thróne, jústice and right.

A fire prepáres his páth; *
it búrns up his fóes on every side.
His líghtnings líght up the wórld, *
the éarth trémbles at the síght.

The móuntains mélt like wáx *
before the Lórd of áll the éarth.
The skíes procláim his jústice; *
all péoples sée his glóry.

Let thóse who serve ídols be ashámed, †
those who bóast of their wórtless góds. *
All you spírits, wórship him.

Síon héars and is glád; †
the péople of Júdah rejóice *
becáuse of your júdgements, O Lórd.

For yóu indéed are the Lórd †
most high above áll the éarth, *
exálted far abóve all spírits.

The Lórd loves thóse who hate évil; †
he gúards the sóuls of his sáints; *
he séts them frée from the wícked.

Líght shines fóρθ for the júst *
and jóy for the úpright of héart.
Rejóice, you júst, in the Lórd; *
give glóry to his hóly náme.

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.

Antiphon: God has made Jesus Christ our wisdom and our vir-
tue, our holiness and our freedom.

Psalm-prayer

Father, you clothe the sky with light and the depths of the
ocean with darkness. Among the sons of men you work
wonders, and rain terror upon the enemy. Look upon your
servants. Do not try us by fire but bring us rejoicing to the
shelter of your home.

Short Reading

Isaiah 50: 5-7

The Lord has opened my ear. For my part, I made no re-
sistance, neither did I turn away. I offered my back to those
who struck me, my cheeks to those who tore at my beard; I
did not cover my face against insult and spittle. The Lord
comes to my help, so that I am untouched by the insults.
So, too, I set my face like flint; I know I shall not be
shamed.

Short Responsory

You have redeemed us, Lord, by your blood.
- **You have redeemed us, Lord, by your blood.**
From every tribe and tongue and people and nation.
- **You have redeemed us, Lord, by your blood.**
Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit.
- **You have redeemed us, Lord, by your blood.**

Canticle

Benedictus

The Messiah and the one who was sent before him

Antiphon: May the blood of Christ, who offered himself as the
perfect sacrifice to God through the Holy Spirit, purify our
inner self from dead actions so that we may serve the living
God.

Blesséd be the Lórd, the Gód of Ísrael! *
He has vísited his péople and redéemed them.

He has raised úp for ús a mighty sáviour *
in the hóuse of Dávid his sérvant,
as he prómised by the líps of holy mén, *
thóse who were his próphets from of óld.

A sáviour who would frée us from our fóes, *
from the hánds of áll who háte us.
So his lóve for our fáthers is fulfilled *
and his hóly covenant remébered.

He swóre to Ábraham our fáther to gránt us, *
that frée from féar, and sáved from the hánds of our
fóes,
we míght sérve him in hóliness and jústice *
all the dáys of our life in his présence.

As for yóu, little child, *
you shall be cálléd a próphét of Gód, the Most High.
You shall go ahéad of the Lórd *
to prépare his wáys befóre him,