

The Evening Practice

Examen and Compline for the Householder



*“Be joyful, keep the faith, and do the little things
that you have heard and seen me do.”*

— St. David of Wales (c. 500–589, feast day March 1)

Prepared May 2026 by Temple of the Exalted Lantern

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This booklet contains two offices for evening use.

The Examen (*ex-AH-men*) is an active practice of review and release, drawing on the structure of Ignatius of Loyola and the practitioner tradition. It is the work of honest attention — examining the day before setting it down. Gordon White, drawing on Doreen Virtue, said of it in the RSPM Prayer Course: *“from a health perspective, if you’re going to take just one thing from this course, let it be the examen.”* That observation is the seed from which this booklet grew.

Compline is the ancient night office of the Benedictine tradition, the prayer said at the threshold of sleep since the Rule of Saint Benedict in the sixth century. It is not work but commendation — the placing of the self into hands larger than one’s own.

The two offices are intended to be used together in sequence. The Examen prepares the ground. Compline completes the day. After the final blessing of Compline, silence.

Psalms are given in the Coverdale translation (from the 1928 American Book of Common Prayer). Prayers and canticles are given in English.

Version 1.3. Typeset in XeLaTeX with TeX Gyre Pagella (body) and Symbola (liturgical marks).



*Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.
Thou hast redeemed us, O Lord, thou God of truth.*

THE EVENING EXAMEN¹

Let my prayer be set forth in thy sight as the incense: and let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice.

— Psalm 141:2



Find a quiet place. Sit comfortably. Take three slow breaths, out-breath longer than the in, and allow the day's noise to begin to settle.



REPLAY

Walk through the day honestly, as an observer rather than a judge. Begin at waking and move forward. Notice the texture of each significant encounter or moment. Where was energy high? Where did it drop? Where did you avoid something? Where were you more present than usual, and where less?

- *Where did I feel consolation — energy, rightness, alignment with what I care about?*
- *Where did I feel desolation — flatness, avoidance, acting against my own values?*
- *Was there a moment today when I sensed something larger than ordinary experience — a synchronicity, an unexpected clarity, a presence in a place or encounter?*

¹The practice of the daily Examen originates with St. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises* (1548), Second Week, “The General Examen.” See also *RSPM Prayer Course*, Day 3, Video 13: “The Examen.”



REJOICE

Begin with gratitude. Name what was genuinely good today — not forced, not general, but specific. Where was there beauty, connection, unexpected grace? Where did the field feel alive?

- *What was given to me today that I did not earn or arrange?*
- *Where did I feel most alive, most present, most genuinely myself?*
- *Who or what was I glad to encounter?*

Sit with what surfaces. Do not rush past it into the next section. Gratitude is the foundation. Without it the review becomes mere inventory.



REPENT

The word sin carries a wider meaning than moral failure.² Think of it as accumulated weight — energy accrued from being out of right relation, whether through choice, circumstance, or simply the friction of living. Not all of it implies culpability. All of it needs to be cleared. The shamanic tradition frames this as energetic hygiene: naming what has gathered so it can be released. The inversion of sin is right relation. Look for where that broke down today.

- *Where did I act against my own values today — in word, action, or deliberate omission?*

²Gordon White, RSPM Prayer Course, Day 3: “The Jesus Prayer,” Track 11 (0:45). The reframe of *sin* as accumulated energetic weight rather than moral transgression is drawn from this lesson.

- *Where did I cause harm, however small, that I was aware of at the time?*
- *Where did I fail to act when action was called for?*

Name what needs naming. Then release it.



REBOOT

Brief intention for the night and the following day. Not planning — the mind wants to plan, and this is not the time for it. Intention: what do you carry forward? What do you release to the night's interior work? What do you want God to address while you sleep?

- *What from today needs to be carried forward into tomorrow?*
- *What is unresolved and can be offered to the night — trusted to a deeper intelligence to process while the waking mind rests?*
- *Is there anyone I should contact, any action I should take tomorrow, arising from what I examined tonight?*

Write down any specific actions that arose. The mind releases more readily what has been committed to writing.



RELEASE

The threshold gesture. Having done the work of honest examination, now release the day's content. This is not suppression — you have examined it. This is genuine release: the day is done, its contents entrusted to what holds them better than you can.

COMPLINE

The Night Office of the Benedictine Tradition

The office opens with the blessing, the versicle, and the 1 Peter lesson, then moves directly into the hymn and psalms. After the final Amen of the Salve Regina, observe silence until morning.



OPENING

Brethren, be sober and watch: for your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour: resist him, steadfast in the faith.

— 1 Peter 5:8–9

Thanks be to God.

May the Lord Almighty grant us a quiet night and a perfect end.

✠ Our help is in the Name of the Lord.

℟ The maker of heaven and earth.



THE CONFITEOR

The traditional confession of Compline. If the Examen has been

prayed, this may be said briefly or omitted — the Kyrie will carry what was named there.

I confess to Almighty God, to blessed Mary ever Virgin, to blessed Michael the Archangel, to blessed John the Baptist, to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, to all the Saints, and to thee, Father, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed:

through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault.

Therefore I beseech blessed Mary ever Virgin, blessed Michael the Archangel, blessed John the Baptist, the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, all the Saints, and thee, Father, to pray to the Lord our God for me.

May Almighty God have mercy upon me, forgive me my sins, and bring me to everlasting life. Amen.

May the almighty and merciful Lord grant me pardon, absolution, and remission of all my sins. Amen.



PSALM 4

When I called upon him, God heard me, even the
God of my righteousness: thou hast set me at lib-
erty when I was in trouble; have mercy upon me,
and hearken unto my prayer.

O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory
into shame: how long will ye love vanity, and seek
after leasing?

Know ye that the Lord hath chosen to himself the
man that is godly: the Lord will hear me when I
call upon him.

Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your
own heart upon your bed, and be still.

Offer the sacrifices of righteousness: and put your
trust in the Lord. There be many that say: Who will
shew us any good?

Lord, lift thou up the light
of thy countenance upon us.
Thou hast put gladness in my heart.

More than in the time that their corn and wine and oil increased.

I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.



PSALM 31:1-5

Verses 1-5 only. Appointed at Compline in the Anglican tradition, including St. Dunstan's. Verse 5 is the scriptural source of the Responsory that follows the psalms.

In thee, O Lord, have I put my trust; let me never be put to confusion: deliver me in thy righteousness.

Bow down thine ear to me: make haste to deliver me; and be thou my strong rock, and house of defence: that thou mayest save me.

For thou art my strong rock, and my castle: be thou also my guide, and lead me for thy Name's sake.

Draw me out of the net, that they have laid privily for me: for thou art my strength.

Into thy hand I commend my spirit: for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth.



PSALM 91

This psalm is the primary protection psalm of the Western tradition, prayed at Compline since the sixth century.

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High: shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler: and from the noisome pestilence.

He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night.

Nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand: but it shall not come nigh thee.

Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.

Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation.

There shall no evil befall thee: neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

For he shall give his angels charge over thee: to keep thee in all thy ways.

They shall bear thee up in their hands: lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.

He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

With long life will I satisfy him: and shew him my

salvation.



PSALM 134

Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord: which by night stand in the house of the Lord.

Lift up your hands in the sanctuary: and bless the Lord.

The Lord that made heaven and earth: bless thee out of Zion.



HYMN: TE LUCIS ANTE TERMINUM

The ancient Compline hymn, attributed to St. Ambrose, 4th century. In the Sarum and English pre-Reformation tradition, sung after the psalms and before the Little Chapter.

To thee before the close of day,
Creator of the world, we pray
That with thy wonted favour thou
Wouldst be our guard and keeper now.

From all ill dreams defend our eyes,
From nightly fears and fantasies;
Tread under foot our ghostly foe,
That no pollution we may know.

O Father, that we ask be done,
Through Jesus Christ thine only Son;
Who, with the Holy Ghost and thee,
Doth live and reign eternally. Amen.



THE LITTLE CHAPTER

Thou art in the midst of us, O Lord, and thy name
is called upon us: forsake us not, O Lord our God.

— Jeremiah 14:9

Thanks be to God.



RESPONSORY

Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

Thou hast redeemed us, O Lord, thou God of truth.

I commend my spirit.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

Keep us, O Lord, as the apple of thine eye.

Hide us under the shadow of thy wings.



THE NUNC DIMITTIS

The Song of Simeon — Luke 2:29-32

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

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.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the

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

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



KYRIE

Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us.

THE LORD'S PRAYER³

Said silently, concluding aloud: "But deliver us from evil. 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,

³Rule of Saint Benedict, ch. 13 directs the Pater Noster be said *in secreto* (silently) at all hours except Lauds and Vespers; only the concluding phrase *sed libera nos a malo* is spoken aloud. The Roman and pre-Tridentine rites follow the same custom. The Anglican tradition (BCP, St. Dunstan's) recites the prayer aloud throughout. This booklet follows the Benedictine practice.

as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation:
but deliver us from evil.
Amen.

VERSICLES

℣ O Lord, hear our prayer.
℞ And let our cry come unto thee.

THE COLLECT

Visit, we beseech thee O Lord, this habitation, and drive far from it all the snares of the enemy: let thy holy Angels dwell herein to preserve us in peace; and may thy blessing be upon us evermore: through our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son, who liveth and reigneth with thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen.



THE BLESSING

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



Marcantonio Raimondi after Albrecht Dürer, The Presentation of Jesus to Simeon in the Temple, from The Life of the Virgin, c. 1500–34. Engraving. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Public domain (CCo).

SALVE REGINA

Antiphon of Our Lady

The Salve Regina has been sung at the close of Compline since the eleventh century. In the Benedictine tradition it is followed by the Great Silence, which continues until after Lauds the following morning. Say it slowly. After the Amen, silence.

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy,
our life, our sweetness, and our hope.
To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve.
To thee do we send up our sighs,
mourning and weeping in this vale of tears.
Turn then, most gracious advocate,
thine eyes of mercy toward us;
and after this our exile
show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.



THE ANGELUS

Optional — said after the Salve Regina

The Angelus commemorates the Incarnation — the central event of Western sacred history. Said three times daily at the Angelus bell in the monastic tradition. Its structure is antiphonal, with the Ave Maria as the operative repetition. The versicles and response conclude it.

The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.

And she conceived of 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.

Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

Be it done unto me according to thy word.

Hail Mary...

And the Word was made flesh.

And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary...

✠ Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

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

Pour forth, we beseech thee O Lord, thy grace into our hearts; that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ thy Son was made known by the message of an angel, may by his Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of his Resurrection.

Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.



*After the Amen, observe silence.
The Great Silence continues until morning.*



Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.



*Albrecht Dürer, The Madonna on the Crescent,
Frontispiece to The Life of the Virgin, c. 1511.
Woodcut. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Public domain (CCO).*



In memoriam

Gordon White

1981 – 2026

He had his final moments in his beloved Cusco, Peru, mid-research-trip, doing the work he devoted his life to.

The river flows on — what is yours to do?

*“All shall be well, and all shall be well,
and all manner of thing shall be well.”*

— *Julian of Norwich, Revelations of Divine Love, c. 1393*

Sources & Inspirations

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Images

William Blake (1757–1827). *The Ancient of Days; Frontispiece (Plate 1)*, from *Europe a Prophecy* (proof impression), 1794. Color-printed relief and white-line etching. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection. Public domain (CC0). *Cover*.

Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528). *Saint Anthony Reading*, 1519. Engraving. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Public domain (CC0).

G. Altzenbach. *Memento Mori*, 17th century. Wellcome Collection. Public domain. *Examen—Compline threshold*.

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