

LITTLE OFFICE of the BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

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Illustrated



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SUNDAY

Morning Prayer

God, come to my assistance.

— Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:

as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever.
Amen.

HYMN

O Mary, of all women,
You are the chosen one,
Who, ancient prophets promised,
Would bear God's only Son;
All Hebrew generations
Prepared the way to thee,
That in your womb the God-man
Might come to set man free.

O Mary, you embody
All God taught to our race,
For you are first and foremost
In fullness of his grace;
We praise this wondrous honor
That you gave birth to him
Who from you took his manhood
And saved us from our sin.

Melody: *Au fort de ma detresse* 76.76D

Music: 17th century
Flemish Melody
Text: Michael Gannon

Or:

Truly, *you are blessed among women.*
For you have changed Eve's curse into a blessing;
and Adam, who hitherto lay under a curse,
has been blessed because of you.



MONDAY Morning Prayer

God, come to my assistance.

— Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:

as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever.
Amen.

HYMN

Mary immaculate, star of the morning,
Chosen before the creation began,
Chosen to bring, for thy bridal adorning,
Woe to the serpent and rescue to man.

Here, in an orbit of shadow and sadness,
Veiling thy splendor, thy course thou hast run;
Now thou art throned in all glory and gladness,
Crowned by the hand of the savior and Son.

Sinners, we worship thy sinless perfection;
Fallen and weak, for thy pity we plead;
Grant us the shield of thy sovereign protection,
Measure thine aid by the depth of our need.

Bend from thy throne at the voice of our crying,
Bend to this earth which thy footsteps have trod;
Stretch out thine arms to us, living and dying,
Mary immaculate, Mother of God.

Melody: Liebster
Immanuel 11.10.11.10

Music: Melody from Himmels-Lust,
1679, adapted and harmonized
by J. S. Bach
Text: F. W. Weatherell

Or:

Virgin of virgins,
you were untouched by that stain of sin,
that first of all evils,
the sad inheritance of the human race.
From my earliest years
I have placed my hope in you.



WEDNESDAY

Morning Prayer

God, come to my assistance.

— Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:

as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever.
Amen.

HYMN

O Mary, of all women
Thou art the chosen one,
Who ancient prophets promised
Would bear God's only Son;
All Hebrew generations
Prepared the way to thee,
That in your womb the God-man
Might come to set man free.

O Mary, you embody
All God taught to our race,
For you are first and foremost
In fullness of his grace;
We praise this wondrous honor
That you gave birth to him
Who from you took his manhood
And saved us from our sin.

Melody: *Au fort de ma detresse* 76.76.D

Music: 17th century
Flemish Melody
Text: Michael Gannon

Or:

I bow before you, Virgins of virgins,
resting-place of the divine Bridegroom,
temple of eternal Wisdom,
sanctuary of the Holy Spirit,
palace of the Blessed Trinity,

at the nearness of her God.

Open our hearts to receive his life
and increase our vision with the rising of dawn,
that our lives may be filled with his glory and his peace,
who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

May the Lord bless us,
protect us from evil
and bring us to everlasting life.

— Amen.

Evening Prayer

God, come to my assistance.

— Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy
Spirit:

as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever.
Amen.

HYMN

What child is this, who, laid to rest,
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
While shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring him laud,
The Babe, the Son of Mary.

Why lies he in such mean estate,
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear, for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear, shall pierce him through,
The cross be borne for me, for you:
Hail, hail, the Word made flesh,
The Babe, the Son of Mary!

So bring him incense, gold and myrrh,
Come, peasant, king, to own him;

compassion in you has gone beyond the endurance of physical suffering.

Or were those words: *Woman, behold your Son*, not more than a sword to you, truly piercing your heart, cutting through to the division between soul and spirit? What an exchange! John is given to you in place of Jesus, the servant in place of the Lord, the disciple in place of the master; the son of Zebedee replaces the Son of God, a mere man replaces God himself. How could these words not pierce your most loving heart, when the mere remembrance of them breaks ours, hearts of stone and iron though they are!

Or:

From a sermon by Saint Bernard, abbot

(*Sermo in dom. infra oct. Assumptionis, 14-15: Opera omnia, Edit. Cisterc. 5 [1968],273-274*)

A martyr in spirit

Do not be surprised, brothers, that Mary is said to be a martyr in spirit. Let him be surprised who does not remember the words of Paul, that one of the greatest crimes of the Gentiles was that they were without love. That was far from the heart of Mary; let it be far from her servants.

Perhaps someone will say: "Had she not known before that he would die?" Undoubtedly. "Did she not expect him to rise again at once?" Surely. "And still she grieved over her crucified Son?" Intensely.

Who are you and what is the source of your wisdom that you are more surprised at the compassion of Mary than at the passion of Mary's Son? For if he could die in body, could she not die with him in spirit? He died in body through a love greater than anyone had known. She died in spirit through a love unlike any other since his.

OFFICE OF READINGS

Lord, open my lips.

— And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

Invitatory

Ant. Come, let us worship Christ, the Son of Mary.

Or: Come, let us sing to the Lord as we celebrate this feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Psalm 95

A call to praise God

Encourage each other daily while it is still today
(Hebrews 3:13)

(The antiphon is recited and then repeated)

Come, let us sing to the Lord
and shout with joy to the Rock who saves us.
Let us approach him with praise and thanksgiving
and sing joyful songs to the Lord.

(Antiphon repeated)

The Lord is God, the mighty God,
the great king over all the gods.
He holds in his hands the depths of the earth
and the highest mountains as well.
He made the sea; it belongs to him,
the dry land, too, for it was formed by his hands.

(Antiphon repeated)

Come, then, let us bow down and worship,
bending the knee before the Lord, our maker.
For he is our God and we are his people,
the flock he shepherds.

(Antiphon repeated)

PRAYERS TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

The Angelic Salutation

The "Hail Mary" ("Ave Maria") is based on Luke 1:28, 42 and is known as the "Angelic Salutation" from its first line.

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

Ancient Prayer to the Virgin

This prayer, known in Latin as "Sub tuum praesidium" and first found in a Greek papyrus, c. 300, is the oldest prayer to Mary.

We turn to you for protection,
holy Mother of God.
Listen to our prayers
and help us in our needs.
Save us from every danger,
glorious and blessed Virgin.

Memorare

The "Memorare" is a sixteenth-century version of a fifteenth-century prayer. Claude Bernard (1588-1641) popularized the idea that the "Memorare" was written by Saint Bernard.

Remember, most loving Virgin Mary,
never was it heard
that anyone who turned to you for help
was left unaided.
Inspired by this confidence,
though burdened by my sins,