

Imagine, if you will, the end of a long summer day at the monastery. The sparrows outside the open windows are arguing about the highest perch in the arbor vitae for the night; the sun is glowing orange just below the horizon of cornfields; the first stars are appearing in the deepening blue in the East. The monks in their long white robes, one by one, enter, bow deeply to the sanctuary, and find their way to their choir stall. Some kneel; some stand leaning against the choir stall listening to the birds chatter. In the back of the old limestone church, visitors sit quietly...waiting to join in this ancient form of night prayers.

In a few minutes, the long choir stalls are filled, and there seems to be a moment of hesitation. Then the bell sounds sharply in the dusk, marking the transition from the work of the day to the long silence of the night.

LISTEN TO COMPLINE

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Leader: ✠ O God, come to my assistance.

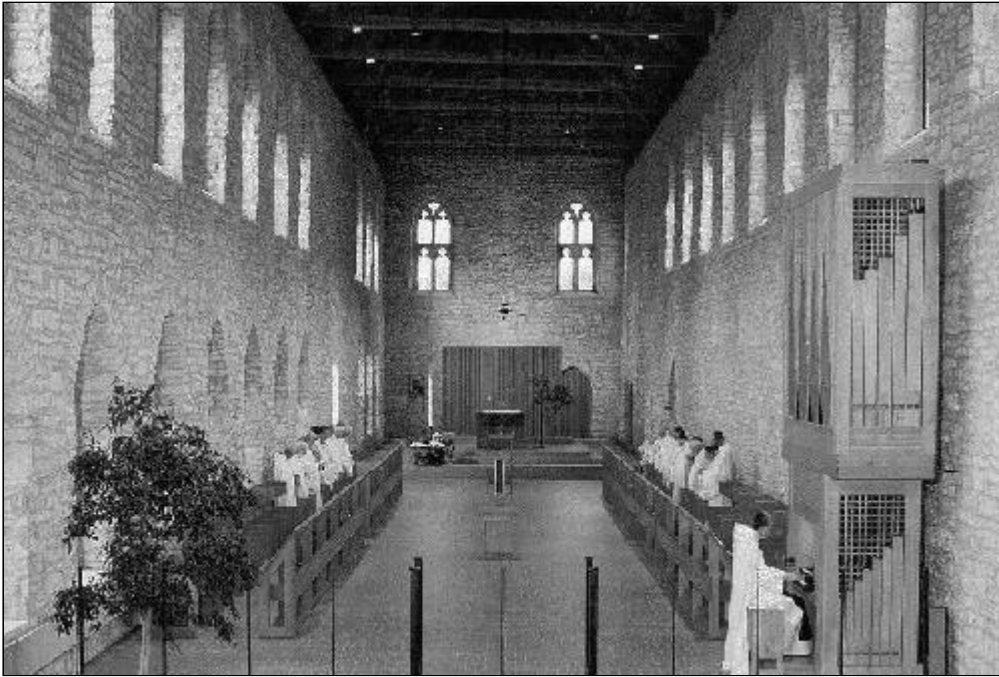
Response: O Lord, make haste to help me.

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



Hymn When evening comes we turn to you, the maker of all things.
We seek that peace and comfort which your kindness always brings.
Protect us from all dangers now and all throughout the night;
that we may rise once more with Christ, who is our truth and light.

Give glory to the Father who is source of all that is.
Give glory to the Son, who died that we might all be his.
Give glory to the Holy Ghost whom they to earth do send.
Give glory to our triune God whose rule will never end. Amen.



Psalm 4

- Leader:** When I call, answer me, O God of justice;
- All:** from anguish you released me; have mercy and hear me.
- Schola:** O men, how long will your hearts be closed,
Will you love what is futile and seek what is false?
- All:** It is the Lord who grants favors to those whom he loves;
the Lord hears me whenever I call him.
- Schola:** Fear him; do not sin: ponder on your bed and be still;
make justice your sacrifice and trust in the Lord.
- All:** "What can bring us happiness" many say.
Lift up the light of your face on us, O Lord.
- Schola:** You have put into my heart a greater joy
than they have from abundance of corn and new wine.
- All:** I will lie down in peace and sleep comes at once

for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety.

Schola: Give praise to the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit,
both now and for ages unending. Amen

Psalm 90

All: He who dwells in the shelter of the most High and abides in the shade of the Almighty says to the Lord "My refuge, my stronghold, my God in whom in I trust."

Schola: It is he who will free you from the snare of the fowler who seeks to destroy you; he will conceal you with his pinions and under his wings you will find refuge.

All: You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the plague that prowls in the darkness, nor the scourge that lays waste at noon.

Schola: A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand fall at your right, you, it will never approach; his faithfulness is buckler and shield.

All: Your eyes have only to look, to see how the wicked are repaid, you who have said: "Lord, my refuge!" and have made the most High your dwelling.

Schola: Upon you no evil shall fall, no plague approach where you dwell; for you has he commanded his angels, to keep you in all your ways.

All: They shall bear you upon their hands lest you strike your foot against a stone. On the lion and the viper you will tread and trample the young lion and the dragon.

Schola: Since he clings to me in love, I will free him; protect him for he knows my name. When he calls I shall answer: "I am with you". I will save him in distress and give him glory.

All: With length of life I will content him; I shall let him see my saving power. To the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit give praise for ever. Amen

Leader: Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

All: Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

Leader: It is you who will redeem me, O Lord my God.

All: I commend my spirit.

Leader: Lord have mercy.

All: Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy.

Abbot: Now, O Lord, dismiss your servants in peace for your word has been fulfilled. Our eyes have seen the salvation you have displayed in the sight of all the peoples: a Light to reveal you to the nations and the Glory of your people, Israel (*Nunc dimmittis*, Lk 2:29-32).

May your glory rest upon us, and in your peace may we be blessed. ✠ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Abbot: May God's help remain with us always.

All: And with our brothers and sisters who are away.

Abbot: May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

All: Amen.

Song to Mary Salve, Regína, Mater misericórdiae, vita,
dulcédo et spes nostra, salve. Ad te
clamámus exules filii Evæ. Ad te

suspirámus geméntes et fléntes in hac
lacrymárum valle.

Eia ergo, advocáta nostra, illos tuos
misericórdes óculos ad nos convérte. Et
Jesum, benedíctum fructum ventris tui,
nobis post hoc exsílium osténde. O
clemens, o pia, o dulcis Virgo María.



Hail, holy Queen, mother of mercy; hail, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To you do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To you do we send up our sighs; mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, our Advocate, your eyes of mercy toward us; and after this, our exile, show us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!

As the last echoes of the *Salve Regina* drift away, the monks move from their choir stalls two by two up the middle of the church, stopping for a moment to bow before the Abbot who blesses them with holy water. The guests follow after and receive the Abbot's blessing before retiring for the evening.

As you prepare for bed this evening, remember the words of the psalm: *Since he clings to me in love, I will free him; protect him for he knows my name. When he calls I shall answer: "I am with you." I will save him in distress and give him glory.*

Good night, and God bless you.

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