

Since earliest times Christians have met at morning and evening to offer the daily liturgical prayer of the Church. Morning and evening prayer are said every day in this church, and on Sundays evening prayer is sung (“evensong”). The office (or service) consists of psalms, readings, and canticles, from scripture, together with hymns and prayers. It is a time to pray and praise, to listen and reflect, as night falls.

*Before the service begins, we keep silence
as people arrive,
to allow each person to approach God,
simply by being still before him.*

Order of Service

When the bell rings, we STAND as the choir and ministers enter. A hymn or anthem may be sung during the entrance. We remain standing for

THE PRECES

O LORD, open thou our lips;
And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.
O God, make speed to save us;
O Lord, make haste to help us.
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.*
Praise ye the Lord;
The Lord’s Name be praised.

The Word of God

PSALTER

The choir sings the psalm(s) appointed for the day. The words are in today's service sheet.

We SIT at the end of the first line.

At the end of each psalm, the choir sings:

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.

FIRST READING

We remain SEATED to listen to the first reading, from the Hebrew scriptures. The reference is in today's service sheet.

After the reading:

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

OFFICE HYMN

We STAND to sing the office hymn. The number is in today's service sheet.

We remain standing while the choir sings the Song of Mary.

MAGNIFICAT

MY soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour, for he hath regarded the lowliness of his hand-maiden. For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed; for he that is mighty hath magnified me, and holy is his Name.

And his mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations. He hath showed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away. He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel, as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.

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.

Words: Luke 1.46-55.

SECOND READING

We SIT to listen to the second reading, from the New Testament. The reference is in today's service sheet.

After the reading:

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

We STAND, while the choir sings the Song of Simeon.

NUNC DIMITTIS

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, to be a light to lighten the Gentiles and to be 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.

Words: Luke 2.29-32.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

We remain standing and say together the Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth;**

**And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried:
He descended into hell;
the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of God
the Father almighty;
from thence he shall come
to judge the quick and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit;
the holy catholic Church;
the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

The Prayers

We remain standing

The Lord be with you;
And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

We then KNEEL.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon 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. Amen.

THE SUFFRAGES

O Lord, show thy mercy upon us;

And grant us thy salvation.

O Lord, save the King;

And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.

Endue thy ministers with righteousness;

And make thy chosen people joyful.

O Lord, save thy people;

And bless thine inheritance.

Give peace in our time, O Lord;

*Because there is none other that fighteth for us,
but only thou, O God.*

O God, make clean our hearts within us;

And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.

THE COLLECTS

The Collect of the Day

The words of the collect are in today's service sheet.

Amen.

The Collect for Peace

O God, from whom all holy desires, all good
counsels, and all just works do proceed:

Give unto thy servants that peace

which the world cannot give;

that both our hearts may be set to obey thy
commandments,

and also that by thee we being defended
from the fear of our enemies

may pass our time in rest and quietness;

through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Amen.

The Collect for Aid against Perils

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord;
and by thy great mercy defend us
from all perils and dangers of this night;
for the love of thine only Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

The Lord be with you;
And with thy spirit.

Let us bless the Lord. (Alleluia.)
Thanks be to God. (Alleluia.)

May the Divine Assistance remain with us always,
and may the souls of the departed
through the mercy of God rest in peace,
and rise in glory. Amen.

We SIT while the choir sings

THE ANTHEM

Details of the anthem are in today's service sheet.

SECOND HYMN

We STAND to sing the second hymn. The number is in today's service sheet. During the hymn the collection is taken up.

If the service is not to conclude with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, prayers of intercession follow here.

If the service is not to conclude with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, the service concludes here with the Blessing.

Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament

BENEDICTION is a beautiful word. It means a blessing, a greeting, an expression of kindness and love. Benediction is also a beautiful service of the church. It is a service that makes real to us in an impressive way the fact that God is always reaching out to us, to bless, to strengthen, to assure us of his loving kindness toward us.

The greatest blessing that God ever bestowed or could bestow upon mankind was the sending of his Son. He is no longer present in the physical body that was his in Palestine many centuries ago, but we believe that he is really present among us in the Sacrament which he appointed. "This is my body," he said over the bread at his Last Supper with his disciples. The same words are said over the bread at every Eucharist, that it may be to us the body of the Lord, so that he may come again among us today as he came at his first appearing in Palestine.

Benediction is a popular service, that is to say, a people's service. The clever and the sophisticated do not come much to Benediction, but the simple, the poor, those who acknowledge an emptiness in their lives that only God can fill. Even those who might not come to Holy Communion will sometimes come to Benediction where God reaches out to them though they think they are only on the fringes. I think of some of those with whom I have knelt at Benediction: harassed city-dwellers in New York, working-class people from the back streets of Dublin, soldiers serving in the deserts of North Africa, Indian Christians living as a tiny minority in a great Hindu city ... They have all had the grace of humility. Those who seek a blessing come with empty hands. "How blessed are those who know their need of God!" (Matthew 5.3, New English Bible) God cannot give a blessing to the proud, the self-sufficient, the superior, those who secretly despise the simple devotion of their brethren. So we can only come to Benediction waiting and expectant. As we sing the hymns and look upon the Host, we open our hearts to God, knowing that he who sent the blessing of his Son to lighten the darkness of the world still sends through the same Son his blessing to us.

Then a very remarkable thing happens. For we find ourselves saying the words of the Divine Praises: "Blessed be God! Blessed be his holy Name!" We came seeking God's blessing, and now we find that we are blessing God! We begin by coming in our need to God, seeking his blessing. He gives us that blessing, and our response is to bless and adore him. This indeed is the goal of all our worshipping — that we may come to love God better. And we cannot love God without loving our neighbours who are God's children, so that in seeking God's blessing, we are praying that in blessing us he will make us a blessing to others.

PROFESSOR JOHN MACQUARRIE

Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament

EXPOSITION

When the bell rings, we KNEEL as the Blessed Sacrament is placed in the monstrance on the altar.

O SAVING Victim, opening wide
The gate of heaven to all below;
Our foes press hard on every side,
Thine aid supply, thy strength bestow.

All praise and thanks to thee ascend
For evermore, blest One in Three;
O grant us life that shall not end,
In our true native land with thee. Amen.

Words: Thomas Aquinas, English version by John Mason Neale

Or, the choir may sing a setting using the Latin text:

O salutaris Hostia quae coeli pandis ostium:
bella premunt hostilia; da robur, fer auxilium.
Uni trinoque Domino sit sempiterna gloria:
qui vitam sine termino nobis donet in patria. Amen.

ADORATION

After a time of silent adoration and prayer we all say together

**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.
Amen.**

THEREFORE we, before him bending,
This great sacrament revere:
Types and shadows have their ending,
For the newer rite is here;
Faith, our outward sense befriending,
Makes the inward vision clear.

Glory let us give and blessing
To the Father and the Son,
Honour, might and praise addressing,
While eternal ages run;
Ever too his love confessing,
Who, from both, with both is one. Amen.

Words: Thomas Aquinas, translated by John Mason Neale

Or, the choir may sing a setting using the Latin text:

Tantum ergo Sacramentum veneremur cernui:
Et antiquum documentum novo cedat ritui:
Praestet fides supplementum sensuum defectui.
Genitori genitoque laus et jubilatio,
Salus, honor, virtus quoque sit et benedictio:
rocedenti ab utroque compar sit laudatio. Amen.

BENEDICTION

Thou gavest them bread from heaven. (Alleluia.)
Containing in itself all sweetness. (Alleluia.)

This, or another, prayer of thanksgiving for the Blessed Sacrament is said or sung.

GOD our Father,
whose Son our Lord Jesus Christ
in a wonderful Sacrament
hath left unto us a memorial of his passion:
Grant us so to venerate
the sacred mysteries of his Body and Blood,
that we may ever perceive within ourselves
the fruit of his redemption;
who liveth and reigneth
with thee and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

We receive Christ's blessing as, in silence, the priest makes the sign of the cross with the Blessed Sacrament in the monstrance.

THE DIVINE PRAISES

We repeat each line after the priest.

Either,

BLESSED be God.
Blessed be his holy Name.
Blessed be Jesus Christ, truly Divine and truly
Human.
Blessed be the Name of Jesus.
Blessed be his Most Sacred Heart.
Blessed be his Most Precious Blood.
Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament
of the Altar.
Blessed be the Holy Spirit the Comforter.
Blessed be the great Mother of God,
Mary most Holy.
Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother.
Blessed be God in Saint Paul the Apostle.
Blessed be God in his angels and in his saints.
Blessed be God.

Words attributed to Luigi Felici 1797.

Or,

BLESSED be God.
Blessed be the holy and undivided Trinity.
Blessed be God the Father,
 maker of heaven and earth.
Blessed be Jesus Christ,
 truly Divine and truly Human.
Blessed be the holy Name of Jesus.
Blessed be Jesus Christ
 in his death and resurrection.
Blessed be Jesus Christ on his throne of glory.
Blessed be Jesus
 in the Sacrament of his body and blood.
Blessed be the Holy Spirit,
 the giver and sustainer of life.
Blessed be God in the Virgin Mary,
 Mother of our Lord and God.
Blessed be God in Saint Paul the Apostle.
Blessed be God in his angels and in his saints.
Blessed be God.

REPOSITION

We remain kneeling; we sing psalm 117 while the Blessed Sacrament is replaced in the tabernacle.

The opening antiphon and the first line of the verse are sung by a cantor; then all join in.

Antiphon:

Let us a - dore_ for_ e - ver
the Most Ho - ly Sac-ra-ment.

O praise the Lord, all ye | hea-then :
 praise him, | all ye na-tions.
For his merciful kindness is ever more and more
 to- | ward us :
 and the truth of the Lord endureth for | ev-er.
 Praise the Lord.
Glory be to the Father, and to | the Son :
 and | to the Ho-ly Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever | shall be :
 world with- | out end. A-men.

All repeat the Antiphon.

When the bell is rung, we STAND as the choir and ministers depart.