

A Treasury of Prayers

Eastern Church Liturgy, Third Century

We give thee hearty thanks for the rest of the past night,
for the gift of a new day,
with its opportunities for pleasing thee.
Grant that we may so pass its hours
in the freedom of thy service,
that at eventide we may again give thanks unto thee;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Augustine of Hippo (354-430)

O thou who art the light of the minds that know thee,
the life of the souls that love thee,
and the strength of the hearts that serve thee;
help us so to know thee that we may truly love thee;
so to love thee that we may fully serve thee,
whom to serve is perfect freedom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Liturgy of Malabar, Fifth Century

Grant, O Lord, that the ears which have heard
the voice of thy songs
may be closed to the voice of clamour and dispute;
that the eyes which have seen thy great love
may also behold thy blessed hope;
that the tongues which have sung thy praise
may speak the truth;
that the feet which have walked thy courts
may walk in the region of light;
and that the bodies which have partaken of thy living Body
may be restored in newness of life.
Glory be to thee for thine unspeakable gift.

Amen.

Columba (c.521-597)

Be thou a bright flame before me,
be thou a guiding star above me,
be thou a smooth path below me,
be thou a kindly shepherd behind me,
today, tonight and for ever.

Amen.

Mozarabic Sacramentary, Seventh Century

Grant us, O Lord, to pass this day in gladness and peace,
without stumbling and without stain;
that reaching the eventide victorious over all temptation,
we may praise thee, the eternal God,
who art blessed, and dost govern all things,
world without end.

Amen.

Gregorian Sacramentary

May God Almighty direct our days in his peace,
and grant us the gifts of his blessing;
may he deliver us in all our troubles,
and establish our minds in the tranquillity of his peace;
may he so guide us through things temporal
that we finally lose not the things eternal.

Amen.

Gelasian Sacramentary

Almighty and everlasting God,
the Comfort of the sad, the Strength of sufferers,
let the prayers of those that cry out of any tribulation
come unto thee;
that all may rejoice to find that thy mercy
is present with them in their afflictions;
through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Alcuin (735-804)

Eternal Light, shine into our hearts,
Eternal Goodness, deliver us from evil,
Eternal Power, be our support,
Eternal Wisdom, scatter the darkness of our ignorance,
Eternal Pity, have mercy upon us;
that with all our heart and mind
and soul and strength we may seek thy face
and be brought by thine infinite mercy
to thy holy presence;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Sarum Breviary, Eleventh Century

O God, who through the grace of thy Holy Spirit,
dost pour the gift of love into the hearts of thy faithful people;
grant unto us health, both of mind and body,
that we may love thee with our whole strength,
and with entire satisfaction may perform those things
which are pleasing unto thee;
through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Francis of Assisi (1182-1226)

Merciful God, to thee we commend ourselves
and all those who need thy help and correction.
Where there is hatred, give love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is sadness, joy;
where there is darkness, light.
Grant that we may not seek so much
to be consoled, as to console;
to be understood, as to understand;
to be loved, as to love;
for in giving, we receive,
in pardoning we are pardoned,
and dying we are born into eternal life.

Amen.

Richard of Chichester (c.1197-1253)

Thanks be to thee, my Lord Jesus Christ,
for all the benefits thou hast won for me,
for all the pains and insults thou hast borne for me.
O most merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother,
may I know thee more clearly,
love thee more dearly,
and follow thee more nearly;
for ever and ever.

Amen.

Mechthild of Magdeburg (c.1210-c.1280)

O sweet and loving God,
when I stay asleep too long,
oblivious to all your many blessings,
then, please, wake me up,
and sing to me your joyful song.
It is a song without noise or notes.
It is a song of love beyond words,
of faith beyond the power of human telling.
I can hear it in my soul,
when you awaken me to your presence.

Amen.

Julian of Norwich (1342-c.1416)

God of your goodness, give me yourself,
for you are sufficient for me...
If I were to ask anything less
I should always be in want,
for in you alone do I have all.

Amen.

Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556)

Teach us, good Lord, to serve thee as thou deservest;
to give, and not count the cost;
to fight, and not to heed the wounds;
to toil, and not to seek for rest;
to labour, and not to ask for any reward,
save that of knowing that we do thy will;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

John Calvin (1509-1564)

Most gracious God, our heavenly Father,
in whom alone dwelleth all fullness of light and wisdom:
illuminate our minds, we beseech thee, by thy Holy Spirit,
in the true understanding of thy Word.
Give us grace that we may receive it
with reverence and humility unfeigned.
May it lead us to put our whole trust in thee alone;
and so to serve and honour thee,
that we may glorify thy holy name,
and edify our neighbours by a good example.
And since it hath pleased thee
to number us among thy people,
O help us to pay thee the love and homage that we owe,
as children to our Father, and as servants to our Lord.
We ask this for the sake of our Master and Saviour.

Amen.

Teresa of Avila (1515-82)

Christ has no body now on earth but yours;
yours are the only hands with which he can do his work,
yours are the only feet with which he can go about the world,
yours are the only eyes through which his compassion
can shine forth upon a troubled world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

Amen.

after John Donne (c.1571-1631)

Bring us, O Lord God, at our last awakening
into the house and gate of heaven,
to enter into that gate and dwell in that house,
where there shall be no darkness nor dazzling,
but one equal light;
no voice nor silence, but one equal music;
no fears nor hopes, but one equal possession;
no ends nor beginnings, but one equal eternity;
in the habitation of thy glory and dominion,
world without end.

Amen.

Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658)

Strengthen us O God, to relieve the oppressed,
to hear the groans of poor prisoners,
to reform the abuses of all professions;
that many be made not poor to make a few rich;
for Jesus Christ's sake.

Amen.

Richard Baxter (1615-1691)

Keep us, O Lord, while we tarry on this earth,
in a serious seeking after thee,
and in an affectionate walking with thee,
every day of our lives;
that when thou comest,
we may be found not hiding our talent,
nor yet asleep with our lamp unfurnished,
but waiting and longing for our Lord,
our glorious King, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Matthew Henry (1662-1714)

O Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us:
let thy peace rule in our hearts;
and may it be our strength and song,
in the house of our pilgrimage.

We commit ourselves to thy care and keeping this day;
let thy grace be mighty in us, and sufficient for us,
and let it work in us both to will and to do
of thine own good pleasure,
and grant us strength for all the duties of the day.
Keep us from sin; give us the rule over our own spirits,
and keep us from speaking unadvisedly with our lips.
May we live together in peace and holy love,
and do thou command thy blessing upon us,
even life for evermore.

Prepare us for all the events of the day;
for we know not what a day may bring forth.
Give us grace to deny ourselves;
to take up our cross daily,
and to follow in the steps of our Lord and Master.

Amen.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

Bless me, O Lord,
and let my food strengthen me to serve thee,
for Christ's sake.

Amen.

John Angell James (1785-1859)

O Holy Spirit, the Comforter,
come and dwell in our souls;
make our bodies thy temple.
Fill our minds with thy light,
and our hearts with thy love,
that over our whole character thy power may be seen
in the beauties of holiness.

May we live as something sacred to thee
as well as perfected by thee.
Come in all thy sevenfold energy,
and replenish us with thy illuminating,
comforting, sanctifying influence.
Baptize us with celestial fire,
and give us in thine abundant grace
the earnest of glory everlasting.

Amen.

Christina Rossetti (1830-94)

O Lord, in whom is our hope,
remove far from us, we pray thee,
empty hopes and presumptuous confidence.
Make our hearts so right with thy most holy and loving heart,
that hoping in thee we may do good;
until that day when faith and hope
shall be abolished by sight and possession,
and love shall be all in all.

Amen.

Cardinal Newman (1801-1890)

O Lord, support us all the day long of this troublous life,
until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes,
the busy world is hushed,
the fever of life is over and our work is done;
then, Lord, in your mercy, grant us safe lodging,
a holy rest and peace at the last;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

or

Lord, support us by your grace
through all the hours of life's day:
until the shadows lengthen, the busy world is hushed,
the fever of life is over, and the evening comes.
Then Lord, in your mercy, grant us a safe lodging,
a holy rest, and peace at the last;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

G E Darlaston (1876-1931)

God, our Father, we thank thee for thy welcoming spirit
that meets us as we assemble ourselves together for worship.
We thank thee for thy greeting of peace
and for the sacred joy that awaits us as our minds are drawn
into the stream of common thought and holy purpose.
Help each one of us to give himself to the leading of thy Spirit,
not holding back in any reluctance
or self-complacency or indifference,
but with out-stretched minds and aspiring souls
to come together to thy holy hill.
Each one has some gift of heart and thought to bring,
each some failing or sin to confess,
each has some praise and prayer,
and we would lift many voices as one voice,
and many petitions as one petition,
to the throne of thy grace.
Lead us into the fellowship of holy worship,
and weave the varied strains of many hearts
into one symphony of praise;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

William Temple (1881-1944)

O Lord Jesu Christ, who didst pray
for thy disciples that they might be one,
even as thou art one with the Father:
draw us to thyself, that in common love
and obedience to thee we may be united to one another,
in the fellowship of the one Spirit,
that the world may believe that thou art Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Amen.

Prayer of General Thanksgiving

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
we, your unworthy servants,
give you most humble and hearty thanks
for all your goodness and loving kindness
to us and to all people.

We bless you for our creation, preservation,
and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for your immeasurable love
in the redemption of the world
by our Lord Jesus Christ,
for the means of grace,
for the hope of glory.

Give us, we pray,
such a sense of all your mercies,
that with truly thankful hearts,
we may show forth your praise,
not only with our lips but in our lives,
by giving up ourselves to your service,
and by walking before you in holiness
and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be all honour and glory,
for ever and ever.

Amen.