



THE PANTOCRATOR ALTAR BOOK

rites of light for the order of the christ
pantocrator

Compiled with Eugene, High Chancellor

EX ALTO AD OMNES

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PREFACE



[PLACEHOLDER: a personal preface by Eugene, High Chancellor. Draft voice below.]

I have spent many years learning to be still. In that stillness I have come to believe something very simple: the universe is not empty. It is held. The One whom the ancient Church called *Pantocrator*, the Sustainer of All, holds every galaxy and every heartbeat in being, moment by moment, with a patience that never tires.

This book is an attempt to pray from that conviction. Its rites do not ask God to be less angry with us. They ask us to become more awake to a Love that is already here: in bread and wine, in water and oil, in the vows of two people, in a child's first breath and in the quiet of a sickroom. To bless, in these pages, is to tune ourselves to the presence that sustains all things, and to say aloud what is already true.

I have written these texts with married clergy and their families in mind, because I believe love between persons is one of the clearest windows onto the divine. I offer them freely to the independent ministries who serve in small places, often alone. Use them, adapt them, and let them become your own.

Ex Alto Ad Omnes. From on high, to all.

Eugene, High Chancellor

[PLACEHOLDER: place and date]

A NOTE ON USE



This book is offered for use by the Order of the Christ Pantocrator and by any ministry of the Independent Sacramental Movement that finds it helpful. Its texts may be adapted to local custom, language and need. Where a rite offers alternatives, the celebrant chooses freely.

Speakers. **C:** marks the celebrant, **P:** the people, and **All:** everyone together. Directions for the conduct of the rite (rubrics) are printed in *red italics*.

Scripture and ancient texts. Scripture is quoted from the King James Version or the World English Bible, both in the public domain. The Gloria, Sanctus, Trisagion, Lord's Prayer, *Phos Hilaron* and *Nunc Dimittis* are ancient texts given in traditional public-domain English forms. All other texts are original to this book.

Marriage. Weddings are solemnized in accordance with the marriage law of the place where they occur. Before the ceremony, the couple obtains a valid marriage license from the civil authority, and the officiant confirms that he or she is authorized to solemnize marriages in that jurisdiction and completes and returns the license as the law requires.

Clergy and families. Clergy of every order may be married. Where it is natural, spouses and children of the clergy are warmly invited to take part as readers, intercessors and bearers of the gifts.

PART 1 • THE COSMIC MASS



THE GATHERING

A candle may be lit in silence before the liturgy begins. The people stand as the ministers enter. A hymn or song may be sung.

C: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

P: Amen.

C: The Light that holds the stars in being be with you.

P: And also with you.

C: Friends, we gather in a universe that is held in love. Let us be still for a moment, and become aware of the presence in which we live and move and have our being.

Silence is kept.

C: Holy One, you are nearer to us than our breath.

P: Open our eyes to your radiance.

C: Where we have turned from the light, in thought, word or deed,

P: draw us gently home.

C: Where we have forgotten one another,

P: remind us that we belong together.

C: The God of mercy gathers what was scattered, heals what was broken, and makes all things new.

P: Amen.

SONG OF PRAISE

The Trisagion or the Gloria is said or sung. The Gloria is usually omitted in Advent and Lent.

THE TRISAGION

All: Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, have mercy upon us. *(three times)*

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

All: Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will towards men.
 We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee,
 we give thanks to thee for thy great glory,
 O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty.
 O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesu Christ;
 O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
 that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.
 Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer.
 Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us.
 For thou only art holy; thou only art the Lord;
 thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost,
 art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

THE COLLECT

C: Let us pray.

Silence. The collect of the day (see Appendix A) or the following is said.

C: Christ Pantocrator, radiant center of all that is, in you the galaxies turn and the smallest seed unfolds: gather our scattered attention into your light, that we may know ourselves held, and become, for one another, a sign of your sustaining love; who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and shines, one God, now and through endless ages.

P: Amen.

THE WORD

Two or three readings are proclaimed, the last always from the Gospel. Suggested readings follow; the lectionary of the season may also be used.

First readings: Genesis 1:1–5, 14–19 (Let there be light); Isaiah 60:1–3 (Arise, shine); Wisdom 7:24–30 (a breath of the power of God); Psalm 19:1–6 or Psalm 104:24–35.

Epistles: Colossians 1:15–20 (in him all things hold together); Ephesians 1:3–10; Hebrews 1:1–3 (upholding all things); Romans 8:18–25; Revelation 21:1–6.

Gospels: John 1:1–14; Matthew 5:14–16 (the light of the world); Matthew 17:1–8 (the Transfiguration); John 8:12; Luke 12:22–31 (consider the lilies).

Reader: The word of the Lord. *or, after the Gospel:* The Gospel of Christ.

P: Thanks be to God. *or:* Praise to you, Lord Christ.

A homily or a time of reflection follows. Silence may be kept.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

The Nicene Creed may be said, or this affirmation:

All: We believe in God, the Source of All, whose love calls forth the universe from nothing, and in whom all things live and move and have their being.

We believe in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, the Pantocrator, in whom all things hold together; who lived among us, healed and taught and loved, who was crucified, and rose in glory, and who fills all things with his radiant life.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the breath of God moving over the waters, who kindles life and love and wisdom in every creature.

We believe that we belong to one another, in one holy, catholic and apostolic Church, in the communion of saints, in mercy that heals and makes new, and in the life of the world to come, when God will be all in all. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

A deacon or lay person leads. Spouses and members of clergy families are welcome to lead these prayers. Particular intentions may be added.

Leader: Held in the love that sustains all things, let us pray.

For the whole earth and every living creature, for the oceans and forests, and for all who care for them:

All: Sustaining Christ, hold us in your light.

Leader: For the Church in all its branches, for independent ministries serving in small places, and for all who seek to follow Christ:

All: Sustaining Christ, hold us in your light.

Leader: For married couples, families and friends, for those who long for love, and for those who grieve:

All: Sustaining Christ, hold us in your light.

Leader: For leaders of nations and communities, that they may seek justice and peace:

All: Sustaining Christ, hold us in your light.

Leader: For the sick, the anxious and the lonely, especially *names*:

All: Sustaining Christ, hold us in your light.

Leader: For those who have died, that they may shine in your eternal light, especially *names*:

All: Sustaining Christ, hold us in your light.

C: Gracious God, receive these prayers and the longings we cannot put into words; through Christ, in whom all things hold together.

P: Amen.

THE PEACE

C: The peace of Christ, which holds the universe together, be always with you.

P: And also with you.

The people greet one another in peace.

THE OFFERTORY

The gifts of bread and wine, and the offerings of the people, are brought to the altar, by a family where possible.

C: Blessed are you, Source of All, through your goodness we have this bread, fruit of the earth, of starlight and of human hands. It will become for us the bread of life.

P: Blessed be God for ever.

C: Blessed are you, Source of All, through your goodness we have this wine, fruit of the vine, of sun and rain and patient work. It will become for us the cup of salvation.

P: Blessed be God for ever.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

C: The Lord be with you.

P: And also with you.

C: Lift up your hearts.

P: We lift them to the Lord.

C: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

P: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

C: It is right and a joy, always and everywhere, to give you thanks, Holy One, Source of All. Before time began, you spoke, and light leapt into being. You set the stars burning and gathered the dust of dying suns into planets and seas, into living cells and beating hearts, until at last creation could look back at you and know your name.

You have made us for love: for friendship and marriage, for family and community, so that in loving one another we learn the shape of your own life. When we wandered from you, you did not let us go. In the fullness of time you sent your Son, the eternal Word, the Pantocrator, in whom all things hold together, to share our flesh and walk our roads.

Therefore with angels and archangels, with the saints in light, and with every galaxy and every grain of sand, we lift our voices to proclaim your glory:

All: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts: heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most high. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

C: Holy indeed are you, and blessed is your Son, Jesus Christ, the light of the world, who healed the wounded, welcomed the outcast and ate with friends and strangers alike. He gave himself entirely for the life of the world, and you raised him in glory, the firstborn of a new creation.

THE EPICLESIS

The celebrant extends both hands over the bread and wine. All may keep a moment of silence, becoming aware of their breath.

C: And now, Holy One,
 send your Holy Spirit,
 the breath that moved over the first waters,
 the fire that rested on the apostles,
 the light that fills all things and is never diminished.
 Let your Spirit come upon these gifts of bread and wine,
 where matter and spirit meet,
 where the dust of stars and the work of human hands
 are gathered into your presence,
 that they may be for us the Body and Blood
 of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The celebrant extends hands over the people.

C: Let that same Spirit come upon us, gathered here,
 awakening our hearts and minds to your radiance,
 so that what we receive, we may become:
 one body, luminous with your love,
 given for the life of the world.

P: Come, Holy Spirit. Amen.

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

C: On the night before he died, our Lord Jesus took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and gave it to his friends, and said: "Take, eat: this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

The celebrant may elevate the bread. A bell may be rung.

C: After supper he took the cup; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said: "Drink this, all of you: this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me."

The celebrant may elevate the cup.

C: Great is the mystery of faith:

All: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

C: Remembering his death and resurrection, and rejoicing in his presence that fills all things, we offer you this bread and this cup. Unite us with all your saints, with those we love who have gone before us into light, and with all creation, until the day when you will be all in all.

Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, Source of All, now and for ever.

All: Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

C: As our Saviour taught us, we pray:

All: Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD AND COMMUNION

The celebrant breaks the bread in silence.

C: The bread we break is a sharing in the Body of Christ.

P: We who are many are one body, for we all share in the one bread.

C: The gifts of God for the people of God. All who seek the light are welcome at this table.

The people receive communion. The minister says to each: The Body of Christ, the bread of heaven. / The Blood of Christ, the cup of salvation. *Each answers:* Amen.

Silence is kept after communion.

C: Let us pray.

All: Radiant Christ, we have tasted your life. Send us out shining, to hold one another as you hold us, and to see your light in every face. Amen.

BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

C: May the Christ who holds the stars hold you;

may the Spirit who breathes in all things breathe in you;
and may the blessing of God, Source of All, Word and Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you always.

P: Amen.

C: Go in peace, and be light in the world.

P: Thanks be to God.

PART II • HOLY MATRIMONY



Before the ceremony the officiant confirms that the couple holds a valid marriage license for this jurisdiction and that the officiant is authorized to solemnize the marriage. The names [N.] and [N.] are used for the couple; the rite is written for any two persons who are free to marry under the law of the place.

THE WELCOME

The couple enters, alone, together, or accompanied by family or friends.

C: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

P: Amen.

C: Dear friends, welcome. We have gathered in the presence of God, who is Love, to witness and to bless the marriage of [N.] and [N.].

Love is not a small thing. It is one of the ways the whole universe tells its deepest secret: that we were made from love, for love, and to love. In marriage two people promise to carry that secret for one another every day, in ordinary kindness and in great faithfulness. Their love becomes a home where others, too, may find welcome.

Today we rejoice with them, we pray for them, and we promise to support them.

THE DECLARATIONS

C: [N.] and [N.], you have come here freely, to give yourselves to each other in marriage. Will you love, honor and cherish one another, in joy and in sorrow, in plenty and in want, in sickness and in health, as long as you both shall live?

Each: I will.

C: Will all of you, family and friends, support and uphold [N.] and [N.] in their marriage?

P: We will.

C: Let us pray. God of love, you make all things shine with your presence. Pour your blessing on [N.] and [N.], that their love may be a sign of your faithfulness, and their home a place of light. Through Christ our Lord.

P: Amen.

READINGS

One or more readings are chosen by the couple. A reading from a non-biblical source may also be used.

Genesis 2:18–24 (it is not good that the man should be alone)
 Song of Solomon 2:10–13; 8:6–7 (many waters cannot quench love)
 Ruth 1:16–17 (whither thou goest, I will go)
 Ecclesiastes 4:9–12 (a threefold cord is not quickly broken)
 1 Corinthians 13:1–13 (love is patient, love is kind)
 Colossians 3:12–17 (above all, put on love)
 1 John 4:7–12, 16 (God is love)
 John 2:1–11 (the wedding at Cana); John 15:9–12 (abide in my love)

A brief homily or reflection may follow.

THE VOWS

The couple face one another and join hands. One of the following forms is used, or vows the couple has written and the officiant has reviewed.

FIRST FORM (TRADITIONAL)

Each in turn: I, [N.], take you, [N.], to be my wedded spouse, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, as long as we both shall live. This is my solemn vow.

SECOND FORM (LIGHT)

Each in turn: [N.], in the presence of God and these witnesses, I choose you. I will see the light in you on the days you cannot see it yourself. I will tell you the truth with tenderness. I will stand beside you in every season, and I will make with you a home where love can grow. All that I am I give to you, and all that I have I share with you, for as long as we both shall live.

THIRD FORM (SIMPLE)

Each in turn: [N.], I give you my hand and my heart. I promise to love you faithfully, to honor you always, and to walk beside you, through all our days.

BLESSING OF THE RINGS

The rings are placed on an open book or a plate. The officiant holds them or extends a hand over them.

C: Source of All, you hold the orbits of the planets and the circling of the seasons. Bless these rings, unbroken circles of precious metal, born in the heart of ancient stars. May they be for [N.] and [N.] a sign of a love without end, a promise kept each day, and a reminder that they are held, together, in your faithful love. Amen.

Each places the ring on the other's hand, saying:

Each: [N.], I give you this ring as a sign of my love and faithfulness. With all that I am, I honor you; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

THE EPICLESIS OVER THE COUPLE

The couple kneel or stand with hands joined. The officiant lays hands lightly on their joined hands, or extends both hands over them. Family and friends may also extend their hands. A moment of silence is kept.

C: Holy Spirit of God,

breath of the first morning,
 fire that kindles every love,
 radiance in whom all things hold together:
 come upon [N.] and [N.].
 Descend upon their joined hands,
 where two lives become one shared life,
 where body and soul and Spirit meet.
 Fill the space between them with your light,
 so that in each other they may see your face,
 and in their love the world may glimpse your own.
 Make their marriage a living sacrament,
 a small, bright universe held in your great one,
 steady in the storm and generous in the calm.
 Abide with them in every season,
 in laughter and in tears,
 in work and in rest,
 until all their days are gathered into your eternal day.

All: Come, Holy Spirit. Amen.

THE NUPTIAL BLESSING

C: May God, the Source of All, who made you for love, bless you.

May Christ Pantocrator, who holds the universe together, hold you together.
 May the Holy Spirit, the breath of life, renew your love every morning.
 May your home be a place of welcome, your table a place of joy,
 and your love a light for all who know you.
 And may the blessing of God Almighty,
 the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
 be upon you and remain with you always.

P: Amen.

THE PRONOUNCEMENT

C: [N.] and [N.], you have given yourselves to each other by solemn vows, with the joining of hands and the giving and receiving of rings. By the authority vested in me by [PLACEHOLDER: jurisdiction / the law of the State of _____], I now pronounce you married. Those whom God has joined together, let no one put asunder.

P: Amen.

The couple may kiss. The officiant may say: You may seal your vows with a kiss.

OPTIONAL UNITY RITE OF LIGHT

Two small candles are lit by members of the couple's families before the ceremony. After the pronouncement, the couple together light a larger candle from the two.

C: Each of you has carried your own light, kindled by those who loved you first. Now you bring your lights together. They do not cancel one another; they become one brighter flame. May this light shine in your home, and may it remind you that your love is held in the Light that never fails.

The couple light the central candle together. The two smaller candles may be left burning.

PRAYERS AND DISMISSAL

The Lord's Prayer may be said. If the Eucharist is celebrated, the rite continues with the Peace (Part I). Otherwise:

C: Friends, I present to you [N.] and [N.]. Go in peace, and may the joy of this day shine in all your days.

P: Thanks be to God.

The officiant, the couple and the witnesses sign the marriage license and any certificate of the Order, and the officiant returns the license to the civil authority as the law requires.

PART III • HOLY BAPTISM



Baptism may be celebrated within the Cosmic Mass, after the homily, or on its own. It is given with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. For infants, parents and godparents answer; adults answer for themselves. The words in brackets indicate the alternatives.

PRESENTATION

C: Who presents [this child / this person] for baptism?

Parents and godparents or the candidate: We do. *or:* I present myself.

C: What name [have you given this child / do you bear]?

The name is given.

C: [N.], the Christian community welcomes you with great joy. You were loved into being before you could know it. Today we celebrate that love and receive you into the life of Christ, in whom all things hold together.

COMMITMENTS

For an infant, the questions are addressed to the parents and godparents: “Will you help this child...”. For an adult, to the candidate: “Will you...”

C: Will you [help this child to] turn toward the light of Christ, and away from all that diminishes life and love?

Answer: I will, with God’s help.

C: Will you [help this child to] seek and serve Christ in all people, loving your neighbor as yourself?

Answer: I will, with God’s help.

C: Will you [help this child to] grow in prayer, in wonder and in the fellowship of the Church?

Answer: I will, with God’s help.

C: Will all of you witnessing these promises do all in your power to support [N.] in the life of faith?

P: We will.

The Affirmation of Faith (Part I) or the Apostles’ Creed may be said by all.

BLESSING OF THE WATER

Water is poured into the font. The celebrant extends hands over it.

C: We give you thanks, Source of All, for the gift of water.

Over the waters your Spirit moved in the beginning;
 through the waters you led your people into freedom;
 in the waters of the Jordan your Son was baptized,
 and the heavens opened, and your voice was heard.
 Now send your Holy Spirit upon this water,
 that what is drawn from the deep places of the earth,
 older than mountains and as young as this morning's rain,
 may become for [N.] a living spring of new birth,
 where the life of Christ and the life of this person meet
 and are joined for ever.

The celebrant may touch the water.

C: Holy Spirit, come and fill this water with your light.

All: Come, Holy Spirit. Amen.

THE BAPTISM

The celebrant pours water three times on the head of the candidate, or immerses the candidate, saying:

C: [N.], I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

ANOINTING

The celebrant anoints the forehead with oil (chrism), tracing a cross.

C: [N.], you are sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked as Christ's own for ever. May the fragrance of Christ fill your life.

P: Amen.

THE LIGHT

A candle is lit from the paschal candle or the altar candle and given to the newly baptized, or to a parent or godparent.

C: Receive the light of Christ. You are a child of the Light that holds the universe in being. Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good works and glorify God (Matthew 5:16).

P: Amen.

WELCOME

C: Let us welcome the newly baptized.

P: We welcome you into the household of God. Shine with us, as one family in Christ.

The rite continues with the Peace, or ends with the Lord's Prayer and a blessing.

PART IV • BLESSINGS



Each blessing follows this pattern: a greeting, a short reading, a prayer, the Epiclesis (the invocation of the Spirit), and a closing blessing. Water may be sprinkled and candles lit. Any baptized Christian may say these prayers in their own home; where a priest or deacon is present, they lead the Epiclesis.

THE BLESSING OF A HOME

C: Peace to this house and to all who live here.

P: And to all who come and go.

Reading: Luke 19:1–10 or Psalm 127:1, or John 14:23.

C: Christ, you entered the house of Zacchaeus and it was filled with salvation. Enter this home.

Epiclesis: Holy Spirit, come upon these walls and doors, these rooms and windows. Fill this place with your light, so that its silence is restful and its conversation kind. Let every meal here be a small communion, every welcome a sign of your welcome, every night's sleep held in your peace.

The rooms may be sprinkled with water. A candle may be lit and carried through the home.

C: May the Light that sustains the universe dwell in this home, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

P: Amen.

THE BLESSING OF A NEW VENTURE

For a business, a project, a journey, a work of art or a new calling.

Reading: Proverbs 16:3 or Psalm 90:17 or Matthew 25:14–23.

C: Creator God, from the first moment of time you have been making all things new, and you invite us to share in your creative work.

Epiclesis: Holy Spirit, come upon this work and upon [N.] who begins it. Breathe wisdom into its plans and integrity into its dealings. Let it bring good to those it serves, fair reward to those who labor in it, and care to the earth. Where ideas meet effort and matter takes shape, be there as its hidden light.

C: Establish the work of our hands, O God; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it (Psalm 90:17). Amen.

THE BLESSING OF A MARRIAGE ANNIVERSARY OR THE RENEWAL OF VOWS

Reading: Ecclesiastes 4:9–12 or 1 Corinthians 13:4–8.

C: [N.] and [N.], [number] years ago you made solemn vows. We give thanks for every day you have shared, in joy and in sorrow.

C: Do you renew the promises you made to one another?

Couple: We do.

The couple may repeat any form of the marriage vows, beginning, “I, [N.], renew my promise to you, [N.]...”

Epiclesis: Holy Spirit, who first kindled this love, come upon [N.] and [N.] again. Gather all their years into your light: the gladness and the strain, the words spoken and the words forgiven. Renew their tenderness, deepen their friendship, and let the love they have built become a shelter for all who know them.

C: May the God who has been faithful to you keep you faithful to one another, all your days. Amen.

THE BLESSING OF A CHILD

At birth, adoption, a birthday or any milestone.

Reading: Mark 10:13–16 or Psalm 139:13–16.

C: [N.], you are fearfully and wonderfully made. You are loved, and you belong.

Epiclesis: Holy Spirit, come upon [N.]. Shine in their growing mind and body. Give them curiosity and courage, laughter and kindness, and a heart that knows it is held by the Love that holds the stars.

The celebrant or a parent may trace a cross on the child’s forehead.

C: The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace (Numbers 6:24–26). Amen.

THE BLESSING OF A MOTHER OR OF PARENTS

During pregnancy, after a birth or adoption, or on any occasion of thanksgiving for parents.

Reading: Luke 1:46–55 or Isaiah 66:13.

C: We give thanks for the gift of [new] life and for the love that receives it.

Epiclesis: Holy Spirit, come upon [N.] [and N.]. Strengthen [her / them] in body and in spirit. In tired nights and busy days, be their rest; in uncertainty, their wisdom; in joy, their song. Let their home be a cradle of light.

C: May God, who mothers and fathers us all, bless you and your family. Amen.

THE BLESSING OF THE SICK

A priest may anoint with the oil of the sick. Laying on of hands may be offered by any minister, with consent.

Reading: Mark 6:12–13 or James 5:14–16 or Psalm 23.

C: [N.], the Lord is near. You are not alone.

Epiclesis: Holy Spirit, healer and comforter, come upon [N.]. Flow into every cell and every fear. Where there is pain, bring ease; where there is weakness, bring strength; where there is fear, bring peace. Let the light that sustains all things hold [N.] in this hour and in every hour.

The minister lays hands on the person, or anoints the forehead and hands, saying: [N.], I anoint you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord in his love and mercy uphold you and give you peace. Amen.

Medical care is always to be sought and supported; this blessing accompanies it.

THE BLESSING OF OBJECTS

For an icon, a cross, a rosary, jewelry, a musical instrument, a vehicle, tools or other objects.

C: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

P: Who made heaven and earth.

Epiclesis: Holy Spirit, come upon this [object]. Made from the stuff of creation and shaped by human skill, let it become for [N.] a reminder of your presence and an instrument of good. May all who use it be drawn closer to you and to one another.

The object may be sprinkled with water.

C: Blessed be God, in whom all things hold together. Amen.

PART V • A CONTEMPLATIVE DAILY OFFICE



These short forms may be prayed alone or with others. The Order also uses the traditional Monastic Diurnal for the full Hours; these brief offices are offered as a simple daily rhythm for busy lives. Silence is an essential part of each office.

MORNING LIGHT

Opening: O Lord, open thou our lips.

Response: And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

A candle may be lit. Silence: notice the light, the breath, the beginning of the day.

Psalm: Psalm 19:1–6, Psalm 63:1–8, or Psalm 104:1–4.

Reading: a short passage from the Gospels or the epistle of the day.

Prayer:

Radiant Christ, you rise on this day as on the first morning.
Let me notice your light in everything I meet:
in faces and in work, in ordinary things and in surprises.
Hold the ones I love; hold the ones I find hard to love.
Let me be, today, a small brightness in your great brightness. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer.

MIDDAY

Opening: O God, make speed to save us.

Response: O Lord, make haste to help us.

Pause in the middle of the day. Two minutes of silence, attending to the breath.

Reading: Matthew 11:28–30 or Psalm 46:10 (“Be still, and know that I am God”).

Prayer:

Christ Pantocrator, at the turning point of the day,
when the sun stands high and the work presses,
gather my scattered mind into your stillness.
Steady my hands, soften my words, and renew my strength. Amen.

COMPLINE

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

Response: Amen.

Silence: recall the day with gratitude. Where there was failure, let it be held and released into mercy.

Psalm: Psalm 4 or Psalm 91:1–6 or Psalm 134.

PHOS HILARON (HAIL, GLADDENING LIGHT)

Hail, gladdening Light, of his pure glory poured
Who is the immortal Father, heavenly, blest,
Holiest of Holies, Jesus Christ our Lord!
Now we are come to the sun's hour of rest;
The lights of evening round us shine;
We hymn the Father, Son and Holy Spirit divine.
Worthiest art thou at all times to be sung
With undefiled tongue,
Son of our God, giver of life, alone:
Therefore in all the world thy glories, Lord, they own.

(tr. John Keble)

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;
A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.
(Luke 2:29–32)

Prayer:

Sustaining One, as the earth turns into darkness,
you do not let go of it, or of me.
Into your hands I give this day, and all whom I love.
Watch over the sick, the restless and those who work through the night.
Let me rest in you, and wake in your light. Amen.

Closing: May the almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, bless us and keep us this night. **Amen.**

APPENDIX A • SEASONAL COLLECTS



Advent. God of the long night and the coming dawn, in the silence of the turning year you prepare the way of your light: make us watchful and hopeful, that we may welcome Christ, who comes to fill all things; through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Christmas. Radiant God, in the birth of Jesus the Word through whom the stars were made became a child in a mother's arms: let the wonder of his coming shine in our homes and families, and make us gentle as he was gentle; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Epiphany. Light of the nations, you led the magi by a star: lead us also, through all the wonders of creation, to the One in whom all things hold together; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lent. Merciful God, in the desert your Son found your sustaining presence: in these forty days strip away what is heavy and false in us, that we may travel light and see clearly; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Holy Week. Christ, who stretched out your arms on the cross to hold the whole world: teach us a love that does not withhold itself, and keep us near you in your passion; who lives and reigns for ever. Amen.

Easter. God of new creation, you raised Jesus from the dead, the firstborn of all things made new: let the light of the resurrection fill every corner of the universe and every corner of our hearts; through the risen Christ. Amen.

Ascension. Christ Pantocrator, ascended to fill all things: lift our sight beyond the small horizons of our fears, and send us out as witnesses to your wide love; who lives and reigns for ever. Amen.

Pentecost. Holy Spirit, fire and breath, you speak in every tongue and kindle every heart: come upon your Church and all creation, and make us one; for you live and reign with the Father and the Son, one God, for ever. Amen.

Trinity. Holy One, Source, Word and Spirit, your life is a communion of love: draw us into that communion, that our marriages, friendships and communities may reflect your eternal dance; one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Transfiguration (6 August). God of glory, on the holy mountain your Son shone with uncreated light: transfigure our seeing, that we may behold that light in all things; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Christ the King / Christ Pantocrator (last Sunday before Advent). Christ Pantocrator, Ruler and Sustainer of All, in you all things were created and in you all things hold together: gather the whole creation into your reign of peace, and make us its servants and its friends; who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Ordinary Time. Faithful God, in the ordinary days you sustain all things with unceasing care: help us to find you in our work and rest, our homes and friendships, and to live each day as a gift; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

APPENDIX B • GLOSSARY



Collect. A short prayer that “collects” the intentions of the people, usually addressed to God, naming an attribute, making a petition and ending through Christ.

Compline. The last office of the day, prayed before sleep (from Latin *completorium*, “completion”).

Epiclesis. From Greek *epiklēsis*, “invocation” or “calling down.” The prayer asking the Holy Spirit to come upon gifts, persons or things to make them holy. In this book every Eucharistic and blessing rite contains an epiclesis.

Eucharist. From Greek *eucharistia*, “thanksgiving.” The celebration of the Lord’s Supper with bread and wine.

Monastic Diurnal. A book containing the daytime Hours of the traditional monastic Divine Office.

Nunc Dimittis. The Song of Simeon (Luke 2:29–32), named from its first words in Latin, “now you dismiss.”

Pantocrator. From Greek *Pantokratōr*: *pas*, “all,” and *kratein*, “to rule” or “to hold.” A title of Christ as Ruler and Sustainer of All; also the classic icon of Christ blessing and holding the Gospels.

Phos Hilaron. “Gladdening Light,” an ancient Greek evening hymn, among the oldest Christian hymns still in use.

Rubric. A direction for the conduct of a rite, traditionally printed in red (Latin *ruber*, “red”).

Sanctus. “Holy, holy, holy,” the hymn of the angels (Isaiah 6:3), sung in the Eucharistic prayer.

Trisagion. “Thrice-holy,” the ancient hymn “Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One.”