

**Compline: A Night Service for Healing**  
**St. John's by the Campus Episcopal Church**  
**Ames, IA, August 25, 2021**

**Augustine, Bishop of Hippo and Theologian +430** (August 28)

Augustine, perhaps the greatest theologian in the history of Western Christianity, was born in 354 at Tagaste in North Africa. In his restless search for truth, he was attracted to the Manichaeans who had attempted to solve the problem of evil by positing the existence of an independent agency eternally opposed to God [in our words, the Devil]). He was constantly engaged in an inner struggle with his personal morals. Under the influence of his mother, Monnica, he was baptized on Easter eve by Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan in 386. After returning to North Africa in 391, and found himself unexpectedly chosen by the people of Hippo to be a presbyter (priest) and four years later was chosen as their bishop. He wrote his autobiography shortly before 400 in the form of an extended prayer, and is still read today and one of the classics of Western spirituality. His letters, treatises, and sermons have provided a rich source of new and fresh insights into Christian truth. In refuting the Manichaeans, Augustine affirmed that all creation was essentially good, having been created by God; and that evil is the privation of good, not an act of an evil deity. After the persecution of the Church by Diocletian in the early 4<sup>th</sup> C, Augustine wrote against the Donatists, a 4<sup>th</sup> C heresy, asserting that the Church was "holy", not because its members could be proven holy, but because holiness was the purpose of the Church. Augustine refuted the teaching of Pelagius, who said that humans could save themselves by their good works, by stressing the unconditional love and grace of God if humans would love God in return and embody that love. God saves us, not our works. Martin Luther was an Augustinian monk, greatly influenced by these teachings. Of the Eucharist, Augustine said: "When you receive the bread, the body of Christ, behold what you are; become what you receive." When Alaric the Visigoth sacked Rome in 410, Augustine wrote his greatest work, The City of God. He died on August 28, 430, as the Vandals were besieging his own earthly city of Hippo. (Holy Women, Holy Men)

*Faith is given through time and the circumstances of life. The living God shapes us in our time and place. Look for the footprints of God around you wherever you are this week. Pray for peace and safety in our time from war of weather. Our world needs it.*

## The Approach

**Reader 1:** The angels of God guard us through the night,  
**Reader 2:** *and quieten the powers of darkness.*

The Spirit of God be our guide  
to lead us to peace and to glory.

It is but lost labor that we haste to rise up early,  
and so late take rest, and eat the bread of anxiety.  
For those beloved of God are given gifts even while they sleep.

*Silence*

My brothers and sisters, our help is in the name of the eternal God.  
***who is making the heavens and the earth.***

Dear God, thank you for all that is good,  
for our creation and for our humanity,  
for the stewardship you have given us of this planet earth.

for the gifts of life and of one another,  
 for your love which is unbounded and eternal.  
 O thou, most holy and beloved,  
 my Companion, my Guide upon the way, my bright evening star.

**Reader 3:** We repent the wrongs we have done:

*Silence*

We have wounded your love  
**Reader 4: O God, heal us.**

We stumble in the darkness.  
**Light of the world transfigure us.**

We forget that we are your home.  
**Spirit of God, dwell in us.**

Eternal Spirit, living God,  
 in whom we live and move and have our being,  
 all that we are, have been, and shall be is known to you,  
 to the very secret of our hearts and all that rises to trouble us.

Living flame burn into us,  
 cleansing wind, blow through us,  
 fountain of water, well up within us,  
 that we may love and praise in deed and in truth.

### **The Invocation**

**Reader 1:** Like the first disciples before the coming of God's power at Pentecost,  
 We wait in faith, and pray.

*Silence*

Be with us, Holy Spirit;  
**Reader 2: nothing can separate us from your love.**  
 Be with us as of old, fill us with your power,  
**direct all our thoughts to your goodness.**  
 Be present, Holy Spirit;  
**Bring faith and healing and peace.**

*Silence*

The Lord is here.  
**God's Spirit is with us.**

### **The Psalmody**

#### **Psalm 87**

**Reader 5:** The Lord loves the city that is founded on the holy hill:

**Reader 6: its gates are dearer to God than all the dwellings of Jacob.**

Glorious things are spoken of you:  
**Zion, city of our God.**

I the Lord will count Egypt and Babylon:  
**as among those who are my friends.**

The people of Philistia, Tyre and Ethiopia:  
**each one was born in her.**

All shall call Jerusalem "Mother":  
**for each one of them was born in her.**

The Most High will keep her secure:  
**when the roll of the peoples is written up,  
 the Lord shall record "Each one was born in her".**

Singers and dancers alike shall proclaim:  
**"In you all will find their home."**

#### **Psalm 4**

**Reader 7:** Answer me when I call, O God, for you are the God of justice.

You set me free when I was hard-pressed:

**Reader 8: be gracious to me now and hear my prayers.**

Men and women, how long will you turn my glory to my shame?  
 How long will you love what is worthless and run after lies?  
**Know that God has shown me such wonderful kindness.  
 When I call out in prayer, God hears me.**

Tremble, admit defeat, and sin no more:  
**Look deep into your heart before you sleep and be still.**

Bring your gifts, just as you are, and put your trust in God:  
**Many are asking, Who can make us content?**

The light of your countenance has gone from us, O God:  
**Yet you have given my heart more gladness  
 than those whose corn and wine and oil increase.**

I lie down in peace and sleep comes at once:  
**for in you alone, O God, do I dwell unafraid.**

#### **Psalm 119: 33-40**

**Reader 9:** Teach me Lord the way of your statutes:

**Reader 10: and in keeping them I shall have my reward.**

Give me understanding and I shall keep your law:  
**I shall keep it with all my heart.**

Make me walk in the path of your commandments:  
**for that is my desire.**

Incline my heart to your instruction:  
**and away from covetous desires.**

Turn away my eyes from what is empty and false:  
**and give me life in your way.**

Fulfill your promise to your servant:  
**your promise to those who fear you.**

Turn away from me the scorn that I dread:  
**for your judgements are very good.**

How I long for your precepts:  
**in your righteousness give me life.**

### **The Holy Scripture**

*Isaiah 62:6-8a, 10-12*

#### **Reader 12:**

Upon your walls, I Jerusalem, I have posted sentinels; all day and all night they shall never be silent. You who remind the Lord, take no rest, and give him no rest until he establishes Jerusalem and makes it renowned through the earth. Go through, go through the gates; prepare the way for the people; build up, build up the highway, clear it of stones, lift up an ensign over the peoples. The Lord has proclaimed to the ends of the earth: Say to daughter Zion, "See, your salvation comes; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him," They shall be called, "The Holy People, The Redeemed of the Lord"; and you shall be called, "Sought Out, A City Not Forgotten."

*(silence for reflection)*

*John 15:5, 8-12*

#### **Reader 13:**

Jesus said: I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

*(silence for reflection)*

#### **Reader 14:** Let us pray:

Lord God, the light of the minds that know you, the life of the souls that love you, and the strength of the hearts that serve you: Help us, following the example of your servant Augustine of Hippo, so to know you that we may truly love you, and so to love you that we

may fully serve you, whom to serve is perfect freedom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

### **The Prayers**

**Reader 1:** God, you are working still, breaking down and building up;  
 open our eyes to discern your hands  
 so that we make take our place as laborers together with you.  
 (p. 614, NZ Book of Common Prayer)

**Reader 1:** Into your hands, O God, I commend my spirit,

**Reader 2:** **For you have redeemed me, O God of truth and love.**

Keep me, O God, as the apple of an eye;  
**Hide me under the shadow of your wings.**

### **Song of Simeon (Nunc Dimittis)**

**Reader 3:** Preserve us, O God, while waking, and guard us while sleeping,  
 That awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep may rest in your peace.

**Reader 4:** Praise be to God, I have lived to see this day.  
 God's promise is fulfilled, and my duty done.  
 At last you have given me peace, for I have seen with my own eyes  
 the salvation you have prepared for all nations –  
 a light to the world in its darkness, and the glory of your people Israel.  
 Glory be to God, sustaining, redeeming, sanctifying,  
 as in the beginning, so now, and for ever. Amen.

**Reader 3:** Preserve us, O God, while waking, and guard us while sleeping,  
 That awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep may rest in your peace.

**Reader 5:** Eternal Spirit,  
 Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,  
 Source of all that is and that shall be,  
 Father and Mother of us all,  
 Loving God, in whom is heaven:

The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!  
 The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!  
 Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!  
 Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth.

With the bread we need for today, feed us.  
 In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.  
 In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.  
 From trials too great to endure, spare us.  
 From the grip of all that is evil, free us.

For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,  
now and forever. Amen.

### **The Prayers of the People**

*We pray this night for the healing of our nation and our world.*

**Reader 6:** Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart and especially the hearts of the people of this land, that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed we may live in justice and peace.

God of grace and mercy:

**Reader 7: Hear our prayer.**

**Reader 7:** O God, you have bound us together in a common life. Help us, in the midst of our struggles for justice and truth, to confront one another without hatred or bitterness, and to work together with mutual forbearance and respect.

God of grace and mercy:

**Reader 8: Hear our prayer.**

**Reader 8:** Almighty and most merciful God, we remember before you all poor and neglected persons whom it would be easy for us to forget: the homeless and the destitute, the old and the sick, and all who have none to care for them. Help us to heal those who are broken in body or spirit, and to turn their sorrow into joy.

God of grace and mercy:

**Reader 9: Hear our prayer.**

**Reader 9:** Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake.

God of grace and mercy:

**Reader 10: Hear our prayer.**

**Reader 10:** We pray in thanksgiving for our Bishop-Elect of the Diocese of Iowa, Betsey Monnot. We also pray in thanksgiving for Bishop Alan and Donna as they "pass on the torch" and we move into the plans that God has for us. We give thanks for our rector, Amma Kim; our assisting priest, Mary Jane; our postulant for the diaconate, Greta; and our ministry intern, Chad. We pray for your blessing on the birthdays of Lily Mellies (8/26), John Bowler (8/27) and Michelle Robinson (8/29); and the anniversary of Mary Ellen and Douglas Hurt (8/29).

God of grace and mercy:

**Reader 11: Hear our prayer.**

**Reader 11:** We pray for the people and clergy of our companion Diocese of Swaziland whose lives, livelihoods and worship are currently threatened with civil unrest. We also pray for our companions in Nzara and Brechin. We pray for the people suffering from natural disasters in Haiti, California, Tennessee and the East Coast. And we pray for all refugees fleeing from conflict in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, and Central America; and all suffering from the pandemic and the lack of shelter, food and livelihood. We pray for peace and healing in our suffering world.

God of grace and mercy,

**ALL:** Hear our prayer.

**Reader 1:**

O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you, bring the nations into your fold, pour out your spirit upon all flesh, and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**Reader 2:** God of the present moment,

God who in Jesus stills the storm and soothes the frantic heart;

Bring hope and courage to us as we wait in uncertainty.

Bring hope that you will make us the equal of whatever lies ahead.

Bring courage to endure what cannot be avoided,

for your will is health and wholeness;

You are God, and we need You. Amen. *(p. 747, NZ Book of Common Prayer)*

**Reader 3:** Lord, it is night.

The night is for stillness.

Let us be still in the presence of God.

It is night after a long day.

What has been done has been done;

what has not been done has not been done;

let it be.

The night is dark.

Let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our own lives  
rest in you.

The night is quiet.

Let the quietness of your peace enfold us,

all dear to us,

and all who have no peace.

The night heralds the dawn.

Let us look expectantly to a new day,

new joys,

new possibilities.

In your name we pray. Amen.

**Reader 4:** God be in my head, and in my understanding.

**Reader 5:** God be in my eyes, and in my looking;

**Reader 6:** God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;

**Reader 7:** God be in my heart, and in my thinking.

**Reader 8:** God be at my end, and at my departing.

**Reader 1:** To God the Creator,  
          who loved us first and gave this world to be our home,  
To God the Redeemer,  
          who loves us and by dying and rising pioneered the way of freedom.  
To God the Sanctifier,  
          who spreads the divine love in our hearts,  
Be praise and glory for time and for eternity.

**ALL:** Thanks be to God. Alleluia!