

Mothers' Union: Mary Sumner Day Compline

9th August 2020

Good evening. My name is Deborah Chapman. I'm the assistant chaplain at the chaplaincy of St. George's in Barcelona, Spain and also serve as the chaplain of the Mothers' Union, the Church of England Diocese in Europe.

I've been asked to say a bit about myself, so I'd like to do that in the context of the Mothers' Union prayer, which you may want to keep in mind. I was very blessed to grow up in a loving family that regularly attended church, so when I finally made a personal commitment to Christ it was no surprise to me that our God is a loving Lord. We pray for families around the world. I grew up in five countries in Latin America, the United States, Spain and France, before ending up studying theology in the UK where I met my Scottish husband. Together we've also lived in Peru and later, when our two children were born, in Papua New Guinea. Mothers' Union is represented in many if not all of these countries.

My own connection with Mothers' Union began straight after my ordination in 2005 when I served my curacy in the Willsden area of the London diocese. The Mothers' Union members of my church blessed me by sharing their love with me, encouraging, strengthening and supporting me as a deacon and then priest, and of course that served to strengthen my marriage and my family in the midst of a busy ministry. I later became chaplain at the Mothers' Union for the Willsden area and enjoyed getting to know other branches than my own. In 2014 after a year in the chaplaincy of Dubai and the northern Emirates, based in Sharjah, my husband became chaplain of St George's Barcelona. At an Archdeaconry Synod that I could not attend he spoke with Carol Johnston, the Archdeacon's wife, and when she heard that I had been a Mothers' Union chaplain she wondered if I would be willing to fill the role for the Diocese in Europe. And here I am over five years later.

Unity in prayer and worship across such a diverse Diocese in Europe, with chaplaincies in 42 countries, is something that I confess I trust into God's loving care, giving thanks for the fact that we all use Families Worldwide¹ in our daily prayers. I do a monthly reflection for our website and have helped in the opening and development of an MU branch in my own chaplaincy. We reach out in love and service as God's hands across the world and in the case of Europe that's not really so difficult, especially in the big city chaplaincies, the world is coming to us. Please pray that we will be faithful in doing God's will for his glory.

Mary Sumner's personal prayer guided her throughout each day:

All this day, O Lord, let me touch as many lives as possible for thee; and every life I touch, do Thou by Thy Spirit quicken, whether through the word I speak, the prayer I breathe or the life I live. Amen

And now we turn to the ending of the day and Compline. Let us pray.

Here at the end of the day, in the stillness of the night I pray.²
My Lord, you created me and you know me. I am your child.

My Father, the day is over and the shadows of the night fall softly around me.
I thank you for the many blessings of the day, for the people I have met,
and the good friends who have helped me on my way,
for the special moments of joy which have made my heart glad,
and for giving me the opportunity of showing your love to others.

1 <https://muenterprises.org/birmingham/families-worldwide/>

2 Similar text found in <https://eatprayloveliturgy.wordpress.com/2015/04/01/compline-by-candlelight-in-holy-week-2015/>

My Father, I long to serve you aright.
I am truly sorry for those moments when I failed you.
Forgive me, that I may lay down this night in peace.
Amen

Before the ending of the day,
Creator of the world, we pray
That you, with steadfast love, would keep
Your watch around us while we sleep.

From evil dreams defend our sight,
From fears and terrors of the night;
Tread underfoot our deadly foe
That we no sinful thought may know.

O Father, that we ask be done
Through Jesus Christ, your only Son;
And Holy Spirit, by whose breath
Our souls are raised to life from death.

Amen.

Psalm 91

¹ Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High ♦
and abides under the shadow of the Almighty,
² Shall say to the Lord, 'My refuge and my stronghold, ♦
my God, in whom I put my trust.'
³ For he shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler ♦
and from the deadly pestilence.
⁴ He shall cover you with his wings and you shall be safe under his feathers; ♦
his faithfulness shall be your shield and buckler.
⁵ You shall not be afraid of any terror by night, ♦
nor of the arrow that flies by day;
⁶ Of the pestilence that stalks in darkness, ♦
nor of the sickness that destroys at noonday.
⁷ Though a thousand fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand, ♦
yet it shall not come near you.
⁸ Your eyes have only to behold ♦
to see the reward of the wicked.
⁹ Because you have made the Lord your refuge ♦
and the Most High your stronghold,
¹⁰ There shall no evil happen to you, ♦
neither shall any plague come near your tent.
¹¹ For he shall give his angels charge over you, ♦
to keep you in all your ways.
¹² They shall bear you in their hands, ♦
lest you dash your foot against a stone.
¹³ You shall tread upon the lion and adder; ♦
the young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot.
¹⁴ Because they have set their love upon me, therefore will I deliver them; ♦
I will lift them up, because they know my name.

¹⁵ They will call upon me and I will answer them; ♦
I am with them in trouble, I will deliver them and bring them to honour.
¹⁶ With long life will I satisfy them ♦
and show them my salvation.

**Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now
and shall be for ever.
Amen.**

Isaiah chapter 60 verses 1 to 6 and verse 19

¹ “Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.
² See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples,
but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you.
³ Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.
⁴ “Lift up your eyes and look about you: All assemble and come to you;
your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried on the hip.
⁵ Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy;
the wealth on the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come.
⁶ Herds of camels will cover your land, young camels of Midian and Ephah.
And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the LORD.
¹⁹ The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you,
for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory.

Gospel Canticle: The Nunc dimittis (The Song of Simeon)

**All Save us, O Lord, while waking,
and guard us while sleeping,
that awake we may watch with Christ
and asleep may rest in peace.**

¹ Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace: ♦
your word has been fulfilled.
² My own eyes have seen the salvation ♦
which you have prepared in the sight of every people;
³ A light to reveal you to the nations ♦
and the glory of your people Israel.

Luke 2.29-32

**All Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

**All Save us, O Lord, while waking,
and guard us while sleeping,
that awake we may watch with Christ
and asleep may rest in peace.**

Prayers

Let us pray

Lord, we are a broken people, broken through pain, fear and doubt. ³

Your broken body, broken for us on the cross and in the breaking of the bread in Eucharist, is your great act of love for us.

So we ask you, take our shattered lives and make them whole, melt our hearts, transform our thoughts, that we may accept each moment as it comes to us, with faith and trust, a simple “we will it Lord”, that all that happens has your seal upon it, and with our life, we will complete our way.

Amen

I give you a few moments of silence to reflect on the past and look into the future.

[pause]

Visit this place, O Lord, we pray,
and drive far from it the snares of the enemy;
may your holy angels dwell with us and guard us in peace,
and may your blessing be always upon us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Wherever you are and whatever language you speak as your mother tongue, please join me now in praying the prayer that Jesus taught his friends the disciples to pray:

All **Our Father, which 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.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

[from the Anglican Church in Costa Brava⁴:]

May the peace of the night unfold me,
so that I may be bathed in love

As I say the next three lines you may wish to repeat each line after me and to sign yourself with the sign of the cross:

³ Found in <https://m.facebook.com/MothersUnionNorwich/posts/3026636624038325>
(Prayer sourced from “United in Prayer and Worship”, Mothers’ Union 2002)

⁴ <https://www.anglicanb.org/prayer.html>

The love of the Father who made me,
the love of the Son who died for me,
the love of the Spirit who dwells within me,
bless me and keep me.
Amen.

May heaven come close as I sleep this night,
and angels surround me with Christ's pure light.
Amen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=heckMzfViNg&t=46s>

The transcript is based the one supplied by YouTube.

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The order for Compline can be found here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/service-word/service-word-morning-evening-prayer-night-prayer#mm6e1>

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