



**Daily Prayer**  
**Book one**  
**The journey begins**

# Celtic Daily Prayer

## Book One: *The Journey Begins*

*Celtic Daily Prayer* has been a valued spiritual resource for nearly twenty years, now re-packaged to coincide with the launch of Book Two, a brand new collection of prayers and liturgies. Inspired by ancient Celtic Christianity, it reaches out to bring inspiration and comfort to all today who seek to be still and to find spiritual truth.

As a companion for the journey, this book offers meditations for the events of life, and liturgies for its seasons. It also provides a two-year cycle of insights and daily reflections with accompanying scripture readings for use in morning and evening prayer.

This is a rich treasury that is loved and trusted across the world.

**The Northumbria Community** is a dispersed network of people, hugely diverse, from different backgrounds, streams and edges of the Christian faith, united in their desire to embrace and express an ongoing exploration into a new way for living. In this respect the Community follows the rich tradition of monastic communities through the centuries.

## How to use this book

If you want to live life free,  
take your time, go slowly.  
Do few things, but do them well.  
Simple joys are holy.

Most of this book is best used on an individual basis or in the context of a small family group. The starting-point must be the Daily Office, with its accompanying Meditation and Daily reading. It is strongly recommended that, before using this book, you read the section entitled 'How to use the Daily Office': it will be your best introduction to the style of worship that pervades this prayer book.

Having established the pattern of daily prayer and perhaps incorporated the Complines into daily use, you can dip into the rest of the liturgies as a resource book for worship on specific occasions or to meet particular needs. This can still be on an individual or small-group basis, but these additional liturgies are ideal for use by larger groups. Those with responsibility for leading worship may find material here to dip into or to inspire their own creativity. If you do this, we only ask that you respect the copyright both of the Community in this publication and of those whose work we, in our turn, have used in this compilation (for details see the 'Sources and Acknowledgements' section, p.828). We will be able to advise you on such matters (see the 'Contact details', p.836).

Whether you use this book daily or as an occasional resource to dip into, we pray, with you, in the words of an old Celtic blessing:

O God, make clear to us each road.  
O God, make safe to us each steep;  
when we stumble, hold us;  
when we fall, lift us up.  
When we are hard-pressed with evil,  
deliver us;  
and bring us at last to Your glory.

## Monday – the Aidan Compline

Aidan came to Lindisfarne from Iona in the year 635 at the request of King Oswald. He was a man of deep prayer who meditated on the words of Scripture, equipping himself in quiet for an active and highly effective apostolate. He remained at Lindisfarne for sixteen years.

In 651, Aidan was taken ill at Bamburgh and died. Cuthbert, who was at that moment looking after a flock of sheep on the Lammermuir hills, saw a vision of angels taking Aidan's soul to heaven.

+ *indicates that you may make the sign of the cross.*

\* *indicates a change of reader.*

*All say together the sections in **bold** type.*

*The words in **bold italic** type set between lines should be said by each in turn.*

+ *(silently.)*

\* O Christ, Son of the living God,  
may Your holy angels guard our sleep,  
may they watch over us as we rest  
and hover around our beds.

\* Let them reveal to us in our dreams  
visions of Your glorious truth,  
O High Prince of the universe,  
O High Priest of the mysteries.

\* May no dreams disturb our rest  
and no nightmares darken our dreams.  
May no fears or worries delay  
our willing, prompt repose.

\* May the virtue of our daily work  
hallow our nightly prayers.  
May our sleep be deep and soft  
so our work be fresh and hard.

May God our Father, our strength and light, bless you with what you most need, beyond even all you would ask. For the weather is always right for the sowing of good seed.

## A house-blessing

This form of prayer may be used:

- ◆ on 1 February, Brigid's feast day, to pray a blessing on the home (a group of friends or neighbours may even go from one house to the next);
- ◆ whenever a Brigid's cross or other cross is put up by the door or on the wall;
- ◆ on moving into a new house or blessing a house at any time (the prayers can be taken out and used singly as often as you like).

*You will find that the prayers take you round the house, beginning outside the doorway, then in the living room. If the house has an open fire or a wood-stove there are extra prayers 'At a warm place' for use in whichever room it is situated. Next you move to the kitchen.*

*There is a blessing to use in each bedroom; but special blessings are also included for use in a single person's room, a couple's room, a guest room, a child's room, and the room of an older son or daughter. Read them carefully beforehand and decide which will be appropriate.*

*Finally you pray a blessing at the door or at any place where a cross or Brigid's cross may be.*

*The leader (usually the householder) reads the parts in ordinary type, and everyone reads together the sections in **bold type**.*

### At the doorway

May God give His blessing to the house that is here.  
 God bless this house from roof to floor,  
 from wall to wall,  
 from end to end,  
 from its foundation and in its covering.

DATE	SAINT	OT READING	PSALM READING	NT READING	GOSPEL READING
1 Jan	New Year	Isaiah 42:5, 9, 12	Psalms 68:1, 3-10, 28, 32-35 (9)	Philippians 3:7-16	John 1:35-50
1 Jan	Telemachus	Isaiah 59:15-16	Psalms 84:4-12 (12B)	Romans 12:20-21	Matthew 5:2-3, 8-9
4 Jan	Juniper	Jeremiah 17:7-8	Psalms 1:1-3 (1A)	1 Corinthians 1:26-31	Matthew 18:1-5
6 Jan	Three Kings' Day	Job 9:1-12	Psalms 72:1-2, 4-6, 10-12, 15, 17-19 (11)	Acts 17:24-27	Matthew 2:1-2 or Matthew 1:18-25; 2:1-2, 13-14
13 Jan	Hilary of Poitiers	Isaiah 32:2-6	Psalms 119:41-46 (42B)	2 Timothy 1:13-14; 2:1-2	Matthew 18:24-28
13 Jan	Kentigern	Ecclesiastes 11:5	Psalms 19:1-4, 7-8 (14A)	Acts 18:24-27	Mark 4:3-9
15 Jan	Ita	Proverbs 24:3-4	Psalms 119:9-16 (11A)	1 Thessalonians 2:7-8, 10, 12-13	Matthew 5:1-3, 7-8
15 Jan	Paul of Thebes	Isaiah 61:8-9	Psalms 63:1, 7-8 (1A)	1 Thessalonians 4:11-12	Matthew 6:5-6
17 Jan	Antony of Egypt	Isaiah 35:1-2	Psalms 91:2-7 (2B)	Ephesians 6:11-18	Matthew 19:16-21
28 Jan	Canaire	Exodus 13:20-21	Psalms 99:3-5, 7 (3B)	Galatians 3:26-29	Luke 24:9-11
1 Feb	Brigid	Leviticus 9:23-24	Psalms 104:13-15, 24-34 (34B)	2 Corinthians 9:6-13	John 2:3-11
8 Feb	Eifleda	1 Samuel 2:18-19, 26; 3:3-4	Psalms 16:1-2, 5-8 (1)	Philippians 4:4-7	John 15:1-5
9 Feb	Teilo	Exodus 22:26-27	Psalms 119:145-149 (145B)	James 1:19-20, 26	Matthew 5:21-22; 7:1-2
11 Feb	Caedmon	Judges 6:11-12	Psalms 147:7-9, 11-19 (7A)	Acts 2:16-18	Luke 1:64-66, 76-79
17 Feb	Finan	Genesis 22:14-18	Psalms 145:3, 4-7 (4A)	Romans 12:16-18	Matthew 5:14-16

## Hild (614–80): 17 November

For Hild's biography see 'Hild – in the right place' (p.291).

## Holy Innocents: 28 December

This feast commemorates the Bethlehem children, aged two years and under, who were massacred by Herod the Great in his attempt to eliminate any rival king of the Jews. It speaks also of the unborn children whose lives are taken through abortion. We pray also for healing and forgiveness for all parents of aborted babies.

Where is the sound of hope,  
 the cry of a child that wakes?  
 The dull, aching, continued breathing  
 of the mother  
 becomes a wail of grief,  
 a weeping for the children  
 who are no more.  
 The silent landscape shudders.  
 God of mercy, light in darkness,  
 hold gently to Your heart  
 the tiny ones we cradle in our prayer  
 whose life was over  
 before it had begun.

### Scriptures:

Jeremiah 31:12-13, 15-17;  
 Matthew 2:13-18;  
 Romans 8:34, 38-39

## John Hyde (1865–1912): 17 February

'Praying Hyde', a missionary to India, was one of six children of a Presbyterian minister from Illinois. He remained single because, as he explained, 'I felt that I wanted to give something to Jesus

## A caim written as a night prayer for someone recently bereaved

(See p.203 for an explanation of caim prayer.)

This night and every night  
seems infinite with questions,  
and sleep as elusive  
as answers.

Pain and longing are always present,  
dulled only a little  
by the distractions of day.  
I am weary; I am angry.  
I am confused.

Circle me, Lord.  
Keep despair and disillusion without.  
Bring a glimmer of hope within.

Circle me, Lord;  
keep nightmare without.  
Bring moments of rest within.

Circle me, Lord;  
keep bitterness without.  
Bring an occasional sense  
of Your presence within.

## Caelan – for the loss of a child

Caelan is the Gaelic word for ‘little one’ – the name given by Nick and Anita Haigh to their second unborn baby. The traumatic experience of losing two babies led Anita to the realisation that there are few specific liturgical resources available for parents and families seeking spiritual strength at a time of such great need; hence this liturgy.



## For a journey

Let me not undertake this journey begrudgingly,  
but instead with love and thankfulness, saying,  
as Columba said:  
I thank You for this, my God:  
I am a traveller  
and stranger in the world,  
like so many of Your people  
before me.

## Blessings

### On the departure of a well-loved guest

Would it not be the beautiful thing now,  
if you were just coming instead of going?

### Till we meet again

May the road rise to meet you;  
may the wind be always at your back.  
May the sun shine warm upon your face  
and the rain fall softly on your fields.  
Until we meet again  
may God hold you  
in the hollow of His hand.

towards some end which is likewise a kind of harvest. Well he knows that he could not call himself man at all unless he labours all his time under the sun to encompass the end for which his faculties were given to him. This end, whatever the nature of his occupation, is his harvest time; and he would be a poor labourer that would not wish, among all that broken gold, to offer back a tithe or a hundredth into the hands that formed the original fecund dust.

*George Mackay Brown, Magnus*

## The gathering of joy and pain

To the singing of the harvest-song goes the life of a year, or of all the years – the summer that is gone, the winter that is coming; the ones who have sown but are not here to reap; the ones who will sow when the reapers that are have been forgotten; the Good Being who makes the sun shine and the corn ripen. There may be the breath of a sigh in that song, but there is also in it a whole storm of rapture.

Gladness must come to its own some time; for the sorrows, there are all the times. To the harvest-field go we, then, for life as it ought to be. The sickle is fate, the hand that holds it is ours, and for once we will be the conqueror. Cut we down a sorrow here and a pain there, bind them, and make them our slaves.

*Kenneth McLeod, The Road to the Isles*

## A harvest prayer

May the holy and life-giving God  
teach us to reverence all His works,  
to praise Him in all we do,  
to live in His image and to His glory.