

**BENEDICTION**

*a short service of*

*devotion to the*

*Blessed Sacrament*

**Name.....**

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This booklet is designed to accompany the service of Benediction at the Church of St Mary the Less in Cambridge (Church of England). Local customs in other places may be slightly different. To obtain the text as a Word document for editing, please contact the author.

The booklet is designed to be used both in and out of church. We suggest that the young people work on the book in the children's group, youth club or choristers' training classes, or at home, and when it is complete it can be used in church as a guide for following the service.

This is a short quiet service, which often happens after evensong.

The service consists of two parts:

- I Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
- II Blessing (benediction)

# Benediction means "blessing"

## 1 Work out how these Latin words are related:

<b>The noun</b>	benedictio	means	blessing
<b>The verb</b>	benedico, benedicere	means	I bless, to bless
<b>The adverb</b>	bene	means	well
<b>The verb</b>	dico, dicere	means	I say, to say
<b>Verb, plural imperative</b>	benedicite	means	bless ye!
<b>The adjective</b>	benedictus	means	blessed
<b>The name</b>	Benedictus	means	Benedict

## 2 What is the name we use for each of these canticles, whose opening words are these, and why?

Opening words in English	Opening words in Latin	The name we use for it in Church
(a) Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord	Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini	
(b) Oh all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord	Benedicite omnia opera Domini Domino	
(c) Blessed be the Lord God of Israel	Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel	

(d) Why? .....

"Blessed" is a funny word with several meanings. It's a way of praising God: when we say "Blessed be God" we mean "may he be well-spoken of". When God blesses us, he bestows love and goodness on us. When we bless our food or other things, we are giving thanks for them as a gift from God, or consecrating them and ourselves to his service. "Blessing" is an old English word meaning "blood sanctification" and has to do with marking things with the blood of a sacrificial animal.

## 1 ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Candles are lit on the altar.

### **3. How many candles can you see? .....**

There should be at least 12.

The Priest and servers come in. Someone fetches the blessed sacrament from the Aumbry where it has been reserved, and places it in the monstrance.

The server rings a little tinkly bell as the monstrance is placed on the altar, and everyone falls to their knees.

*What is the little bell for? Would you be aware what was happening if the bell didn't ring? Maybe you were day-dreaming? It makes you alert and attentive.*

The sacrament may be left on the altar for a while for your silent adoration. Incense is used.

### **4. What do you think the incense is for? .....**

.....

Think about how wonderful it is that we have Jesus with us, as if we could gaze on him with our own eyes.

**Some useful words to know:**

The most holy sacrament	in Latin sanctissimum sacramentum
Draw how it looks:	This is the consecrated bread from the Mass. Because it has been consecrated it has now become, for us, the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is why it is blessed and precious and holy. It is in the form of a large round host.
The aumbry	derived by way of Medieval French from Latin almarium
Draw how it looks:	This is the little cupboard in the wall of the chancel, where they lock up the consecrated sacrament, to keep it safe.
The monstrance	In Latin monstrantia
Draw how it looks	This is a fancy piece of equipment designed to display the consecrated host, which is held in a little clip in the centre so that the people can see it.

Usually the singing starts straight away. Don't let that distract you from gazing at the blessed sacrament.

The first hymn is *O salutaris hostia*.

This is the last two verses of a hymn by St Thomas Aquinas that begins *Verbum supernum prodiens* (see number 269).

Here are the words:

## O SAVING VICTIM, OPENING WIDE

O salutaris hostia quae caeli pandis ostium; bella premunt hostilia; da robur, fer auxilium	<b>O saving victim opening wide the gate of heaven to man below our foes press on from every side; thine aid supply, thy strength bestow.</b>
Uni trinoque Domino Sit sempiterna gloria Qui vitam sine termino Nobis donet in patria <b>Amen</b>	<b>All praise and thanks to thee ascend for ever more blest One in Three O grant us life that shall not end In our true native land with thee. Amen</b>

The English words don't say exactly what the Latin does, because the poem has to rhyme and fit the music. You could write a more accurate translation if you didn't have to make it fit the music. On the next page you can use the clues to help you do that.

My own literal translation of

## O SALUTARIS HOSTIA

<p>O salutaris hostia          quae caeli pandis ostium;          bella premunt hostilia;          da robur, fer auxilium</p> <p>Uni trinoque Domino          Sit sempiterna gloria          Qui vitam sine termino          Nobis donet in patria</p> <p><b>Amen</b></p>	<p><b>O saving victim</b></p> <p><b>Amen</b></p>
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### Clues

Latin	English	Latin	English
salutaris	healthy, life-saving	hostia	sacrificial victim
quae	who (feminine)—to go with hostia	caeli	of heaven
pandis	(thou) dost fling wide	ostium	a door or entrance passage
bellum, bella	war, wars	hostile, hostilia	hostile (singular, plural)—goes with bella
premunt	(they) press upon	da	give!
robur	strength	fer	bring!
auxilium	help	uni	to one
trino	to three (the que on the end means 'and to three')	Domino	to the Lord
sit	be, let there be	sempiterna	eternal
gloria	glory	qui	who (masculine)—goes with Domino
vita, vitam	life	sine	without
termino	end	donet	may (he) give
nobis	to us	in patria	in the fatherland

Next, there may be some prayers or a litany, or a period of silence.

A **litany** is an ancient kind of prayer from the early Christian Church. There is a set response (such as "Lord have Mercy" or "Lord hear us" which comes again and again in response to a series of petitions spoken or sung by the priest or deacon.)

Sometimes we use the prayer called "Anima Christi"

<p><b>Soul of Christ, sanctify me</b>  <b>Body of Christ, save me</b>  <b>Blood of Christ, inebriate me.</b>  <b>Water from the side of Christ, wash me.</b>  <b>Passion of Christ, strengthen me.</b>  <b>O good Jesu, hear me.</b>  <b>Within Thy wounds, hide me.</b>  <b>Suffer me not to be separated from Thee.</b>  <b>From the malicious enemy, defend me.</b>  <b>In the hour of my death, call me.</b>  <b>And bid me come to thee</b>  <b>That with thy saints I may praise Thee.</b>  <b>For ever and ever</b>  <b>Amen</b></p>	<p><b>ANIMA Christi, sanctifica me.</b>  <b>Corpus Christi, salva me.</b>  <b>Sanguis Christi, inebria me.</b>  <b>Aqua lateris Christi, lava me.</b>  <b>Passio Christi, conforta me.</b>  <b>O bone Iesu, exaudi me.</b>  <b>Intra tua vulnera absconde me.</b>  <b>Ne permittas me separari a te.</b>  <b>Ab hoste maligno defende me.</b>  <b>In hora mortis meae voca me.</b>  <b>Et iube me venire ad te,</b>  <b>Ut cum Sanctis tuis laudem te</b>  <b>in saecula saeculorum.</b>  <b>Amen</b></p>
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"Inebriate me" means "make me drunk". Some people say "invigorate me" instead. Look at the Latin. Which do you think is the right translation?

**5. Work out from this prayer what the words "Corpus Christi" mean:**

**Answer:** .....

At the end of this period of quiet prayer and adoration, we say this **VERSICLE AND RESPONSE** three times:

**Priest:** Most sacred heart of Jesus

**All:** **have mercy upon us**

Now we all bow down as we sing the hymn, *Tantum Ergo*.

This is the last two verses of another hymn by St Thomas Aquinas which starts *Pange lingua gloriosi* (see number 268).

Here are the words:

## **THEREFORE WE BEFORE HIM BENDING**

Tantum ergo sacramentum  
Veneremur cernui  
Et antiquum documentum  
Novo cedat ritui.  
Praestet fides supplementum  
Sensuum defectui.

**Therefore we before him bending  
this great sacrament revere.  
Types and shadows have their ending  
for the newer rite is here.  
Faith our outward sense befriending  
makes the inward vision clear.**

Genitori genitoque  
Laus et iubilatio  
Salus, honor, virtus quoque  
Sit et benedictio:  
Procedenti ab utroque  
Compar sit laudatio  
Amen

**Glory let us give and blessing  
to the Father and the Son  
Honour, might and praise addressing  
while eternal ages run.  
Ever too his love confessing,  
who from both with both is one.  
Amen**

These familiar English words are chosen to fit the music again. On the next page you can use the hints and clues to help you write a translation that is more accurate.

My own literal translation of  
**TANTUM ERGO SACRAMENTUM**

Tantum ergo sacramentum	<b>Such a great sacrament</b>
Veneremur cernui;	<b>therefore</b>
Et antiquum documentum	<b>let us venerate</b>
Novo cedat ritui.	
Praestet fides supplementum	
Sensuum defectui.	
Genitori genitoque	
Laus et iubilatio	<b>praise and</b>
Salus, honor, virtus quoque	
Sit et benedictio:	<b>be, and</b>
Procedenti ab utroque	<b>To</b>
Compar sit laudatio	<b>be equal</b>
<b>Amen</b>	<b>Amen</b>

**clues**

<b>Latin</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Latin</b>	<b>English</b>
tantum	such	ergo	therefore
sacramentum	sacrament	veneremur	let us venerate
cernui	prostrate, bowed down	et	and
antiquum	ancient	documentum	teaching
cedat	gives way to	novo	to new
ritui	to a rite	fides	faith
praestet	let it emerge	supplementum	as a supplement
defectui	for the shortfall	sensuum	of senses
genitori	to the begetter (the father)	genito	to the begotten —the que on the end means 'and to the begotten'
laus	praise	iubilatio	jubilation
salus	health, salvation	honor	honour
virtus	strength	quoque	too
sit	be, let it be	benedictio	blessing
procedenti	to the one who proceeds	ab utroque	from both (the father and the son)
compar	equal	laudatio	praising

After the hymn, we have a  
**VERSICLE AND RESPONSE:**

Priest: Thou gavest them bread from heaven

People: **Containing in itself all sweetness**

In Eastertide we add "**Alleluia!**" to both the versicle and the response.

### **THE COLLECT FOR CORPUS CHRISTI**

The priest recites a prayer, beginning "O God, who in a wonderful sacrament..." **Amen**

Here it is in Latin and then in English. See if you can work out which word means which.

*Deus, qui nobis sub sacramento mirabilis passionis tuae memoriam reliquisti: tribue, quaesumus, ita nos corporis et sanguinis tui sacra mysteria venerari, ut redemptionis tuae fructum in nobis jugiter sentiamus. Qui vivis... Amen.*

O God, who in a wonderful sacrament hast left unto us a memorial of thy passion, grant, we beseech thee, that we may so venerate the sacred mysteries of thy body and blood, that we may ever perceive within ourselves the fruits of thy redemption. Who livest... Amen.

## II THE BLESSING (BENEDICTION)

Now the priest is going to give us a blessing with the monstrance containing the Blessed Sacrament. The server dresses the priest in a special wrap to handle the monstrance with This precious embroidered or silk wrap is called a *humeral veil*. It serves to conceal the priest's arms and hands so that attention is focused not on him but on the monstrance.

**6. Why is the humeral veil called a humeral veil? Work it out from this bit of information:**

Latin	English
<i>humerus, humeri</i>	shoulder, upper arm

**Answer:** A humeral veil is a veil that .....

The priest picks up the monstrance and turns to face the people. The priest lifts it high up and moves it up and down and sideways in the shape of a cross, to bless the people. The tinkly bell rings.

*Why does the tinkly bell ring? Would you have been day-dreaming or not paying attention? It's the most important moment! You can make the sign of the cross, touching your forehead and breast: that is a sign that you have received the blessing (which was in the form of the cross).*

**7. Why is a cross shape like this a special holy sign of blessing for Christians?**

**Answer** .....

Now the priest puts the monstrance back on the altar and takes off the humeral veil. The priest kneels again.

### THE DIVINE PRAISES

The priest may use all of these or just some. We repeat the sentence after the priest.

Notice that almost all these sentences begin "benedictus" except for a few which begin "benedicta" or "benedictum".

<i>Benedictus Deus</i>	<b>Blessed be God</b>
<i>Benedictum nomen sanctum eius</i>	<b>Blessed be his holy name</b>
<i>Benedictus Jesus Christus, verus Deus et verus homo</i>	<b>Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true man</b>
<i>Benedictum nomen Jesu</i>	<b>Blessed be the name of Jesus</b>
<i>Benedictum Cor eius sacratissimum</i>	<b>Blessed be his most sacred heart</b>
<i>Benedictus Sanguis eius pretiosissimus</i>	<b>Blessed be his most sacred blood</b>
<i>Benedictus Jesus in sanctissimo altaris Sacramento</i>	<b>Blessed Jesus in the most holy sacrament of the altar</b>
<i>Benedicta magna Mater Dei, Maria</i>	<b>Blessed be the great mother of God, Mary most holy</b>
<i>Benedictum nomen Mariae, Virginis et Matris</i>	<b>Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother</b>
<i>Benedictus sanctus Joseph, ejus castissimus sponsus</i>	<b>Blessed be Saint Joseph, her most chaste spouse</b>
<i>Benedictus Deus in angelis suis et in sanctis suis.</i>	<b>Blessed be God in his angels and in his saints.</b>
<i>Amen</i>	<b>Amen</b>

**8. Can you work out why some of them begin benedicta and some of them begin benedictum?**

**Answer:** .....

.....

## THE ANTIPHON AND PSALM 117

<b>The antiphon in Latin</b>	<b>Write it in English (from memory!)</b>
Adoremus in aeternum	
sanctissimum sacramentum	
<b>The psalm</b>	<b>Fill in the missing words from memory or use the clues below</b>
Laudate Dominum	O praise the .....
omnes gentes	..... ye heathen
laudate eum	..... him
omnes populi.	..... ye people
Quoniam confirmata est super nos misericordia ejus	For his merciful ..... is ever more and more towards .....
et veritas Domini manet in aeternum	and the ..... of the ..... endureth for ever, praise the Lord!
Gloria patri et filio et spiritui sancto	Glory be to the ..... and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit
Sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper	As it was in the ..... is now, and ever shall be
et in saecula saeculorum Amen	world without end, Amen
<b>The antiphon in Latin</b>	<b>Write it in English (from memory!)</b>
Adoremus in aeternum	
sanctissimum sacramentum	

### Clues:

<b>Latin</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Latin</b>	<b>English</b>
<i>Dominus, Domini</i>	Lord, of the Lord	<i>omnes</i>	all
<i>laudate</i>	praise	<i>veritas</i>	truth
<i>misericordia</i>	kindness	<i>nos</i>	us
<i>patri</i>	to the father	<i>in principio</i>	in the beginning

On special occasions we sing something different instead of the psalm:

**Blessed and praised be Jesus Christ, in the Most Holy Sacrament.  
Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in excelsis.**

**Blessed and praised be Jesus Christ, in the Most Holy Sacrament.  
Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in excelsis.**

**Blessed and praised be Jesus Christ, in the Most Holy Sacrament.  
Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in excelsis.**

During the psalm or these exclamations, the body of Jesus is taken out of the monstrance and put safely away in the Aumbry again.

Our period of adoration is over. The clergy and servers go out.

After all is quiet, and you have finished your prayers or tidied your books, you can go.

## ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS AND PUZZLES:

2. (a) Benedictus, (b) Benedicite, (c) Benedictus (d) Because it is the opening word of the canticle.
4. The incense signifies holiness and stimulates our sense of smell (think about what we are seeing and what are we hearing: the incense does the same for our noses! Do you think God has a nose too? NB there's not meant to be an answer to that question, it's just for you to think about it!)
5. Corpus Christi means "Body of Christ"
6. A humeral veil is a veil that covers the shoulders and upper arms.
7. The cross is a special sign because Jesus died on a cross and that is how he saved mankind.
8. Benedictus is for masculine things, Benedicta is for feminine things (including the Virgin Mary for instance), and Benedictum is for neuter things (such as the name and the heart).

The words of the antiphon are "Let us adore for ever, the most holy sacrament"