Lenten Evening Prayer
Liturgical Texts & Prayers from the writings of
Hildegard von Bingen
1098-1179

Hildegard von Bingen

Attention in recent decades to women of the medieval Church has led to a great deal of popular interest in Hildegard, particularly her music. Between 70 and 80 compositions have survived, which is one of the largest repertoires among medieval composers. Hildegard left behind over 100 letters, 72 songs, 70 poems, and 9 books.

Her music is described as monophonic; that is, consisting of exactly one melodic line. Hildegard's compositional style is characterized by soaring melodies, often well outside of the normal range of chant at the time.

In addition to her music, Hildegard also wrote three books of visions, the first of which, her Scivias ("Know the Way"), was completed in 1151. Liber vitae meritorum ("Book of Life's Merits") and De operatione Dei ("Of God's Activities", also known as Liber divinorum operum, "Book of Divine Works") followed. In these volumes, the last of which was completed when she was about 75, Hildegard first describes each vision, then interprets them through Biblical exegesis.

Aside from her books of visions, Hildegard also wrote her Physica, a text on the natural sciences, as well as Causae et Curae. Hildegard of Bingen was well known for her healing powers involving practical application of tinctures, herbs, and precious stones. In both texts Hildegard describes the natural world around her, including the cosmos, animals, plants, stones, and minerals. She combined these elements with a theological notion ultimately derived from Genesis: all things put on earth are for the use of humans. She is particularly interested in the healing properties of plants, animals, and stones, though she also questions God's effect on man's health. One example of her healing powers was curing the blind with the use of Rhine water.

In recent years, Hildegard has become of particular interest to feminist scholars. Her reference to herself as a member of the "weaker sex" and her rather constant belittling of women, though at first seemingly problematic, must be considered within the context of the patriarchal church hierarchy. Hildegard frequently referred to herself as an unlearned woman, completely incapable of Biblical exegesis. Such a statement on her part, however, worked to her advantage because it made her statements that all of her writings and music came from visions of the Divine more believable, therefore giving Hildegard the authority to speak in a time and place where few women were permitted a voice.
Lenten Evening Prayer

As you enter, please take a moment to remind yourself of your Baptism. Using water from the Font trace the sign of the cross on your forehead to remind yourself that, “In Baptism you are marked with the cross of Christ forever.”

O Holy Wisdom,
Soaring Power,

encompass us with wings unfurled,
and carry us, encircling all, above,
below,
and through the world.

Please begin your worship in quiet contemplation of all that God has made.

O Holy Spirit, Root of Life
Hildegard von Bingen

Benediction:

P: “We cannot live in a world that is interpreted for us by others. An interpreted world is not a hope. Part of the terror is to take back our own listening. To use our own voice. To see our own light”

“The soul is kissed by God in its innermost regions.”
“Love abounds in all things. So, sing the Love of God”

Amen

(Hildegard)

Peace: receive the peace of Christ and share Christ’s peace as you depart.

(Hildegard)
Prayers of the Body

We will begin our prayers by singing # 751 three times; please change the singular pronouns to plural:

#751 O Lord, Hear Our Prayers When We Call Answer Us

Prayer petitions will be punctuated by silence.

Following the Amen, please sing the alternate verse of #751 “The Lord is our song”

Abba Prayer

P: As Jesus taught us, we pray:

Heavenly Mother, Heavenly Father
Holy and blessed is your true name.
We pray for your reign of peace to come.
We pray that your good will be done.
Let heaven and earth become one.
Give us this day the bread we need.
Give it to those who have none.
Let forgiveness flow like a river between us
From each one to each one to each one.
Lead us to holy innocence
Beyond the evil of our days:
Come swiftly Mother, Father, come.
For yours is the power
And the mercy, and the glory.
Forever your name is all one. Amen.

Invocation:

P: “O God, grant that we may be aflame with you, Spirit of Love and walk as your children.

C: O Sophia, Spirit of Wisdom, who speaks the language of God in our hearts, speak to us now; and infuse us with the courage to listen.”

(Hildegard)

Evening Hymn: #561 Joyous Light of Heavenly Glory

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

P: Fire of the Spirit, life of the lives of creatures, spiral of sanctity, bond of all natures, glow of charity, lights of clarity, taste of sweetness to the fallen, be with us and hear us. Composer of all things, joy in the glory, strong honour, be with us and hear us. C: Amen.

(Hildegard)

Psalmody: #232 Let My Prayer Rise Up

the piano side is Group 1 and the north side Group 2

Silence for reflection

Litany: To the Holy Spirit:

P: The Holy Spirit animates all, moves all, roots all, forgives all, cleanses all, erases all our past mistakes, and then puts medicine on our wounds.

C: We praise this Spirit of incandescence for awakening and reawakening all creation.

P: Doctor of the desperate, Healer of everyone broken past hope, Medicine for all wounds, Fire of love, Joy of hearts, fragrant Strength, sparkling Fountain, Protector, Penetrator,

C: in You we contemplate how God goes looking for those who are lost and those who are at odds with God. Break our chains!
P: You bring people together. You curl clouds, whirl winds, send rain on rocks, sing in creeks, and turn the lush earth green. You teach those who listen, breathing joy and wisdom into them.

C: We praise You for these gifts, Light-giver, Sound of joy, Wonder of being alive, Hope of every person, and our strongest Good.

(Hildegard)

Silence for reflection

Hymn: #399 O Holy Spirit Root of Life

Text inspired by Hildegard

Scripture Reading: Wisdom of Solomon 8:2-7

Readings from Hildegard von Bingen:

THE FIRST ARTIST

Humans, God made you in a profoundly sacred space when the holy Divinity split heaven open for the Trinity to penetrate and sparkle in earth's muck. If you want to know why, look at God's humility and kindness. Even the angels who serve God see God in us who merely walk on land.

Don't let yourself forget that God's grace rewards not only those who never slip, but also those who bend and fall. So sing!

The song of rejoicing softens hard hearts. It makes tears of godly sorrow flow from them. Singing summons the Holy Spirit. Happy praises offered in simplicity and love lead the faithful to complete harmony, without discord. Don't stop singing.

TO SOPHIA

You soar, sustain, and animate, climb, dive, and sing Your way through this world, giving life to every beating heart.

You never end.

You keep circling, crossing over us on three wings--one speeds through heaven, one holds the earth together with a kiss as light as dew, and one whooshes over, under, and through our lives.

We praise You, Sophia, Wisdom.