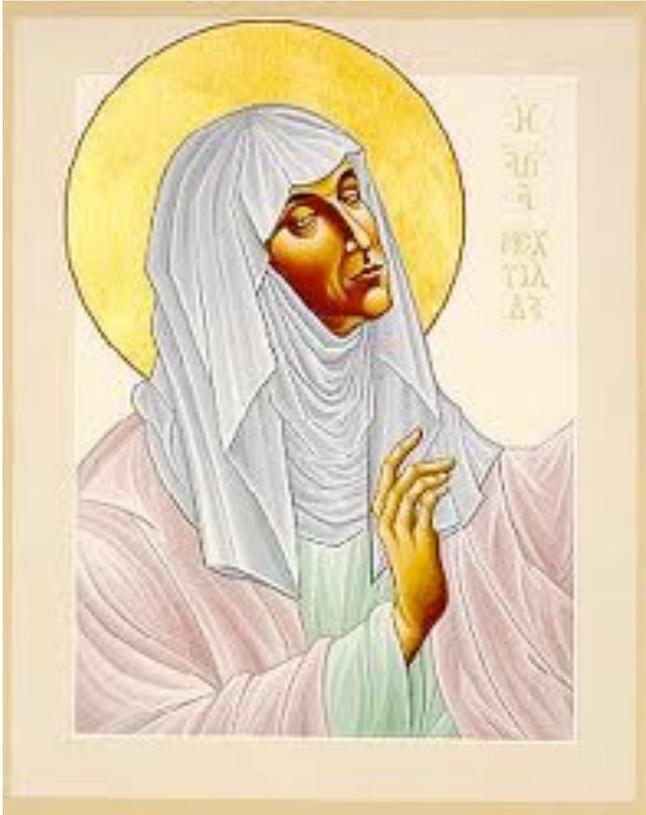


Lenten Evening Prayer

Liturgical Texts & Prayers from the writings of

Mechthild of Magdeburg

1212-1282



Mechthild of Magdeburg - lived and worked for about 40 years as a Beguine in Magdeburg. Born in a castle near a city, she joined the Medieval Poverty Movement at the age of 20 and consequently chose the “descent” from the castle, where she grew up, to live in the city. She is famous for her book “The Flowing Light of the Godhead” that she wrote in Middle Low German, the vernacular and the language of the poor.

Mechthild of Magdeburg

Most of what is known of Mechthild of Magdeburg comes from her book: references to court custom and courtly literature suggest she was from an educated family, as does the fact that she could read and write German (although she tells us that she does not know Latin). She had at least one brother who became a Dominican. In her early 20s, she left her home to go to Magdeburg (on the Elbe River); she appears to have lived most of her life there as a beguine, apparently in a community, perhaps as a superior. Near the end of her life, about 1270, she entered a monastery at Helfta which followed Cistercian custom.

She may have gone to Helfta because of the increasing restrictions being placed on beguines in Germany and the Low Countries. The women had received statements of papal approval in 1215 and 1233, but with approval went a requirement for clerical direction and eventually for ecclesiastical control. In 1261, a synod meeting in Magdeburg ordered the local beguines to obey their parish priests, rather than relying on the mendicant orders (such as the Dominicans) for spiritual advice.

When she was in her mid-30s, on the advice of her Dominican confessor, Mechthild had begun to write down her love songs and visionary experiences. We know that some of these writings were quickly circulated because she speaks of the harsh criticism she received as a woman writing about spiritual matters. But she continued to write until her death.

Fliessende licht der Gottheit (originally Vliessende lieht miner gotheit, often translated as "Flowing light of the Godhead") is divided into seven books: Books 1-5 were written during the 1250s, Book 6 in the 1260s, and Book 7 in the 1270s at Helfta. Within the seven books are 267 sections, from a few lines to several pages long. They include not only Mechthild's visionary experiences, but also letters of advice and criticism, allegories, reflections, and prayers; they use prose and verse, dramatic dialogue and lyric.

Mechthild wrote in the dialect used in the north of Germany; fragments remain of this original, but our complete text is a translation made in the language of southern Germany about 60 years after her death. Yet scholars assume that the text as we have it reflects Mechthild's words and, for the first six books, an organization determined by her and her confessor.

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.”*

"A fish cannot drown in water,
A bird does not fall in air.
In the fire of creation,
God doesn't vanish:
The fire brightens.
Each creature God made
must live in its own true nature;
How could I resist my nature,
That lives for oneness with God?"

*“God is not only fatherly,
God is also mother
who lifts her loved child
from the ground to her knee.
The Trinity is like a mother's cloak
wherein the child finds a home
and lays its head on the maternal breast.”*

Mechthild of Magdeburg: Soul Weavings

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

Invocation:

P: O Burning Mountain, O Chosen Sun, O Perfect Moon,
O Fathomless Well, O Unattainable Height, O
Unattainable Light, O Clearness Beyond All Measure,
O Wisdom Without End, O Mercy Without all Limit, O
Strength Beyond Resistance, O Crown of All Majesty,

C: All Creation humbly sings your praise!

(Mechthild of Magdeburg)

Evening Hymn: **#561 Joyous Light of Heavenly Glory**

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

P: We cannot dance, Lord, unless you lead us.
If you want us to leap with abandon,
You must intone the song.
Then we shall leap into love,
From love into knowledge,
From knowledge into enjoyment,
And from enjoyment beyond all human sensations.
There we want to remain, yet want also to circle
higher still. **C: Amen.**

(Mechthild of Magdeburg)

Psalmody: **#232 Let My Prayer Rise Up**

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

Silence for reflection

Litany:

P: And God Said to the Soul:
"I desired you before the world began.
I desire you now
As you desire me.
And where the desires of two come together
There LOVE is perfected.

C: How the Soul Speaks to God
“O God, you are my lover,
My longing,
My flowing stream,
My sun,
And I am your reflection.”

P: How God Answers the Soul
“It is my nature that makes me love you often,
For I AM love itself.
It is my longing
that makes me love you intensely,
For I yearn to be loved from the heart.
It is my eternity that makes me love you long,
For I have no end.

(Mechthild of Magdeburg)

Silence for reflection

Hymn: #773 Precious Lord, Take My Hand

Scripture Reading: Matthew 15:21-28

Reading from Mechthild of Magdeburg:

“Lord, since you have taken from me all that I had of you, yet of your grace leave me the gift which every dog has by nature: that of being true to you in my distress, when I am deprived of all consolation.”

“The soul is made of love
and must ever strive to return to love.
Therefore, it can never find rest
nor happiness in other things.
By its very nature it must seek God,
who is love.”

THE FLOWING LIGHT OF THE GODHEAD

The Day of my spiritual awakening was the day I saw
--and knew I saw--all things in God
and God in all things.

Woman, your soul has slept from childhood on.
Now it is awakened by the light of true love.
Now, she sees clearly, she recognizes for the first time
How God is All in All.

I who am Divine am truly in you.
I can never be sundered from you:
However far we be parted, never can we be separated.
I am in you and you are in Me
We could not be any closer.
We two are fused into one, poured into a single mould
Thus, unwearied, we shall remain forever.

I, God, am your playmate!
I will lead the child in you in wonderful ways
for I have chosen you.
Beloved child, come swiftly to Me
for I am truly in you.



Mechthild of Magdeburg

Hymn: ***I Cannot Dance, O Love***
printed on the BELOW - Text: Mechthild of Magdeburg

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.**

Hymn: ***Day is Done***
printed on the below

I Cannot Dance, O Love

printed under LiscenSing #1975

Unison

1 I can-not dance, O Love, un-less you lead me on.
2 Love is the mu-sic 'round us, we glide as birds in air,
3 O bless-ed Love, your circ-ling u-nites us, God and soul.

I can-not leap in glad-ness un-less you lift me up.
en-twin-ing, soul and bod-y, your wings hold us with care.
From the be-gin-ning, your arms em-brace and make us whole.

From love to love we cir-cle, be-yond all knowl-edge grow,
Your Spir-it is the harp-ist and all your chil-dren sing,
Hold us in steps of mer-cy from which you nev-er part,

for when you lead we fol-low, to new worlds you can show.
her hands the curr-ents 'round us, your love the gold-en strings.
that we may know more ful-ly the dan-ces of your heart.

Words: Jean Wiebe Janzen 1991, based on the writings of Mechtild of Magdeburg

Music: Ruth Wiebe 1993

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EVTON

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Day Is Done

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1 Day is done, but love un-fail-ing dwells ev-er here,
2 Dark de-scends, but light un-end-ing shines through our night,
3 Eyes will close, but you un-sleep-ing watch by our side,



shad-ows fall, but hope, pre-vail-ing, calms ev-ery fear.
you are with us, ev-er lend-ing new strength to sight:
death may come, in love's safe-keep-ing still we a-bide.



God, our Mak-er, none for-sak-ing, take our hearts of Love's own
one in love, your truth con-fess-ing, one in hope of heav-en's
God of love, all e-vil quell-ing, sin for-giv-ing, fear dis-



mak-ing, watch our sleep-ing, guard our wak-ing, be al-ways near.
bless-ing, may we see, in love's pos-sess-ing, love's end-less light
pell-ing, stay with us, our hearts in-dwell-ing, this e-ven-tide.

Benediction:

P: "Then we shall no longer complain.
Then everything that God has done with us
Will suit us just fine,
If you will now only stand fast
And keep hold of sweet hope." Amen

(Mechthild of Magdeburg - Soul Weavings)

Peace:

*receive the peace of Christ
and share Christ's peace as you depart.*



*Mechthild von Magdeburg
sculpture by Susan Turcot
in Magdeburg Germany.*