

## Love

None (Traditional hour: afternoon)

*As shadows lengthen, we are filled by the day's encounters; now, more than ever, we accept the depth and breadth of God's grace.*

**Opening** May our sacrifice be love  
as we practice mercy on earth.

**Prayer** God of love, the day is long and its burden is heavy:  
Give us grace to see your hand at work in the  
lives of those around us so that adversity will not  
overwhelm us, nor resentments possess us. Remain  
with us, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Savior.  
**Amen.**

**Praise** *Love Bade Me Welcome*  
Love bade me welcome; yet my soul drew back,  
Guilty of dust and sin.  
But quick-eye'd Love, observing me grow slack  
From my first entrance in,  
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning  
If I lack'd anything.  
A guest, I answer'd, worthy to be here:  
Love said, You shall be he.  
I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear,  
I cannot look on Thee.  
Love took my hand and smiling did reply,  
Who made the eyes, but I?  
Truth, Lord, but I have marred them: let my shame  
Go where it doth deserve.  
And know you not, says Love, Who bore the blame?  
My dear, then I will serve.  
You must sit down, says Love, and taste my meat.  
So I did sit and eat.

George Herbert <sup>76</sup>

**Scripture** Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. I John 4:7

**Meditation** We cannot know whether we love God although there may be strong reason for thinking so, but there can be no doubt about whether we love our neighbor or not. Be sure that, in proportion as you advance in affection for sisters and brothers, you are increasing your love of God. Teresa of Avila <sup>77</sup>

*Who is hard to love just now? What would it cost us to love that one?*

**Prayers** O God, you beckon us with promises of love;  
**Fulfill our desire for you.**  
You pursue us even when we flee from you;  
**Bring us to our right minds.**  
You delight in us and show us your compassion;  
**Make us mindful of the deep need in the world.**

*Here, the people may add particular intercessions or thanksgivings.*

You give us the gift of your unbounded love;  
**Pour out your love on all the world.**

### Lord's Prayer

**Prayer** Merciful God, return us now to working and relating in our world; return us, stimulated by hope, strengthened by faith, and directed by love. Thus, we are heartened to reconcile all people, created, redeemed, and sustained by you. In the name of Christ. **Amen.** <sup>78</sup>

**Going Out** May our sacrifice be love  
as we practice mercy on earth.