

## Florence Nightingale

12 May

*Nurse, Social Reformer, 1910 — Commemoration*

We remember Florence Nightingale for her work during the Crimean War, which took place between 1854 and 1856. Hearing the voice of God and animated by the spirit of service, she organized the first modern nursing service in the British field hospitals at Scutari and Balaklava. In the midst of appalling conditions she was tireless in her efforts to relieve the sufferings of wounded and dying soldiers. Her solitary vigils in the hospital wards led the popular press to call her "the Lady of the Lamp" and "the Angel of Scutari."

Nightingale's labours helped to disperse the age-old prejudice against nurses and gave their profession high respectability in later Victorian England. Her example also helped to liberate middle-class women from their subordinate and passive role in society.

She lived for another fifty-four years and had enormous influence in public affairs, but in private her personality became increasingly unbalanced. She deliberately wrecked the careers of several people who disagreed with her and, convinced that God directly revealed her opinions to her, she ignored the Church and ceased to attend its liturgy. Nevertheless, by the time of her death in the year 1910 her reputation had assumed mythical proportions, and to this day she is still honoured as the founder of the modern profession of nursing.

### Sentence

Thus says the Lord God: I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak; I will feed them with justice.

*Ezekiel 34.11, 16*

### Collect

Life-giving God,  
you alone have power over life and death,  
over health and sickness.

Give power, wisdom, and gentleness  
to those who follow the lead of Florence Nightingale,  
that they, bearing with them your presence,  
may not only heal but bless,  
and shine as lanterns of hope  
in the darkest hours of pain and fear;  
through Jesus Christ, the healer of body and soul,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

### Readings

Micah 6.6-8      Psalm 73.23-29

*Refrain* You will guide me by your counsel, O Lord.

Matthew 25.31-40

### Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God,  
grant us such faithfulness  
in offering the service of these gifts  
that this table may bear your glory  
and our lives may receive your healing.  
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

### *Preface of a Saint*

#### Prayer after Communion

God of eternal compassion,  
you fill our lives with your plenteousness  
and gladden our hearts with the new wine of your kingdom.  
Grant us so to behold your Son  
in every friend and stranger, that we may minister to him  
as he first ministered to us;  
for his sake, who is Lord now and for ever.