

*Custōdī, Domine*  
Watch over them, O Lord  
BIRTHDAY BLESSING

Custōdī, Domine  
et tuōs filiōs  
et tuās filiās  
dum multiplicantur  
eōrum dies; nunc  
custōdī, Domine.

Lord, as their days increase,  
Bestow on them your peace;  
Watch over them, O Lord.  
Your daughters and your sons,  
Watch over every one.  
Watch over them, O Lord.

Both the Latin and English lyrics are adapted by Adam F McCune from the opening of the birthday blessing, “Watch over thy/your child, O Lord, as his days increase,” from the Book of Common Prayer (1928, 1979, and 2019). According to *The Book of English Collects* (1940), this prayer was based on a prayer written by William Amory Gardner (1863–1930) for the Groton School (founded 1884). Gardner in turn drew on biblical phrasing from the KJV: “so will I *watch over* them” (Jeremiah 31:28), “by me *thy days* shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life *shall be increased*” (Proverbs 9:11). (The English lyrics also draw on a later part of the same birthday blessing, “in his heart may your peace which passes understanding abide all the days of his life,” which in turn also draws on the KJV: “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts,” Philippians 4:7.)

The Latin lyrics can be more literally translated, “Lord, watch over both your sons and your daughters as their days are multiplied; now watch over them, Lord.” Like the original birthday blessing, the Latin lyrics draw on biblical wording (from the Latin Vulgate): “dies quibus Deus *custodiebat* me,” ESV: “the days when God *watched over* me” (Job 29:2); “vos eritis mihi in *filios et filias*, dicit Dominus,” ESV: “you shall be *sons and daughters* to me, says the Lord” (2 Corinthians 6:18); “per me enim *multiplicabuntur dies tui*,” ESV: “by me *your days will be multiplied*” (Proverbs 9:11).

Both the Latin and the English can be sung to the hymn tune *Laudes Domini* (by Joseph Barnby, 1868) commonly used for hymns such as “When morning gilds the skies.”