

# Liturgy of the Hours



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# Background

Liturgy of the Hours is referred to by many names including Divine Office, Breviary and Opus Dei (Latin for Work of God). All these names refer to the same reality, the official prayer of the Church offered at various times of the day, referred to as hours, in order to sanctify it. All the hours include psalms, canticles, biblical and other readings, prayers and hymns, and - as corporate or common prayer - are structured by their nature, to be prayed by more than one person. When the Divine Office (under its various labels) is not possible as common prayer, it can, and should (sometimes must, in the case of some individuals), be prayed alone. What is unique in this prayer, prayed alone or with others, is that it offers a strong sense of belonging to the larger Christian community

# History and Origins

The Divine Office owes its remote origin to the inspiration of the Old Covenant. God commanded the Aaronic priests (c.1280 BC) to offer a morning and evening sacrifice (Ex. 29:38-29). During the Babylonian Exile (587-521 BC), when the Temple did not exist, the synagogue services of Torah readings and psalms and hymns developed as a substitute for the bloody sacrifices of the Temple, a sacrifice of praise. The inspiration to do this may have been fulfillment of David's words, "Seven times a day I praise you" (Ps. 119:164), as well as, "the just man mediates on the law day and night" (Ps. 1:2).

After the people returned to Judea, and the Temple was re-built, the prayer services developed in Babylon for the local assemblies (synagogues) of the people were brought into Temple use, as well. We know that in addition to Morning and Evening Prayer to accompany the sacrifices, there was prayer at the Third, Sixth and Ninth Hours of the day.

According to ancient custom, the Romans and Greeks divided the day and night respectively into four parts of about three hours each and numbered them. The daytime hours at the solstice were as follows:

<i>I. Hora prima</i> from 7:33 to 8:17 A.M.	<i>VII. septima</i> 12:00 to 12:44 P.M.
<i>II. secunda</i> 8:17 to 9:02	<i>VIII. octava</i> 12:44 to 1:29
<b><i>III. tertia</i> 9:02 to 9:46</b>	<b><i>IX. nona</i> 1:29 to 2:13</b>
<i>IV. quarta</i> 9:46 to 10:31	<i>X. decima</i> 2:13 to 2:58
<i>V. quinta</i> 10:31 to 11:15	<i>XI. undecima</i> 2:58 to 3:42
<b><i>VI. sexta</i> 11:15 to 12:00 noon.</b>	<i>XII. duodecima</i> 3:42 to 4:27 P.M.

The history of the early Church's prayer times is difficult to follow after the first century, largely due to the periodic destruction of documents during persecutions. The Acts of the Apostles notes that Christians continued to pray at these hours (Third: Acts 2:15; Sixth: Acts 10:9; 10: 3, 13). And, although the



Apostles no longer shared in the Temple sacrifices—they had its fulfillment in the "breaking of the bread" (the Eucharist)—they continued to frequent the Temple at the customary hours of prayer (Acts 3:1).

We see numerous traces of early public prayer services in the New Testament, particularly in St. Paul's Letters. The first mention of a daily prayer cycle outside Scripture comes from an important first century text know as the **Didache** (The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles). In addition to being a first century catechism, the Didache outlined the norms of conduct and worship in the early Church. It prescribed assembling and praying at certain times of the day and the reciting of

the Our Father three times a day by all the faithful.

Monastic and eremitical (hermit) practice as it developed in the early Church recognized in the Psalms the perfect form of prayer and did not try to improve upon it. The practices were quite individual from monastery to monastery. At first some tried to do the entire Psalter (150 Psalms) each day, but eventually that was abandoned for a weekly cycle built around certain hours of the day. It is interesting to note that mass was not required to be celebrated daily in the early church, but Liturgy of the Hours was required.

Among the earliest weekly Psalter cycles dividing the 150 psalms of which we have a record, is the division given by St. Benedict in his Rule ch. 8-19 (c.550), with canonical hours of:

Lauds (Morning Prayer) offered at sunrise,  
Prime (1st hour of the day),  
Terce (3rd hour, or Mid-morning),  
Sext (6th hour or Midday),  
None (9th hour or Mid-Afternoon),  
Vespers (Evening Prayer) offered at sunset, and  
Compline (Night Prayer) before going to bed.

One can clearly see the connection of the third, sixth and ninth hours to the Roman time keeping system.

The division of the day into these groupings is not solely arbitrary, but rather also reflects events recorded in Scripture. Night prayer corresponds to the night Jesus spent in prayer in the garden of Gethsemane before his crucifixion. Terce, the Roman third hour of the day (9:00am) recalls Jesus' death sentence. Sext, the Roman sixth hour (noon) is the hour of the Crucifixion (Luke 23:33-43). Nones, the Roman ninth hour (3:00pm) recalls Jesus last utterance and his death (Matt 27:46).

The early Christians adopted the two times of Morning and Evening prayer which, since then, have been the principal daily periods of prayer. In fact, at the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), they were called the "two hinges upon which the daily office turns." That's why "they are to be considered as the chief hours."

These Christians prayed not only during the day but also at night. Paul and Silas prayed and sang songs of praise to God in prison at midnight (see Acts 16:25). This time of prayer corresponds to matins, originally prayed between the first and second hour of the day, or midnight and 1 a.m. The theologian Tertullian (c.160-c.222) advised Christian women to be careful to marry men who also were Christians, because pagan men would not understand their getting up in the middle of the night to praise God.

Other evidence in scripture regarding daily prayer include Pentecost—the Holy Spirit descending on the apostles—was at the third hour (Acts 2:15). Peter prayed on the housetop at the sixth hour (Acts 10:9). And Peter and John went to the Temple to pray at the ninth hour (Acts 3:1).



In later history, the monks arose to read and pray during the Night. This Office of Matins (Readings) likewise had its divisions, into nocturnes, corresponding to the beginning of each of the "watches of the night" (Ps. 63:6), that is, 9 pm, midnight and 3 am.

Between the fall of the Roman Empire and the invention of movable type, and with the notable exceptions of Charlemagne's court or the Parisian university scribes of the 13th century, virtually all scribes were associated with monasteries, and virtually all book were religious – either Bibles, or more commonly, liturgical service books.

The service books began as simply excerpts of the Bible for use during the mass. Over time, as the mass became increasingly complex, more specialized books were created to serve specific functions for the priest, deacon or choir. Many of these early texts ended up as part of more comprehensive books, such as the breviary or the missal



In "monasteries, it was common for monks to use a number of large books for the Divine Office. They might have a psalter (book of psalms), another book for antiphons, a Bible, a hymn book and yet another volume containing the non-scriptural readings required. This worked fine for clerics who lived and prayed in one location, but the newer, more mobile clerics, such as the Franciscans and Dominicans, needed to travel light. (both founders living in the 13<sup>th</sup> century) For them the Vatican devised a condensed version of the office. Its name—"breviary"—comes from the Latin word for "abbreviated." The Franciscans spread the use of the breviary throughout Europe and beyond.

Originally the practice of monks, it was also used by the canons of cathedrals and other great churches. The Roman Breviary, perhaps as old or even older than the Benedictine, was originally the Office of the canons of St. Peter's and the other Roman Basilicas. Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) extended its use to the Roman Court (curia). When the Franciscan Order was looking for a convenient one volume Office for its much-traveled friars to use, it adopted this Breviarium Curiae, but substituting the Gallican (French) Psalter for the Roman. This modified Roman Breviary was then spread throughout Europe by the Franciscans. Pope Nicholas III (c.1270) would then adopt this popularized Franciscan version of the Breviary as the Breviary of Rome itself.

After the Council of Trent, and its reforms, the Roman Breviary became the Office of the entire Latin Church. It should be noted that religious orders have a right to their own version, though many simply use the Roman Office.

The reform of the Liturgy of the Hours has been ongoing since the 1500s, with Pope Pius X utilizing the liturgical-renewal movement, and the Second Vatican Council eventually revising and streamlining the office, resulting in a simpler, more flexible liturgy.

While much has changed over the twenty centuries of its history, the basic elements comprising the Liturgy of the Hours have remained the same since the second century. Hymns, Psalms, Scripture, and prayers are blended into a prayer of thanksgiving, reparation, and adoration of God. Each day's prayer is tied to the yearly Church Liturgical cycle and is carefully intertwined with the particular feast or liturgical season of the day. During Advent, Lent, and Easter, the prayers and readings are designed to help us contemplate the meanings behind the great mysteries we are experiencing. Texts for the feast days remind us of the struggles of the saints in truly living out Christian lives. Also the individual days themselves have particular significance. Sundays recall the resurrection, Thursdays recall the Last Supper, and Fridays recall Christ's passion and death.



An early example of the Divine Office is Mary Stuart's personal breviary which she took with her to the scaffold, and is preserved in the Russian National Library of St. Petersburg. Inscriptions by her hand may be seen on the margins.

The celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours today is often a far cry from the earliest gatherings. A fourth century Spanish tourist recounted her experience of Morning Prayer in Jerusalem: a multitude had gathered outside before the cock-crow, waiting for the bishop to throw open the doors to a basilica sparkling with innumerable lights.



# Liturgy of the Hours in Modern Times

Although the Divine Office has gone through various forms, and reforms, including that of Vatican II, its basic structure, combining Psalms, prayers, canticles and readings, has been relatively constant since the 11th century.

- Office of Readings. Previously called Matins, this was often prayed in monastic settings early in the dark hours of the morning. Today, Office of Readings is prayed at any time of the day.
- Morning Prayer. Previously called Lauds, this is the first set of prayers for the beginning of the day. Along with Evening Prayer, it is one of the two most important hours of the day.
- Daytime Prayer. Previously the separate hours of Terce, Sext and None, Daytime Prayer is now a single hour to be prayed whenever it fits into one's schedule.
- Evening Prayer. Previously called Vespers, this is the most popular of the hours, when we begin to wind down our day.
- Night Prayer. Previously called Compline, this is the prayer we say before we retire to bed.

With the reforms of the Second Vatican Council the traditional one-week Psalter cycle became a four-week cycle. Canon law still requires priests to recite the Liturgy of the Hours each day: Lauds, Vespers and three other sets of prayer.

Initially, the Hours were considered to be the activity of priests and religious. Thus, Pope Pius XII's 1947 encyclical, *Mediator Dei*, says, "The divine office is the prayer of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, offered to God *in the name and on behalf* of all Christians, when recited by priests and other ministers of the Church and by religious who are *deputed by the Church for this*" (my emphases). To be sure, Pius recognized that in "an earlier age, these canonical prayers were attended by many of the faithful" and the encyclical recommends lay attendance at vespers on feast days. But the Hours were primarily imagined to be the pursuit of those "deputed by the Church" – not the laity.

The so-called "Pian Commission" was formed several months after *Mediator Dei*, and the commission suggested two kinds of obligations regarding the Hours. The first was for contemplative religious, but the second kind of obligation was for priests with pastoral duties. Again, the Hours are associated with those deputed by the Church.

Nevertheless, the "Pian Commission" would prove to be important for the laity on this matter. Obviously, the laity, just as much as parish priests, would require a more flexible Liturgy of the Hours.

But we *can* suggest that the Second Vatican Council marks another advance in the relationship between the laity and the Liturgy of the Hours. This is clear when we read the documents of Vatican II *intertextually*. SC's emphasis on the "full and active participation by all the people" is meant to apply "with special force to the celebration of the Mass," but it must also apply to other liturgies as well, including the Divine Office. Furthermore, if we look at *Lumen Gentium*, we read that "all Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of love." If the Liturgy of the Hours has a particular efficacy in forming Christian holiness, then, surely, the laity should have a part in it.

The Catechism of the Catholic church is very insistent that the Divine Office – Liturgy of the Hours – pertains to the WHOLE church, Clergy, Religious and Laity equally. See paragraphs 1174..."In this public prayer of the Church, the faithful (clergy, religious, laity) exercise the royal priesthood of the baptized.", 1175..."The laity, too, are encouraged to recite the divine office, either with the priests, or among themselves, or even individually."

I would point to Episcopal and Anglican churches as examples of places where public recitation of the Daily Office is stronger (although it varies from place to place). The reason for this is the availability of the texts and psalter in every church, in the Book of Common Prayer. This availability continues in Anglican parishes of the Roman Catholic Church through the Book of Common Worship. When you have a standard source in the pews, with copies for all, that's used regular and taught in classes, it's easy to pray these

services in church (in the Episcopal Church, these include Morning, Noonday, Evening Prayer, and Compline).

It should be noted that three psalms are not said in the psalter, PS 57, 82 & 108. These were passed over since violence was their major theme.

## Versions of the Roman Breviary

Since the advent of the new Liturgy of the Hours, termed "official", it seems that there have been no attempts to seek "official" approval for newly composed *breviaria parva* texts. Although new short breviaries could be prepared, so long as they contained the necessary elements of the Liturgy of the Hours, the current process requires that a book be presented to the various national conferences of Bishops, and then to the Roman authorities for approval. With these various requirements comes the additional requirements of translation permissions. For example, only the "Grail" translation of the Psalms may be used in any office. The current group of "approved" texts are simply excerpts from the Liturgy of the Hours, receiving approval from a national Conference of Bishops with a "*concordat cum originali*". While there are new structures and texts which have no approval and/or did not seek approval, these are considered "unofficial", and may not be used as corporate and public prayer. In the United States, in two cases, at least, attempts at distribution of such texts through the regular channels met with strong opposition from the Conference of Bishops. It appears that the only way a text may be considered "ecclesial" is if it is no more than an excerpt from the official book.

The prayer of these varied breviaries, the "office", is a non-sacramental prayer, yet very much a part of what comprises "Liturgy". The different sections (called "hours") mark particular moments of the day: morning, midday, evening and night

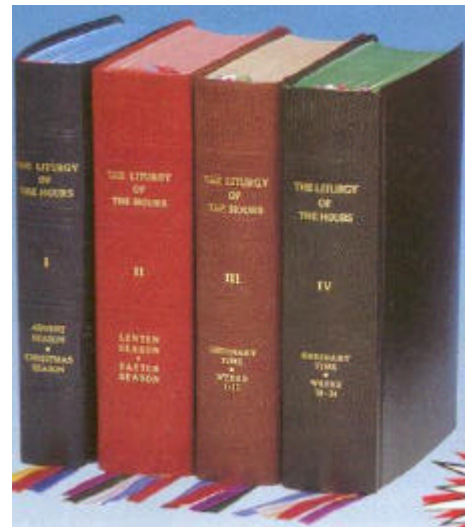
### Standard Version – Four Volume

Liturgia Horarium, editio typica altera (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1985). This is the official Latin text, in 4 volumes, and is lawful throughout the Latin Rite.

Liturgy of the Hours is approved for use in the United States, Canada, South Africa and most English-speaking countries. The US edition is published in 4 volumes by Catholic Book Publishing Co, NYC, NY. The 4 volumes correspond to the liturgical seasons

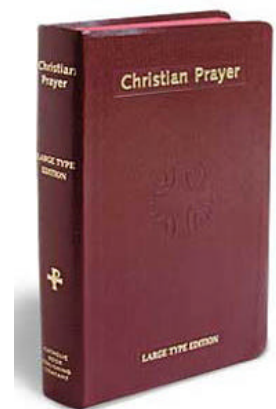
- Volume 1 - Advent/Christmas
- Volume 2 - Ordinary Time 1-17
- Volume 3 - Lent/Easter
- Volume 4 - Ordinary Time 18-34

and can be purchased individually or as a set.



### Abbreviated Versions – One Volume

Christian Prayer is a one-volume edition of the Liturgy of the Hours (Catholic Book Pub.). This version contains the complete texts of Morning and Evening Prayer for the entire year. It lacks the variety of proper readings and prayers found in the four volume edition. However, it makes a good "starter edition" for the laity, and generally is adequate for following along in community recitation of the Office. There is also a large print edition for the visually impaired. The Daughters of St. Paul offer a one-volume edition that contains all of the Divine Office except the Office of Readings. Catholic Book Publishing also offers a one-volume edition that lacks the Office of Readings.



## Shorter Christian Prayer

Shorter Christian Prayer (Catholic Book Pub.) contains Morning and Evening Prayer from the Four-Week Psalter and selected texts for the Seasons and Major Feasts of the year. This is a vademecum (carry with me) for those who only need the basics. There is also a large print edition for the visually impaired.

## Guidebooks

For the US, Catholic Book Publishing Company publishes annually the St. Joseph's Guide to the Office for the upcoming liturgical year. It gives the page numbers in the 4 volume Liturgy of the Hours for every part of every office on every day of liturgical calendar. It is highly recommended for novices. They also publish a guide for the one volume condensed version of the Office, *Christian Prayer*.

## Little Office of The Blessed Virgin Mary

While it appears that *The Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, arguably the oldest and most popular of the "short offices" has remained (although re-edited structurally and textually to correspond to the format of the current Liturgy of the Hours), the only other short breviary from the pre-Vatican Council period to "survive" is the successor to *Officium Divinum Parvum*, now called *Christuslob*, in use in Germany, though it, too, has been revised to conform somewhat to the current official texts.

## Magnificat

*Magnificat* is a monthly magazine that provides for each day simple versions of Morning, Evening, and Night Prayer, plus the Mass readings, brief lives of the saints, and a short spiritual reading from one of the saints or a spiritual leader: Refer to [www.magnificat.com](http://www.magnificat.com).

## Structure of The Liturgy of the Hours

Each hour has a similar basic structure with most of the texts coming from Scripture. An Opening Hymn, Psalms, Canticles, Readings and Concluding Prayer form the backbone of the Hours. The Psalms, distributed over a four week cycle in the post Vatican II format and over one week in the pre-Vatican II format, are some of the most beautiful prayers in the Bible. The Psalms contain 150 prayers, poems, and hymns that give praise and adoration of God.

Hour of the Day	Latin Name	English Name
During the Night	Matins	Readings
Sunrise	Lauds	Morning Prayer
First Hour of the Day	Prime	(suppressed by Second Vatican Council - 1962)
Third Hour of the Day	Terce	Mid-morning Prayer
Sixth Hour of the Day	Sext	Midday Prayer
Ninth Hour of the Day	None	Mid-afternoon Prayer
As evening approaches	Vespers	Evening Prayer
Nightfall	Compline	Night Prayer

Prime was suppressed by the [Second Vatican Council](#), reducing the number of canonical hours to seven (cf. [Psalm](#) 118(119) v. 164). (Seven times a day do I praise Thee, because of Thy righteous judgments.)

## The Rites within the Hours

Rite	Office of Readings	Morning Prayer	Mid-Morning Prayer	Midday Prayer	Mid Afternoon Prayer	Evening Prayer	Night Prayer
Invitatory - Invitatory Antiphon - Psalm Antiphon - Invitatory Psalm - Doxology - Psalm Antiphon	Said only once before the first Hour recited each day	Said only once before the first Hour recited each day	Said only once before the first Hour recited each day	Said only once before the first Hour recited each day	Said only once before the first Hour recited each day	Said only once before the first Hour recited each day	Said only once before the first Hour recited each day
Opening Antiphon & Doxology	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Exam. of Conscience							<b>X</b>
Hymn	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Psalter (repeat 1-3x) - Antiphon - Psalm or Canticle - Doxology - Psalm Prayer - Antiphon	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1 or 2</b>
Antiphon prior Reading	<b>X</b>						
Scripture Reading & Responsorial	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Ecclesiastical Reading & Responsorial	<b>X</b>						
Te Deum & optional Responsorial	Sundays Solem/Feast						
Gospel Canticle - Antiphon - Canticle - Doxology - Antiphon		Benedictus (MP)				Magnificat (EP)	Nunc Dimittis
Intercessions		<b>X</b>				<b>X</b>	
Our Father		<b>X</b>				<b>X</b>	
Prayer	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Conclusion/Dismissal	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Marian Antiphon Hymn							<b>X</b>



Each of the four volumes of the complete edition and each of the editions of *Christian Prayer* has the same basic organization. The organization of the shorter versions is similar. The sections found in these volumes include:

·	<u>PROPER OF THE SEASONS</u>	- Ribbon
·	<u>ORDINARY (Instructions)</u>	
·	<u>FOUR WEEK PSALTER</u>	- Ribbon
·	<u>DAYTIME PRAYER</u>	
·	<u>NIGHT PRAYER</u>	- Ribbon
·	<u>PROPER OF THE SAINTS</u>	- Ribbon
·	<u>COMMONS</u>	- Ribbon

## PROPER OF THE SEASONS

It is the first of the sections found in each of the editions of the Office and immediately precedes the Ordinary section. This section provides prayers, readings, etc. for the Seasons of the Lord in the Church year (i.e. Lent, Easter, Advent, Christmas, Epiphany and Ordinary Time.) At the conclusion of this section may be found the Solemnities of the Lord in Ordinary Time which do not have a fixed date, i.e. Trinity Sunday, Corpus Christi, Sacred Heart, Christ the King.

## ORDINARY

This section provides the basic structure of each hour. It is printed in two colors, red for instructions (rubrics) and black for the actual text of prayers, readings, etc. [Note: Only the unchanging (ordinary) prayer texts for each hour are printed in this section. Those texts which vary from day to day or from one season to another are found in either the Four Week Psalter, the Proper of the Season or the Proper of the Saints.] The hours are presented in the Ordinary in the following order:

- + **Invitatory**
- + **Office of Readings** (in four volume and some, one volume editions)
- + **Morning Prayer**
- + **Daytime Prayer** (in four volume and some, one volume editions)
- + **Evening Prayer**
- + **Night Prayer** (in four volume and some, one volume editions)

## FOUR WEEK PSALTER

The psalms prayed in the Liturgy of the Hours are arranged in a four week pattern. This section contains all of the psalms for the four weeks arranged according to the hour of the office and the day or the week on which they are prayed.

The *Ordo* (Church calendar of feasts and seasons) will tell you which week is being prayed. You can also find the proper week by consulting the beginning of the Sunday Office in the Proper of the Seasons (see below). The week of the four- week cycle assigned to a specific week of the liturgical calendar is given there (e.g. **SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT, Psalter, Week II; or NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Psalter, Week I**).

## DAYTIME PRAYER

This section contains all of the psalms, Mid-morning, Mid-day and Mid-afternoon, for the days of the week arranged according to the hour of the office and the day or the week on which they are prayed.

## NIGHT PRAYER

This section contains all of the psalms for the days of the week arranged according on which they are prayed.

## PROPER OF SAINTS

- This section contains celebrations of Our Lady, the Saints and significant Church events arranged according to calendar dates.
- The location of the section varies, but it is always found after the Ordinary.
- For Saints and events celebrated only in the United States, see the Proper for the United States provided in an Appendix.
- Texts for celebrations of Our Lady and saints which have been changed or added to the calendar since the publication of the office books may be found in a supplementary pamphlet available from the publisher. This section is usually the minimum necessary, that is, only what pertains uniquely to that saint. This unique material (e.g. St. Dominic) is then combined with general saint material from the Commons, depending on the category of saint (e.g. for Dominic, Common of Pastors, or, Common of Religious).

## COMMONS

- Contains Hymns, Psalms, Readings and Prayers common to a specific category of saints (Virgins, Martyrs, Doctors, etc.)
- This section is located after the Proper of the Saints in each edition.

## OFFICE OF THE DEAD

Contains the entire office which is prayed for a person who has died.

## OTHER FEATURES

In addition to those listed above, each volume also contains the following:

- ***Calendar of Principle Celebrations of the Liturgical Year through 1999*** ~ (found in front of book)
- ***General Roman Calendar*** ~ [Celebrations assigned to specific dates in the Liturgical Calendar observed by the entire Roman Catholic Church throughout the world] (found after preceding calendar)
- ***Table of Liturgical Days*** ~ [Four volume edition only] This table shows categories of celebrations and indicates which are of greater and which of lesser importance. It can be helpful when two important celebrations fall on the same day, e.g. the Feast of the Immaculate Conception and the First Sunday of Advent. This table may also be found in its original location at the end of the *General Instruction on the Liturgical Year and the Calendar*.
- ***Hymns*** ~ In the four-volume edition and in some of the one volume editions the texts of hymns are located at the beginning of each hour. In the Catholic Book edition of *Christian Prayer* the hymns including text and music are collected in a separate section toward the end of the book.
- ***Poetry*** ~ A collection of poems which may replace hymns in private recitation is provided in each volume of the four-volume edition and in the Daughters of St. Paul edition of *Christian Prayer*.

## Relation of the Rosary to the Divine Office



Murillo 1638

The Liturgy of the Hours and the Rosary developed parallel to each other, and properly fill different aspects of Christian worship - the former communal worship and praise, the latter a matrix within which private meditation can flourish. Of course this presupposes the Liturgy of the Hours to be the common gathering of the Christians throughout the day (according to very early Church Canons, the Faithful were to gather twice a day to offer the Divine Praises - hearing the Word of God, singing Psalms and Hymns, listening to teachings; this is to be done in the morning and evening.)

It is commonly held historically that the common people wanted to pray daily like the monks but had no books to read the psalms from and most could not even read. Before printing was invented, books were fabulously expensive. Often only monastic communities and churches had books. The book of the Psalms was used for the daily recitation of prayers (something that continues today). Further conjecture supposes that the people, not up to memorizing all 150 Psalms, recited an Our Father or Hail Mary in the place of each psalm. There was not necessarily any order to

the prayers. And further that they strung 150 beads together, one for each psalm, so they could keep count. But remember, the monasteries were already moving away from all 150 psalms being prayed simultaneously.

Although this could have been the origin of the rosary, there are significant differences in the two prayer forms and in my opinion and direct relationship is unlikely.

The early history of the Hail Mary is not clear, as the words are taken from Scripture and it is difficult to ascertain when the greeting/prayer was distinctly used. One source attributes the distinct use of the first half to St. Idelfonsus of Toledo in the 7th century. Its use as a salutation and prayer begin to appear frequently in the 11th and 12th centuries, though the first half only was regarded as the 'Hail Mary'. Here are the parts of the prayer: In point of fact there is little or no trace of the Hail Mary as an accepted devotional formula before about 1050. This fact would therefore contradict the earlier supposition that the faithful prayed Our Fathers and Hail Marys on knotted strings.

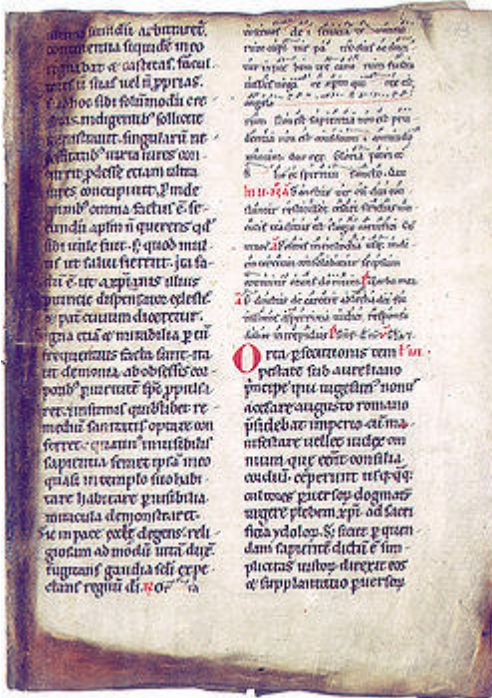
The first clear historical reference to the rosary, however, is from the life of St. Dominic (died in 1221), the founder of the Order of Preachers or Dominicans. He preached a form of the rosary in France at the time that the Albigensian heresy was devastating the Faith there. Tradition has it that the Blessed Mother herself asked for the practice as an antidote for heresy and sin.

It is my opinion that, rather, that God and the Blessed Mother, in their kindness and mercy to us, chose to use methods and prayers that were familiar to the populace and arrange them in a new way. Using prayers already known would ease the burden of memorizing new ones. The number of prayers would add no unusual or formidable burden to our daily prayer life.

## Order and Form of Praying the Divine Office

One does not have to be a priest or deacon to lead the Liturgy of the Hours—provided that a priest or deacon is not present. Non-clerical religious have been doing it for centuries. If a priest or deacon is present, he should lead.

Furthermore, while a layperson can lead the Liturgy of the Hours, he should do it from his pew—not from the presidential chair. Nothing should be done that would blur the role of the laity with that of the priest. There is no reason for the lay leader to sit in the chair that is reserved for the priest-presider or to stand at the altar



**Breviary of Cologne, 12th or 13th c**

Generally, at the first "Hour" of the day, this would be Morning Prayer, the Invitatory is prayed. This consists of the following prayer: "Lord, open my lips", "My mouth will proclaim your praise."

(When praying with two or more people, the first part is said by one side, and the second part by the other side; when praying alone, the both are said)

The Antiphon given generally before MP, or before Office of Readings, is then said and repeated after each strophe of the Invitatory Psalm. This may be either Ps. 95, 100, 67 or 24. All Psalms are followed by "Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen." (Note that this is a different ending than that traditionally said when praying the Rosary, for example).

When other "Hours" are started, the following is said instead of the Invitatory. "God come to my assistance. Lord make haste to help me. " This is followed by the Glory Be, as above.

MP or EP begin with a hymn. Certain hymn numbers are suggested and should be used. Then there are three Psalms with their Antiphons. When you're praying in community, generally the following scheme is used in alternating prayer.

line of each Psalm.

There are two sides or groups of people. Perhaps those who sit at one side of the table vs. those on the other side of the table. One person on each side is chose to intone the Antiphon and the first

Leader on Side A: Reads 1st Antiphon and then 1st Line of the Psalm.

All on Side A: pray the remainder of the first strophe of the Psalm.

All on Side B: pray the next strophe, and so on.

The Glory Be is alternated also.

If there is a Psalm-Prayer, the Leader on Side A reads it.

All (both A and B) repeat the Antiphon at the end of the Psalm

Then the Leader on Side B is next and All on Side B carry on with the first strophe, and the whole thing repeats itself with the next Psalm.

When you are praying alone, you pray all of it. Now we come to the next mayor division, the "Reading." If a priest or deacon is present, they will read the Reading, otherwise, the Minister of the Fraternity will read the Reading. If not present, the Leader on side A will read the Reading.

Each reading (no matter which "Hour" they occur in) always have a responsory. This is said as it is printed in the book with one exception. After the Glory Be, the usual ending is NOT said, but the next line of the responsory is said.

Then comes the Antiphon with the Gospel Cantic Benedictus (Morning Prayer), or Magnificat (Evening Prayer). After the Gospel Cantic come the Intercessions.



The Intercessions often cause confusion as to the proper way to pray them. There are two ways. Generally if a large group is praying the Office, such as perhaps a whole congregation, the response in Italics is used, and two cantors pray the first and second part of each intercession. In smaller groups, e.g. a laity Monthly meeting, often, one half prays the first part of the intercession and the other prays the other part (after the long dash) and the response in Italics is used only after the first intercession. Also, intercessions may be added. When you add intercessions it is OK to pray for someone who has cancer, for example, but we generally include all others who are suffering similarly. This is the prayer of the Church, not of any single individual. For example: We lift up to You, my God, my cousin Thelma who has cancer and all those who are suffering with cancer. The response would then be the versicle in Italics.

After the Intercessions the Our Father follows, and the concluding prayer. For MP and EP, the very last prayer (after the concluding prayer) is the blessing. If a priest or deacon is present, he will take care of that. For group or single recitation, all generally pray in unison: "May the Lord Bless us, keep us from all evil, and lead us to everlasting life." Amen.

Frequent page turning seems to go with praying the LH (especially). This is not such a big deal as it seems provided someone can show you. Ordinary time is the easiest. The page turning concerns the Office of Readings and since Christian Prayer does not feature that Hour, the laity is on pretty safe grounds.

Generally, Solemnities are entirely "Proper" - these have their own text, or the deviations from these texts is noted in the Rubrics (directions in red), usually with a page number. There is one exception: Sundays. Sundays are also Solemnities. The Gospel Canticle with its Antiphon are almost always someplace else (in the Proper of that Sunday).

On Solemnities and Feasts, the Psalms in MP are almost always those of Sunday, Week I. And also, the entire office is taken from the Proper of Saints (except for Sundays and Liturgical Holidays). So if the Saint is a Martyr, the Office of Martyrs is used.

Obligatory Memorials: These will use the Psalms of the day and everything from the Reading onwards will appear in the Proper (as above, based on what the Saint(s) was, either a Martyr, Pastor, or whatever).

Optional Memorials: As the name implies, these may be said. Usually, one can say the Office of the weekday. Sundays always have precedence over everything else except where noted otherwise.

**Sign of the Cross** - normal way unless indicated

1. Invitatory. At the words: *Lord, open my lips*. Made with right thumb on the lips.
2. Opening Antiphon (unless preceded by the Invitatory). At the words: *God, come to my assistance*.
3. Gospel Canticles (Morning and Evening Prayer). Made on first verse of the Canticle (Blessed be the Lord ..., or, My soul magnifies the Lord ...).
4. Dismissal. Either when the blessing is given by a priest or deacon, or, when lead by a lay person, at the words: *May the Lord bless us...*

Bows

The liturgical bow for the Names of the Persons of the Trinity (an incline of the upper body of about 30 degrees) is given throughout the Liturgy of the Hours when called for (*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit ...*).

The bow of the head at the name of Jesus.

There is some variety upon the common pattern. Some communities, for example, stand for the antiphons and doxology during the Psalter, even when they sit for the Psalms themselves. The general pattern is:

Stand - Invitatory, Opening Antiphon, Psalm and Hymn

Sit - Psalmody, Reading, Responsory

Stand - After the Responsory until the end

Many communities, still pray the psalms antiphonally — splitting the assembly into two sides, chanting the strophes or stanzas in turn, a legacy of the ancient liturgies.

Originally a single reader chanted the psalms. Over the rustles and murmuring of a packed congregation, a lone voice was hard to hear. As one early bishop lamented, "What hard labor it is to produce silence while the readings are proclaimed!" So the custom of two choirs alternating strophes arose, better able to punch through the noise.

The cacophony at the Liturgy of the Hours these days is less likely to come from restive congregants and more likely to arise from our internal voices. The upcoming day's demands and responsibilities often rustle distractingly in my head as I mark the pages for morning prayer; I know I'm on the clock the moment I'm out the church door.

Antiphonal psalmody is as effective at overpowering these quieter, though no less distracting companions, as it was at drowning out the noise in a crowded basilica. You can't drift through the verses, prompted by a break to repeat a refrain on autopilot. You have to be present to the Word made flesh in your counterparts across the chapel, ready to take up the next verse. You can't rush through at your own pace; the voices on your side hold you to a measured and untroubled rhythm.

St. Basil, an early champion of antiphonal psalmody, thought it a blessing to sing in turn like the choirs of angels on heaven and earth. I'm not sure how much we sound like an angelic chorus in the morning, but Basil also reminded us that this practice would season our day's tasks like salt.

I go forth well seasoned each morning, distractions set aside, enabled to enjoy the flavors of the psalms in the work at hand. It's a taste worth cultivating.

## **Dominicans and the Divine Office**

Dominican spirituality is embodied in the ideal that we contemplate, and then give to others the fruit of our contemplation. Dominicans live this motto in the way we pray the Office. We pray the Office chorally: the psalms and canticles are prayed choir-to-choir, with the sisters and brothers on opposite sides of the chapel alternating in chanting the lines of the psalms.

Each side thus takes its turn "preaching" God's Word while the other listens and contemplates, then listens as the other "preaches." In effect, choral prayer in this fashion creates a microcosm of our life of contemplation and apostolic action.

Dominicans chant or sing the psalms and responses, rather than recite them. This is an expression of St. Augustine's admonition to have "but one heart and soul in God" with our voices in unison. Our bodies, too, join in the prayers as we sit, stand, and bow, so that our whole persons are engaged in our praise of and conversation with God.

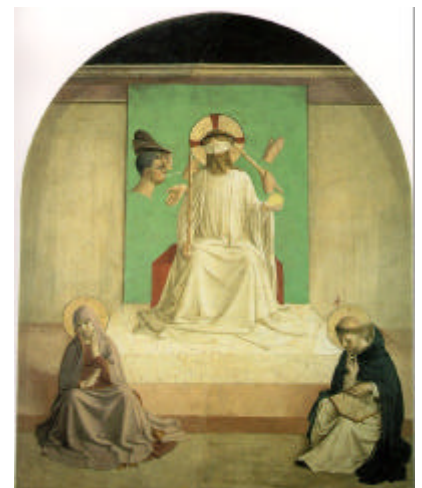
The Order of Preachers, also known as the Dominicans, retained their form of the Office until the early 20th century essentially as it had been practiced since a reform undertaken by the Master of the Order Humbert of Romans in the 1250s. Even after the drastic reform of the Roman breviary by Pope Pius X in 1913, which was accompanied by the unprecedented demand that each religious order revise its form of the office "according to the principles of the new revision,"<sup>3</sup> the Dominicans maintained the distinct repertoire of hymns they had first compiled in the early 13th century and that had been enriched over the ensuing years with hymns honoring newly canonized saints or offering deeper insights into traditional doctrines, such as the corporeal presence of Christ in the Eucharist celebrated by the Dominican St. Thomas Aquinas' hymns and -rhymed office for the feast of Corpus Christi.

### **Origin of the Dominican form of the Divine Office**

On August 15, 1217, Dominic dispersed his small band of followers to various parts of Europe.<sup>16</sup> At this time, "though the Roman Rite was quite universally observed throughout the Latin Patriarchate (with the



**Part of Larger Work - see below**



exception of Milan, Toldeo, and Braga), it was everywhere influenced by local customs." The friars initially adopted the customs of the places they settled in, perhaps so as "not to arouse prejudice," but it was soon found that "differences in liturgical usages from province to province were undesirable in a large and highly mobile order."

St. Dominic is our model and teacher in the prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours. We are told that he encouraged the devotion of the brothers during Office as he walked up and down the aisles of the choir, exhorting the brothers, "*Fortiter, Fratres!*" ("Stronger, Brothers!"). We are to approach the praise of God with the same fervor desired by our Holy Founder. He knew that in this prayer the hearts and minds of his followers would be drawn into deeper love for the Savior and strengthened for His work on earth.

Dominic's love for the liturgy included not only the Mass but the Divine Office. He taught the early friars to chant the canonical hours at the prescribed time, if possible, even when they were en route. Ventura again supplies our information:

Almost always when outside the priory, on hearing the first stroke of the matins bell from the monasteries, he used to arise and arouse the friars; with great devotion he celebrated the whole night and day Office at the prescribed hours so that he omitted nothing. And after compline, when traveling, he kept and had his companions keep silence, just as though they were in the priory.

It was the same when he was at home in the priory. "Devoted to the Divine Office," Rudolph of Faenza tells us, "the Blessed Dominic always attended choir with the community." He did this even when he had stayed up all night praying. There is striking proof of his fidelity to choir from his last week on earth. During the greater part of July, 1221, Dominic had worked in Lombardy, preaching in many cities of the area. Toward the end of the month, he came back to Bologna fatigued and running a fever.

**Mocking of Christ - Fra Angelico**

Because of the excessive heat, the prior suggested to Brother Dominic that he go to rest and not rise for matins during the night. The holy man did not acquiesce in this suggestion but entered the church and prayed through the night. Nevertheless, he was present at matins.

The Founder constantly exhorted the brethren to put their hearts into the Office. Paul of Venice tells us of this characteristic:

He would walk around on each side of the choir urging the brethren by word and example to sing well and attentively and to recite the psalms devoutly. He himself was so faithfully intent on what he was praying that he was never distracted by any tumult or noise.

Dominic was just as intent on private prayer. Even during his missionary years among the Albigensians he readily became absorbed in God. One witness tells us: "When we searched for him, we found him on his knees, despite danger from the wild wolves that infested the place." Throughout his lifetime, he passed the greater part, and frequently the whole, of the night in prayer. "We often found him in church weeping and praying", testified Ventura of Verona. "Even while traveling," said Paul of Venice, "he was devoted and constant in prayer." Few of Dominic's children have reached the degree or constancy of his prayer. But he was the Founder, and God gave him a special gift. Through his nightly prayers and vigils he won graces for the whole Order, not only for the Order as it was in his day, but for the Order as it is today and all the days of the world. His mortifications and prayers are still active for his children.

Pray office for the dead.....

Blessed Humbert of Romans became Master of the Order in 1254 and by 1256 completed a major reform of the liturgy. Humbert himself wrote a chronicle of his reform, where he describes the historical development of the Dominican liturgy: "from the beginning of the Order, there was much diversity in the office. Hence, there was compiled one office for the sake of having everywhere uniformity. In the course of time, four friars from four provinces were entrusted with the task of arranging the office in a better form. They accomplished this work, and it was confirmed [by several chapters]. But because there still were some corrections to be made, master-general Humbert was commissioned to make another revision, which revision was later approved by three chapters." William Bonniwell, O.P., has speculated that Dominic, or perhaps his successor Blessed Jordan of Saxony, instituted a uniform liturgy for the order, although Leonard Boyle, O.P., has argued that the commission of the Four Friars mentioned by Humbert was given the task of "*producing* a uniform liturgy by the General Chapter of 1245." William Bonniwell

holds that "the Friars Preachers chose the early thirteenth-century (or more accurately, the late twelfth-century) rite of Rome, and made certain changes in it." There were several distinct versions of the Divine Office celebrated in Rome in the thirteenth century; at the Lateran basilica one form was sung by the canons of the basilica, while a distinct and much newer version was sung by the Pope and the Roman Curia in the Lateran palace, located in the same complex as the basilica. The Franciscans adopted the Office according to the use of the Roman curia; not, as is often supposed, because it was briefer than the other versions, but because it was the version of the Office practiced in Assisi. In 1204 Guido II, a close friend of Pope Innocent III, was appointed bishop of Assisi. Bonniwell outlines eight theories as to the origin of the unified Dominican rite, arguing against the positions that it was invented by Humbert, the liturgy of ancient Rome, the Gallican or Gallico- Roman rite, an eclectic rite compiled from various other rites, a combination of the Carthusian and Premonstratensian rites, or the use of Lyons or Paris (pp. 167-177). Ansgar Dirks, O.P., and Philip Gleason, O.P., have pointed out the resemblance of the pre-Humbertian and Humbertian form of the Divine Office to that of Sarum. See Philip Gleason, O.P., "The Pre-Humbertian Liturgical Sources Revisited" in *Aux origines de la liturgie dominicaine : le manuscrit Santa Sabina XIV L 1*, ed. Leonard E. Boyle and Pierre-Marie Gy, curia, which spread throughout the city.<sup>26</sup> St. Francis, who was a close friend of Guido,<sup>27</sup> adopted this form of the Office for the Friars Minor,<sup>28</sup> although they replaced the so-called Roman psalter with the more popular "Gallican" version.<sup>29</sup> With the assistance of the Franciscans, the curial office thus spread throughout the Church, eventually becoming the basis of the Roman breviary.<sup>30</sup> The Dominicans, however, seem to have based their form of the Office on that of the Lateran basilica, making certain modifications to fit their taste and duties. They too replaced the Roman psalter with the Gallican,<sup>31</sup> and made other changes such as shortening certain texts.<sup>32</sup> However, the Dominicans retained elements of the older Roman office that the Curia had abandoned, such as the frequent use of long responsories after the scripture reading at first Vespers. In addition, the Dominicans made extensive adaptations to the Office hymnal: "Though hymns had been in use in the Church for many centuries, they were excluded at Rome from the breviaries of the secular clergy until the second half of the twelfth century, and possibly even to the end of that century. If the first Dominican liturgists did find hymns in the Roman Office, those hymns could have been there only a very short time. Hence, we can understand why the Dominicans felt free to select others. It is clear that the Dominican hymnal is not the one tardily adopted by Rome. It is equally clear that it is not the hymnal of the Church of Paris. No hymnal that we know corresponds closely to that of the Order. Probably the Order took the more common monastic version, omitted some of the hymns and slightly altered the order of some of the others."

The Dominican Breviary differed somewhat from the Roman. The Offices celebrated were of seven classes: of the season (de tempore), of saints (de sanctis), of vigils, of octaves, [votive Offices](#), Office of the Blessed Virgin, and Office of the Dead. The order of the psalms was different from the Roman use in the [canonical hours](#), having a different selection of psalms at Prime, and in Paschal time providing only three psalms and three lessons instead of the customary nine psalms and nine lessons. The Office of the Blessed Virgin was said on all days on which feasts of the rank of duplex or "totum duplex" were not celebrated. The [Gradual psalms](#) were said on all Saturdays on which the votive Office of the Blessed Virgin was said and were added to the psalms of Prime during Lent. The Office of the Dead was said once a week except during the week following Easter and the week following Pentecost. Other minor points of difference were the manner of making the commemorations, the text of the hymns, the Antiphons, the lessons of the common Offices and the insertions of special feasts of the order.

## **Inserts for Liturgy of the Hours**

Using Avery 05454 - 4" x 6" labels.




Compline Procession  
Salve Regina, Hail Holy Queen  
In honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Sal-ve Re-gi-na, Ma-ter mis-er-icord-iae,  
Vi-ta, dul-cis et spes nostra, sal-ve.  
Ad te cla-ma-mus ex-su-les fi-li-i He-va-e. Ad te  
sus-pi-ra-mus, gemen-tas et flen-tes in hac lacrimarum  
val-le. E-ja ergo ad-vo-ca-ta nostra, illos tu-os  
lae-ri-cor-das o-cu-los ad nos con-ver-te.  
Et Je-sum ben-edictum fructum ven-tris tu-i in hoc  
post hoc ex-sil-i-um ostende, O clemens, o  
pia, o dulcis Vir-go Ma-ri-a.

Salve Regina, Mater  
misericordiae,  
Vita dulcedo et spes nostr  
salve.  
Ad te clamamus exsules fi  
Hevae.  
Ad te suspiramus gement  
et flentes,  
in hac lacrimarum valle  
Eja ergo advocata nostra,  
illos tuos misericordes  
oculos ad nos converte.  
Et Jesum benedictum  
fructum ventris tui  
nobis post hoc exsilium  
ostende.  
O clemens, o pia, o dulcis  
Virgo Maria.

Hail holy queen, mother of  
mercy,  
Hail our life, our sweetness  
and our hope.  
To you do we cry poor  
banished children of Eve,  
To you do we send up our  
sighs, mourning and weepin  
in this valley of tears.  
Turn then, most gracious  
advocate  
your eyes of mercy toward  
us.  
And after this, our exile,  
Show us the fruit of your  
womb, Jesus.  
O clement, O loving, O swee  
Virgin Mary

Compline Procession  
O Lumen Ecclesiae, Light of the Church  
In honor of St. Dominic



O lumen Ecclē si-ae, Doctor ver-  
a tis, Ro- sa pa-ti-ē-ti-ae, E- bur ca-  
stā-tis, a- quam sa-pi-ē-ti-ae propi-nasti gra-  
tis: Praedi-cā-tor grā-ti-ae nos junge be-ā-tis.

O lumen  
Ecclesiae  
Doctor  
veritatis,  
Rosa  
patientiae,  
Ebur castitatis,  
Aquam  
sapientiae  
propinasti  
gratis,  
Praedicator  
gratiae,  
nos junge  
beatis.

Light of the Church,  
Teacher of truth,  
Rose of patience,  
Ivory of chastity,  
You freely offered  
The waters of  
wisdom,  
Preacher of grace,  
Unite us with the  
blessed.

Precedes Office if prayed before the Eucharist

*O Sacred Banquet,  
in which Christ is received,  
the memory of His Passion is recalled,  
the soul is filled with grace,  
and the pledge of future glory is given to us.*