

# **THE DIVINE OFFICE**

**The Liturgy of the Hours**



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## The Liturgy of the Hours

A Guide for clergy, seminarians, and laity

*“Ut in omnibus glorificetur Deus.”*

“That in all things God may be glorified.”

–St. Benedict

Arranged by the seminarians of Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, 2012.

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

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1.1 This guide is intended to be a general introduction to praying the Liturgy of the Hours, either in common or in private. The best source of information and instruction is the General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours (GILH), found in the beginning of Volume I of the four-volume set, or online. We encourage all the faithful to read the instruction regularly—especially the first chapters—to re-ignite interest in the praying of the Hours, and to deepen understanding.

1.2 The Liturgy of the Hours is the prayer of the Church. Know that as you pray, you pray with the Church, you pray through the Church, and you pray in the name of the Church. Just as surely, as the prayer of the Church is united with Christ, you pray also with, through, and in Christ Jesus.

1.3 The Liturgy of the Hours is a labor of love, not a legal dictate. All praise and glory is God's alone, and the Hours allow us to give voice to this unceasing song of praise.

## 2. GENERAL NOTES:

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2.1 For the purposes of this document, we assume the use of “Liturgy of the Hours” to refer to the four-volume set approved for use in the United States. The one-volume *Christian Prayer* is adapted and condensed, and is also approved for those who are not bound to pray the entire Office, including the Office of Readings and Daytime Prayer. *Shorter Christian Prayer* is further condensed. There are also digital versions. (See resources section)

2.2 The names “Liturgy of the Hours” and “Divine Office” are used interchangeably. In previous eras, there was a difference, but the Church has defined both terms to apply to this revision of the Office.

2.3 “Say the black, do the red.” Black text is generally what is said in prayer, while red text is instruction. Titles and descriptions (including descriptions of saints) are the exception: these are not said.

2.4 The Divine Office, or Liturgy of the Hours, is above all *vocal prayer*. It was designed to be prayed aloud, even in private. If it would be disruptive to pray aloud, it is permissible to pray silently, but many still encourage moving of lips, rather than silent reading.

2.5 The Liturgy of the Hours is ***public prayer of the whole Church***. Prayer in common (in a group), when possible, is always preferred to private prayer (GILH 32, 108, 273).

2.6 The Grail translation of the psalms is designed specifically for liturgy to preserve the poetic flow of the text, while still maintaining a highly accurate translation. Rome has given the *Recognitio* for use of this translation in future liturgy texts, so future lectionaries and missals may make use of this translation.

2.7 There are five main sections of the Breviary: the Proper of Seasons, the 4-Week Psalter, Night Prayer, Proper of Saints, and the Common of Saints. Other sections include the Ordinary, placed after the Proper of Seasons, the Complementary Psalmody for Daytime Prayer placed after Night Prayer, and the Office of the Dead, and appendices placed after the Common of Saints.

2.8 A common way to mark the breviary is to place one ribbon each in the appropriate day within the Proper of Seasons, Four-Week Psalter, Night Prayer, Proper of Saints, and the Common of Saints. Holy cards may also be used to mark common pages such as the *Te Deum* and hymns in the Ordinary, the beginning of privileged seasons for the hymns, the Office of the dead, and any other commonly needed place. Find a way that works for you. You may find it handy to print common prayers and hymns and keep them inside the cover.

2.9 There are a number of options available for adapting the Office. Many of them are included in this summary.

### 3. THE STRUCTURE OF THE OFFICE:

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Morning, Evening	Office of Readings	Daytime	Nighttime
Introduction	Introduction	Introduction	Introduction
Hymn	Hymn	Hymn	Examination
Psalmody	Psalmody	Psalmody	Hymn
Reading	Responsory	Reading	Psalmody
Responsory	Scripture Reading	Responsory	Reading
Canticle	Responsory	Prayer	Responsory
Intercessions	Second Reading	Dismissal	Prayer
Lord's Prayer	Responsory		Dismissal
Prayer	Prayer		
Dismissal	Dismissal		

3.1 The people stand during the introduction, hymn, Gospel Canticle, intercessions, Lord's Prayer, and dismissal. The people sit during the psalms and readings, except the Gospel, although the people may stand during the psalms if it is customary (GILH 263-265).

#### INTRODUCTION:

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3.2 Invocations of "God" may be expanded for musical purposes, such as "O God," "Lord God," etc. (cf. Ordinary).

3.3 The invitatory normally begins the first Hour of the day. The leader intones the words "(O) Lord, open my lips." Everyone responds "And my mouth will proclaim your praise." All make the sign of the cross on the mouth (GILH 34, 266).

3.4 The Invitatory Psalm 95, with its antiphon from the Proper of Seasons for the day, is then recited. It is preferred to be recited responsorially, but may be recited with the antiphon said only at the beginning and end. Outside Ordinary Time and ferial days, the invitatory antiphon can be found in the Proper of Seasons or in the Ordinary.

3.5 Before all other Hours: Make the sign of the cross, saying “(O) God come to my assistance, (O) Lord make haste to help me. 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. (Alleluia).”

#### **PSALMODY:**

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3.6 The antiphon is said by the psalmist, and then the first line of the psalm, then the others join. Side 1 will join for praying in choir.

3.7 The psalms may be recited in three ways: as a single unit without break (*in directum*), or antiphonally with two choirs or sections alternating, or responsorially (GILH 122).

3.8 The end of every psalm is concluded with the doxology: “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.” (with the exception of the morning Canticle of the Three Children on Sunday Week 1 and 3) (GILH 123).



## **READINGS:**

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**3.9** No readings may be taken from the Gospels, except on vigil observations (GILH 73, 144).

**3.10** The lector reads the short reading, then the psalmist reads the first line of the responsory, and the people respond, and so on, until the responsory is complete. The psalmist reads only the first part of the doxology, “Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,” and then the people respond as given in the responsory.

## **GOSPEL CANTICLES:**

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**3.11** The psalmist reads the canticle antiphon, then the first line of the canticle, and all sign themselves with the cross and recite it if it is prayed together (*in directum*), antiphonally. Alternately, it may be recited responsorially.

## **INTERCESSIONS:**

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**3.12** The leader should introduce the intercessions with the first line given in the Office. All respond with the response in italics.

**3.13** The lector then reads the intercessions. He may read the first line and the people respond with the second, or he may read both lines, and the people repeat the italicized response or another appropriate response.

## DISMISSAL:

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3.14 On Sundays, Feasts, and Solemnities, during the Office of Readings the *Te Deum* (found in the Ordinary) is said before the final prayer and dismissal.

3.15 At Daytime, Night, and the Office of Readings, the final prayer is preceded by the invitation, “**Let us pray.**” At Morning and Evening Prayer, the invitation is omitted (LOTH Ordinary).

3.16 If a cleric presides at the celebration, he should always give the final prayer, blessing, and dismissal. In the absence of a cleric, the leader of the group reads the prayer and follows the appropriate dismissal formula.

3.17 For a bishop: The bishop says, “**The Lord be with you,**” and the rest respond, “**And with your spirit.**” He then says “**Blessed be the name of the Lord,**” and all reply “**Now and forever.**” The bishop says “**Our help is in the name of the Lord,**” and all reply “**Who made heaven and earth.**” He blesses the people as usual with the triple sign of the cross. Alternately, he may use another approved dismissal appropriate to the day found in the Missal for the Mass (Ceremonial of Bishops 206; also 1120-1121).

3.18 For a priest or deacon: The priest or deacon says, “**The Lord be with you,**” and all respond, “**And with your spirit.**” He then blesses the people with the usual formula, “**May almighty God bless you...**,” and the people respond, “**Amen.**” He then dismisses the people with the usual formula, such as “**Go in peace,**” and all reply “**Thanks be to God.**” Alternately, a priest or deacon may use another approved dismissal appropriate to the day found in the Missal for the Mass (GILH 54).

3.19 In the absence of a cleric, the leader says at Morning and Evening prayer: “**May almighty God bless us, protect us from all**

evil, and bring us to everlasting life,” and all respond “Amen,” and sign themselves with the cross.

3.20 At Daytime Prayer and the Office of Readings, there is no blessing following the prayer. In communal celebrations, the leader says, “Let us praise the Lord,” and all respond, “And give him thanks,” and all sign themselves with the cross (GILH 79).

3.21 At Night Prayer, there is no blessing following the prayer. The leader says, “May the all-powerful Lord grant us a restful night, and a peaceful death,” and all respond “Amen,” and sign themselves with the cross. This formula is used even in private (GILH 91). One of the Marian hymns is then sung.

#### **MARIAN HYMNS BY SEASON:**

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#### 3.22

*Alma Redemptoris Mater*: Advent to the Baptism of the Lord

*Ave Regina Caelorum*: Lent

*Regina Coeli*: Easter Season

*Salve Regina*: Ordinary time

## 4. ORDINARY OR PROPER: SOLEMNITIES, FEASTS, MEMORIALS, AND PRIVILEGED SEASONS:

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4.1 Ferial days are ordinary days on which no special celebration is observed. Memorials and Feasts are special celebrations during the year. Solemnities are the highest celebrations in the calendar.

4.2 A part is *proper* if it is unique to the celebration for the day, such as the prayers given for a solemnity. A part is *ordinary* if it is always the same at every celebration, such as the introduction “God come to my assistance...” A part is *common* if it is unique to a kind of celebration, such as all celebrations of martyrs. If something is taken “from the day,” this refers to the current day in the Four-Week Psalter, for instance, Tuesday Week III.

4.3 The simplified hierarchy of precedence is as follows: Solemnities, Sundays, Feasts, Memorials, Optional Memorials, then Ferial days. See the Table of Liturgical Days following the GILH.

4.4 On Sundays and solemnities during the privileged seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter, including the Triduum, Octave of Easter, and the Octave of Christmas, antiphons, readings, responses, intentions and prayers are proper to the day, and are found in the Proper of Seasons or Proper of Saints.

4.5 Whenever anything is missing from the Proper, it is taken from the Common for that day (GILH 226).

4.6 Solemnities and Feasts are always obligatory—they must be observed. Memorials of saints are obligatory if under the name of the saint it reads “Memorial.” A feast or solemnity always takes precedence over a memorial (cf. GILH 220)

4.7 Solemnities begin with Evening Prayer I on the day before (GILH 225).

4.8 For feasts and solemnities, everything is taken from the proper of the day, or from the appropriate common where indicated in the proper. On memorials, the psalter can be taken from the day or from the appropriate common, and everything from the reading forward must be taken from the proper for the memorial or from a common as indicated in the proper. On a memorial, Daytime and Night prayer is taken from the day, and nothing from the office of the saint (GILH 225-236).

4.9 On ferial days that fall on Saturday, an optional memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary is permitted (GILH 240).

4.10 During privileged seasons, all memorials are optional; those that are observed are celebrated as *commemorations*. The seasonal antiphons for the day are used in the morning and evening; the memorial reading for the Office of Readings is added after the second reading and responsory, before the final prayer. The final prayer can read from the day, up to “we ask this...” or “through our Lord...” and then the saint’s antiphon is added, and the saint’s prayer is prayed through the end (GILH 239; see also 237-238).

## 5. OPTIONS:

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- 5.1 In place of the Invitatory psalm 95, psalm 100, 67, or 24 may be used (GILH 34).
- 5.2 The invitatory psalm may be recited responsorially, with the antiphon repeated after every strophe, or with the antiphon said only at the beginning and the end (GILH 34).
- 5.3 The invitatory psalm and antiphon may be omitted when it precedes Morning Prayer (GILH 34).
- 5.4 The hymn may not be skipped. In the United States another suitable hymn from the day may be sung from approved hymnals. The original Latin hymns, or their translations approved in the United States may also be used (see resources).
- 5.5 If a psalm of longer length is divided into two or more sections, it is possible to pray the psalm without break as one psalm, using only the first antiphon (GILH 124-125).
- 5.6 The antiphon may be said only at the beginning, or both at the beginning and end of the psalm (GILH 123).
- 5.7 The psalm prayer may be skipped, as they are not in the Latin *Editio Typico*, but are an adaptation of the English version.
- 5.8 An additional supplement for the Office of Readings is available, which extends the readings from one year to a two year cycle, and includes nearly all the Bible (GILH 145-146).
- 5.9 When the texts are shortened, one may read the longer one from an approved the supplementary volume (GILH 155).

**5.10** It is possible to substitute the reading from the Fathers and Saints in the Office of Readings with one from the longer supplement, or one may choose, with care, another work for “quasi-continuous reading” from a Church Father (GILH 161, 250).

**5.11** A homily or a period of silence may follow the reading (GILH 47, 48).

**5.12** The responsory following the reading may be omitted. Other chants or responsories “with the same purpose and character,” approved by the conference of bishops, may be substituted (GILH 49; also 171).

**5.13** For the intercessions, the leader may say both parts, and the congregation respond appropriately with the response given or another appropriate phrase, or pause silently, or he may say the first part and the congregation respond with the second part (GILH 190, 193).

**5.14** Periods of silence may be observed in appropriate places in order to foster meditation (GILH 201-203).

**5.15** The Office of Readings of the following day may be observed any time after Evening Prayer the day before, even before Night Prayer (GILH 59).

**5.16** Before special occasions such as feasts and solemnities and Sundays, the Office of Readings may be celebrated the night before as a Vigil. After the second responsory, canticles may be added from the appendix, followed by the Gospel for the coming day, and if desired, a homily, and finally, the *Te Deum* is sung, and then the prayer (GILH 73).

5.17 Those who pray more than one hour of Daytime Prayer take the psalms and antiphons from the complementary psalmody, unless the antiphons are proper. The same hour may not be prayed twice (GILH 81).

5.18 The psalms for night prayer may be taken from either Sunday I or II of night prayer, but the rest is from the day (GILH 88).

5.19 For good reason, the Liturgy of the Hours may be combined with Mass. The instructions on GILH 93-99 should be observed.

5.20 The Office may be celebrated in multiple languages in one celebration. (GILH 276, *Musicam Sacram* 51).



## 6. SINGING IN THE OFFICE:

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6.1 Singing is so important, that the words “say, recite, etc.” are all understood to refer to either singing or recitation. “Rather than being an embellishment, singing is an integral part of prayer.” Singing is assumed to be the first expectation of any celebration in common, and reciting the Hours is allowed as an exception. Care must be taken to avoid “undue burden,” however, on any who participate. For that reason, it is possible to sing only parts of the Hours, and recite others. Refer to sections 267-284 for more detail.

6.2 Singing is always preferred to simple recitation. God gave us our voices, so we should give them back to him! Augustine says, “When we sing, we pray twice.” Or, a modern rendition: “If God gave you a beautiful voice, you should sing to thank him. If he didn’t give you a beautiful voice, you should sing to pay him back.”

6.3 Psalm tones can be simple and sung almost entirely on one note, or they can be more complex. In some cases chant can become very complex and stylized. Most chant can be sung with minimal instruction.

6.4 Typically, any publication designed to be sung will arrange the text to assist in singing.

6.5 The verse will be sung entirely on one note, called the *recitation tone*, (or *tenor*), with a melody at the end of each half of the verse.

6.6 If the verse is long, the two halves may be further broken up to help singing. This is called the *flex*, and is indicated by the symbol †. In simplified modern chant, the tone does not always change in the flex.

6.7 Often, verses that cannot fit on one line will be indented after the first line.

6.8 The *mediant cadence* is the melody sung at the end of the first half of the verse. The first note of the mediant cadence is typically indicated by italics. The second half of the verse may be indicated with a \*.

6.9 The *termination* is the melody at the end of the second half of the verse. Again, its start is typically indicated by italics.

6.10 Chant notation is based on the 8 modes, rather than scales and uses the movable *do* (*do, re, mi...*) scale. This means the scale is relative and can be moved. Typically though, *do* refers to C. The staff often has 4 lines, but may use the modern 5 lines, and may use square or round notes.

6.11 A *neum* is a note, or several notes, sung on one syllable. There are many different types of neums; rising, falling, and so on. Most modern chant is sung on simpler single-note neums.

6.12 Below is a psalm tone and a few verses from the Mundelein Psalter. The two bars are the median cadence and the termination. The white ‘hollow’ notes are the recitation tones for each half. The first note of the cadences (black notes) will be sung on the italicized syllable. The number to the left is the mode number (8), and the letter represents the *final*, or the last note of the psalm tone.



Psalm 63:2-9  
A soul thirsting for God

*Whoever has left the darkness of sin, yearns for God.*

**O** God, you are my God, for  
*you* I long; \* for you my *soul* is  
thirsting.  
My body *pines* for you \* like a dry,  
weary land *without* water.  
So I gaze on you *in* the sanctuary \* to  
see your strength *and* your glory.  
For your love is *better* than life, \* my  
lips will *speak* your praise.  
So I will bless you *all* my life, \* in your  
name I will lift *up* my hands.  
My soul shall be filled as *with* a ban-

quet, \* my mouth shall praise *you*  
with joy.  
On my bed I *remember* you. \* On you I  
muse *through* the night  
for you have *been* my help; \* in the  
shadow of your wings *I* rejoice.  
My soul *clings* to you; \* your right hand  
*holds* me fast.  
Glory to the Father, and *to* the Son, \*  
and to the *Holy* Spirit:  
as it was in the *beginning*, is now, \* and  
will be for *ever*. Amen.

The Mundelein Psalter, © 2007 Douglas A. Martis, Liturgy Training Publications. Used with permission.

6.13



— The first symbol is the *do clef*, which signifies where the note “do” (C) is sung. The second is the *fa clef* (F).



## 7. RESOURCES:

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7.1 The Divine Office is now available in a variety of new media. Many are free services, but some require purchase or subscription.

### 7.2 Printed:

*The Liturgy of the Hours, Christian Prayer, Shorter Christian Prayer*  
Catholic Book Publishing, 1975, 1976, 1988, respectively.  
*The Mundelein Psalter*, Hillenbrand Books, 2007.

### 7.3 Online:

[Divineoffice.org](http://Divineoffice.org)

Full Office available for free online; also available for purchase on iPhone, iPad, Kindle, and Android.

[Universalis.com](http://Universalis.com)

(British translations, will differ from American)

[eBreviary.com](http://eBreviary.com):

Subscription service which provides printable and mobile versions of the Office. Some hours (such as Night Prayer) are free, while most are included in the subscription.

### 7.4 On mobile devices:

[iBreviary](http://iBreviary) for iPhone, iPad, Android, and Blackberry

Download at [iBreviary.com](http://iBreviary.com), or in the App Store for your device.

### 7.5 St. Joseph's Guide:

A yearly guide that tells you which pages you will need for each hour of the day. About \$2.

## 8. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

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### 8.1 Resources on the Scriptures of the Office:

John Brook, *School of Prayer*

Jean Danielou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*

Anthony Bloom, *Beginning to Pray*

Massey Hamilton Sheppard, *The Psalms in Christian Worship—A Practical Guide*

Thomas Merton, *Praying the Psalms*

### 8.2 Music in the liturgy:

Lucien. Deiss, *Biblical Hymns and Psalms*, 2 volumes

J. Gelineau, *The Grail Gelineau Psalter*

Stephen Somerville, *Psalms for Singing*, 2 volumes

*Morning Praise and Evensong—A Liturgy of the Hours in Musical Setting*

*The Catholic Liturgy Book*, ed. R. A. Keifer

*Cantor Book* (Cycles A, B, C)

*People's Mass Book; F. E. L. Hymnal*

*Christian Prayer—The Liturgy of the Hours—Organ Accompaniment* (ICEL)

### 8.3 Chant:

Susan Treacy, *A Plain and Easy Introduction to Gregorian Chant*

## 9. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

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9.1 This Divine Office Guide is produced free of charge for all. A small donation may be given to defray printing costs, but no profit should be derived from this guide.

9.2 This guide may be reproduced as needed within the dioceses of the United States of America, provided no profit is sought, as mentioned above.

9.3 Special thanks and acknowledgement to the faculty at Sacred Heart Major Seminary, Detroit, for faithfully promoting exercise of the Office, and joyfully promoting it among seminarians. May our prayers in this Office always lift you up in thanksgiving to the Lord.

9.4 General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours (*Laudis Canticum*) English translation © 1970, 1971, International Committee on English in the Liturgy.

9.5 *The Mundelein Psalter* © 2007 Hillenbrand Books, Chicago/Mundelein, IL. Excerpts used with permission.

9.6 *A Plain and Easy Introduction to Gregorian Chant*, © 2007 CanticaNOVA Publications, Charles Town, WV. Excerpts used with permission.





