

**INTRODUCTION TO  
THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS**

**FOR**

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## EXCERPTS<sup>1</sup> FROM THE GENERAL INSTRUCTION OF THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS

### Chapter I-III. Liturgy of the Hours

#### Consecration of Time

10. Christ taught us: "You must **pray at all times** and not lose heart" (Lk 18:1). The Church has been faithful in obeying this instruction; it never ceases to offer prayer and makes this exhortation its own: "Through him (Jesus) let us offer to God an unceasing sacrifice of praise" (Heb 15:15). **The Church fulfills this precept not only by celebrating the eucharist but in other ways also, especially through the liturgy of the hours.** By ancient Christian tradition **what distinguishes the liturgy of the hours from other liturgical services is that it consecrates to God the whole cycle of the day and the night.** [56]

11. **The purpose of the liturgy of the hours is to sanctify the day and the whole range of human activity.** Therefore its structure has been revised in such a way as to make each hour once more correspond as nearly as possible to natural time and to take account of the circumstances of life today. [57]

Hence, "that the day may be truly sanctified and the hours themselves recited with spiritual advantage, it is best that each of them be prayed at a time most closely corresponding to the true time of each canonical hour." [58]

#### Liturgy of the Hours and the Eucharist

12. To the different hours of the day **the liturgy of the hours extends [59] the praise and thanksgiving, the memorial of the mysteries of salvation, the petitions and the foretaste of heavenly glory that are present in the eucharistic mystery,** "the center and high point in the whole life of the Christian community." [60]

The liturgy of the hours is in turn an excellent preparation for the celebration of the eucharist itself, for it inspires and deepens in a fitting way the dispositions necessary for the fruitful celebration of the eucharist: faith, hope, love, devotion, and the spirit of self-denial.

#### Sanctification of God's People

14. **Our sanctification is accomplished [64] and worship is offered to God in the liturgy of the hours** in such a way that an exchange or dialogue is set up between God

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<sup>1</sup>Taken from <http://www.ewtn.com/library/curia/cdwgilh.htm> I have tried to include anything that might be of interest to a parish using Morning Prayer on weekdays.

and us, in which "God is speaking to his people ... and his people are responding to him by both song and prayer." [65]

**Those taking part in the liturgy of the hours have access to holiness of the richest kind** through the life-giving word of God, which in this liturgy receives great emphasis. Thus **its readings are drawn from sacred Scripture, God's words in the psalms are sung in his presence, and the intercessions, prayers, and hymns are inspired by Scripture and steeped in its spirit.** [66]

Hence, not only when those things are read "that are written for our instruction" (Rom 15:4), but also **when the Church prays or sings, faith is deepened for those who take part and their minds are lifted up to God**, in order to offer him their worship as intelligent beings and to receive his grace more plentifully. [67]

**16. When the Church offers praise to God in the liturgy of the hours, it unites itself with that hymn of praise sung throughout all ages in the halls of heaven;** [72] it also receives a foretaste of the song of praise in heaven, described by John in the Book of Revelation, the song sung continually before the throne of God and of the Lamb.

#### **Petition and Intercession**

**17. But besides the praise of God, the Church in the liturgy of the hours expresses the prayers and desires of all the faithful; indeed, it prays to Christ, and through him to the Father, for the salvation of the whole world.** [76]

#### **Chapter I-IV. Participants in the Liturgy of the Hours**

##### **a) Celebration in Common**

**20. The liturgy of the hours, like other liturgical services, is not a private matter but belongs to the whole Body of the Church, whose life it both expresses and affects.** [91] ...

**21. Wherever possible, other groups of the faithful should celebrate the liturgy of the hours communally in church. This especially applies to parishes** - the cells of the diocese, established under their pastors, taking the place of the bishop; they "represent in some degree the visible Church established throughout the world." [94]

**22. Hence, when the people are invited to the liturgy of the hours and come together in unity of heart and voice, they show forth the Church in its celebration of the mystery of Christ.** [95]

**23. Those in holy orders or with a special canonical mission [96] have the**

**responsibility of initiating and directing the prayer of the community;** "they should expend every effort so that those entrusted to their care may become of one mind in prayer." [97] **They must therefore see to it that the people are invited, and prepared by suitable instruction, to celebrate the principal hours in common, especially on Sundays and holydays.** [98] They should teach the people how to make this participation a source of genuine prayer; [99] they should therefore give the people suitable guidance in the Christian understanding of the psalms, in order to progress by degrees to a greater appreciation and more frequent use of the prayer of the Church. [100]

### **c) Structure of the Celebration**

33. The structure of the liturgy of the hours follows laws of its own and incorporates in its own way elements found in other Christian celebrations. Thus it is so constructed that, **after a hymn, there is always psalmody, then a long or short reading of sacred Scripture, and finally prayer of petition.**

In a celebration in common and in private recitation **the essential structure of this liturgy remains the same, that is, it is a conversation between God and his people. Celebration in common, however, expresses more clearly the ecclesial nature of the liturgy of the hours; it makes for active participation by all, in a way suited to each one's condition, through the acclamations, dialogue, alternating psalmody, and similar elements.** It also better provides for the different literary genres that make up the liturgy of the hours. [121] Hence, **whenever it is possible to have a celebration in common, with the people present and actively taking part, this kind of celebration is to be preferred to one that is individual and, as it were, private.** [122] **It is also advantageous to sing the office** in choir and in community as opportunity Offers, in accordance with the nature and function of the individual parts.

In this way the Apostle's exhortation is obeyed: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you in all its fullness, as you teach and counsel each other in all wisdom by psalms, hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing thankfully to God in your hearts" (Col 3:16; see Eph 5:19-20).

## **Chapter II: Sanctification of the Day: The Different Liturgical Hours**

### **Chapter II-I. Introduction to the Whole Office**

34. The whole office begins as a rule with an invitatory. This consists in the verse, *Lord, open my lips. And my mouth will proclaim your praise,* and Ps 95. ...

37. "By the venerable tradition of the universal Church, *lauds* as morning prayer and *vespers* as evening prayer are the two hinges on which the daily office turns; hence they are to be considered as the chief hours and celebrated as such." [2]

41. Morning prayer and evening prayer begin with the introductory verse, *God come to*

*my assistance. Lord, make haste to help me.* There follows the *Glory to the Father*, with *As it was in the beginning* and *Alleluia* (omitted in Lent). ...

43. After the hymn the psalmody follows, in accordance with the rules laid down in nos. 121-125. **The psalmody of morning prayer consists of one morning psalm, then a canticle from the Old Testament and, finally, a second psalm of praise**, following the tradition of the Church. ...

45. The short reading is provided to fit the day, the season, and the feast. ... The short readings are different for each day of the psalter cycle.

46. Especially in a celebration with a congregation, a longer Scripture reading may be chosen **either from the office of readings** or the Lectionary for Mass, particularly texts that for some reason have not been used. ...

47. In a celebration with a congregation a short homily may follow the reading to explain its meaning, as circumstances suggest.

48. After the reading or homily a period of silence may be observed.

49. As a response to the word of God, a responsorial. chant or short responsory is provided; this may be omitted. Other chants with the same purpose and character may also be substituted in its place, provided these have been duly approved by the conference of bishops.

50. Next is the solemn recitation of the gospel canticle with its antiphon, that is, the Canticle of Zechariah at morning prayer and the Canticle of Mary at evening prayer. ... The antiphon for each canticle is indicated, according to the character of the day, the season, or the feast.

51. After the canticle, at morning prayer come the petitions for the consecration of the day and its work to God and at evening prayer, the intercessions (see nos. 179-193).

52. After the petitions or intercessions the Lord's Prayer is said by all.

53. Immediately after the Lord's Prayer there follows the concluding prayer, which for weekdays in Ordinary Time is found in the psalter and for other days in the proper.

54. Then, if a priest or deacon is presiding, he dismisses the congregation [as at Mass]. In the absence of a priest or deacon the celebration concludes with *May the Lord bless us*, etc.

## **Chapter II-VII. Combining the Hours With Mass or With Each Other**

93. In particular cases, if circumstances require, it is possible to link an hour more

closely with Mass when there is a celebration of the liturgy of the hours in public or in common, according to the norms that follow, provided the Mass and the hour belong to one and the same office. Care must be taken, however, that this does not result in harm to pastoral work, especially on Sundays.

94. When morning prayer, celebrated in choir or in common, comes immediately before Mass, **the whole celebration may begin** either with the introductory verse and hymn of morning prayer, especially on weekdays, or **with the entrance song, procession, and celebrant's greeting**, especially on Sundays and holydays; one of the introductory rites is thus omitted.

**The psalmody of morning prayer follows as usual, up to, but excluding, the reading.** After the psalmody **the penitential rite is omitted** and, as circumstances suggest, the Kyrie; the Gloria then follows, if required by the rubrics, and the celebrant says the opening prayer of the Mass. **The liturgy of the word follows as usual.**

The general intercessions are made in the place and form customary at Mass. But **on weekdays, at Mass in the morning, the intercessions of morning prayer may replace the daily form of the general intercessions at Mass.**

**After the communion with its communion song the Canticle of Zechariah, Blessed be the Lord, with its antiphon from morning prayer, is sung. Then follow the prayer after communion and the rest as usual.**

### **Chapter III: Different Elements in the Liturgy of the Hours**

#### **Chapter III-I. Psalms and Their Connection With Christian Prayer**

100. In the liturgy of the hours the Church in large measure **prays through the magnificent songs that the Old Testament authors composed under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.** The origin of these verses gives them great power to raise the mind to God, to inspire devotion, to evoke gratitude in times of favor, and to bring consolation and courage in times of trial.

101. The psalms, however, are only a foreshadowing of the fullness of time that came to pass in Christ the Lord and that is the source of the power of the Church's prayer. Hence, while the Christian people are all agreed on the supreme value to be placed on the psalms, they can sometimes experience difficulty in making this inspired poetry their own prayer.

102. Yet the Holy Spirit, under whose inspiration the psalms were written, is always present by his grace to those believers who use them with good will. But more is necessary: **the faithful must "improve their understanding of the Bible, especially of the psalms," [1] according to their individual capacity, so that they may**

**understand how and by what method they can truly pray through the psalms.**

103. The psalms are not readings or prose prayers, but poems of praise. They can on occasion be recited as readings, but from their literary genre **they are properly called Tehillim ("songs of praise") in Hebrew and psalmoi ("songs to be sung to the lyre") in Greek.** In fact, **all the psalms have a musical quality that determines their correct style of delivery.** Thus even when a psalm is recited and not sung or is said silently in private, its musical character should govern its use. **A psalm does present a text to the minds of the people, but its aim is to move the heart of those singing it or listening to it and also of those accompanying it "on the lyre and harp."**

**104. To sing the psalms with understanding, then, is to meditate on them verse by verse,** with the heart always ready to respond in the way the Holy Spirit desires. The one who inspired the psalmist will also be present to those who in faith and love are ready to receive his grace. For this reason **the singing of psalms, though it demands the reverence owed to God's majesty, should be the expression of a joyful spirit and a loving heart,** in keeping with their character as sacred poetry and divine song and above all with the freedom of the children of God.

**105. Often the words of a psalm help us to pray with greater ease and fervor, whether in thanksgiving and joyful praise of God or in prayer for help in the throes of suffering.** But difficulties may arise, especially when the psalm is not addressed directly to God. **The psalmist is a poet and often addresses the people as he recalls Israel's history; sometimes he addresses others,** including subrational creatures. **He even represents the words as being spoken by God himself** and individual people, including, as in Ps 2, God's enemies. This shows that a psalm is a different kind of prayer from a prayer or collect composed by the Church. **Moreover, it is in keeping with the poetic and musical character of the psalms that they do not necessarily address God but are sung in God's presence.** Thus St. Benedict's instruction: "Let us reflect on what it means to be in the sight of God and his angels, and let us so stand in his presence that our minds are in harmony with our voices." [2]

**106. In praying the psalms we should open our hearts to the different attitudes they express,** varying with the literary genre to which each belongs (psalms of grief, trust, gratitude, etc.) and to which biblical scholars rightly attach great importance.

107. Staying close to the meaning of the words, **the person who prays the psalms looks for the significance of the text for the human life of the believer.**

It is clear that each psalm was written in its own individual circumstances, which the titles given for each psalm in the Hebrew psalter are meant to indicate. But whatever its historical origin, each psalm has its own meaning, which we cannot overlook even in our own day. Though **the psalms** originated very many centuries ago among an Eastern people, they **express accurately the pain and hope, the unhappiness and**

**trust of people of every age and country, and sing above all of faith in God, of revelation, and of redemption.**

**108. Those who pray the psalms in the liturgy of the hours do so not so much in their own name as in the name of the entire Body of Christ.** This consideration does away with the problem of a possible discrepancy between personal feelings and the sentiments a psalm is expressing: for example, when a person feels sad and the psalm is one of joy or when a person feels happy and the psalm is one of mourning. Such a problem is readily solved in private prayer, which allows for the choice of a psalm suited to personal feelings. The divine office, however, is not private; the cycle of psalms is public, in the name of the Church, even for those who may be reciting an hour alone. Those who pray the psalms in the name of the Church nevertheless can always find a reason for joy or sadness, for the saying of the Apostle applies in this case also: "Rejoice with the joyful and weep with those who weep" (Rom 12:15). **In this way human frailty, wounded by self-love, is healed in proportion to the love that makes the heart match the voice that prays the psalms. [3]**

**109. Those who pray the psalms in the name of the Church should be aware of their full sense (sensus plenus), especially their Messianic sense, which was the reason for the Church's introduction of the psalter into its prayer.** This Messianic sense was fully revealed in the New Testament and indeed was affirmed publicly by Christ the Lord in person when he said to the apostles: "All that is written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled" (Lk 24:44). The best-known example of this Messianic sense is the dialogue in Matthew's Gospel on the Messiah as Son of David and David's Lord, [4] where Ps 110 is interpreted as Messianic.

**Following this line of thought, the Fathers of the Church saw the whole psalter as a prophecy of Christ** and the Church and explained it in this sense; **for the same reason the psalms have been chosen for use in the liturgy.** Though somewhat contrived interpretations were at times proposed, in general the Fathers and the liturgy itself had the right to hear in the singing of the psalms the voice of Christ crying out to the Father or of the Father conversing with the Son; indeed, they also recognized in the psalms the voice of the Church, the apostles, and the martyrs. This method of interpretation also flourished in the Middle Ages; in many manuscripts of the period the Christological meaning of each psalm was set before those praying by means of the caption prefixed. A Christological meaning is by no means confined to the recognized Messianic psalms but is given also to many others. Some of these interpretations are doubtless Christological only in an accommodated sense, but they have the support of the Church's tradition.

On the great feasts especially, the choice of psalms is often based on their Christological meaning and **antiphons taken from these psalms are frequently used to throw light on this meaning.**

## Chapter III-II. Antiphons and Other Aids to Praying the Psalms

110. In the Latin tradition of psalmody **three elements have greatly contributed to an understanding of the psalms** and their use as Christian prayer: **the captions, the psalm-prayers, and in particular the antiphons.**

111. In the psalter of The Liturgy of the Hours **a caption is given for each psalm to explain its meaning and its import for the personal life of the believer.** These captions are intended only as an aid to prayer. A quotation from the New Testament or the Fathers of the Church is added to foster prayer in the light of Christ's new revelation; it is an invitation to pray the psalms in their Christological meaning.

112. **Psalm-prayers for each psalm are given in the supplement** to The Liturgy of the Hours as an aid to understanding them in a predominantly Christian way. An **ancient tradition provides a model for their use:** after the psalm a period of **silence** is observed, **then the prayer** gives a resume and resolution of the thoughts and aspirations of those praying the psalms.

113. Even when the liturgy of the hours is recited, not sung, each psalm retains its own antiphon, which is also to be said in private recitation. **The antiphons help to bring out the literary genre of the psalm; they highlight some theme that may otherwise not attract the attention it deserves; they suggest an individual tone in a psalm,** varying with different contexts: indeed, as long as farfetched accommodated senses are avoided, **antiphons are of great value in helping toward an understanding of the typological meaning or the meaning appropriate to the feast;** they can also add pleasure and variety to the recitation of the psalms.

114. The antiphons in the psalter have been designed to lend themselves to vernacular translation and to **repetition after each strophe,** in accordance with no. 125. **When the office of Ordinary Time is recited, not sung, the quotations printed with the psalms may be used in place of these antiphons (see no. 111).**

115. When a psalm may be divided because of its length into several sections within one and the same hour, an antiphon is given for each section. This is to provide variety, especially when the hour is sung, and also to help toward a better understanding of the riches of the psalm. Still, **it is permissible to say or sing the complete psalm without interruption, using only the first antiphon.**

**116. Proper antiphons are given for each of the psalms of morning prayer and evening prayer** during the Easter triduum, on the days within the octaves of **Easter** and **Christmas,** on the **Sundays of the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter,** on the weekdays of **Holy Week and the Easter season,** and from the **17th to the 24th of December.**

117. On **solemnities** proper antiphons are given for the office of readings, morning prayer, the daytime hours, and evening prayer; if not, the antiphons are taken from the common. On **feasts** the same applies to the office of readings and to morning prayer and evening prayer.

118. Any memorials of the saints that have proper antiphons retain them (see no. 235).

119. **The antiphons for the Canticles of Zechariah and of Mary are taken, during Ordinary Time, from the Proper of Seasons, if they are given there; if not, they are taken from the current week and day of the psalter.** On solemnities and feasts they are taken from the proper if they are given there; if not, they are taken from the common. On memorials without proper antiphons the antiphon may be taken at will either from the common or from the current week.

120. **During the Easter season Alleluia is added to all antiphons,** unless it would clash with the meaning of a particular antiphon.

### **Chapter III-III. Ways of Singing the Psalms**

121. **Different psalms may be sung in different ways** for a fuller grasp of their spiritual meaning and beauty. The **choice of ways is dictated by** the literary genre or length of each psalm, by the language used, whether Latin or the vernacular, and especially by the kind of celebration, whether individual, with a group, or with a congregation. The reason for using psalms is not the establishment of a fixed amount of prayer but their own variety and the character proper to each.

122. **The psalms are sung or said in one of three ways,** according to the different usages established in tradition or experience: **directly (*in directum*), that is, all sing the entire psalm, or antiphonally, that is, two choirs or sections of the congregation sing alternate verses or strophes, or responsorially.**

123. **At the beginning of each psalm its own antiphon is always to be recited, as noted in nos. 113-120. At the end of the psalm the practice of concluding with the Glory to the Father and As it was in the beginning is retained.** This is the fitting conclusion endorsed by tradition and it gives to Old Testament prayer a note of praise and a Christological and Trinitarian sense. **The antiphon may be repeated at the end of the psalm.**

124. **When longer psalms occur,** sections are marked in the psalter that divide the parts in such a way as to keep the threefold structure of the hour; but great care has been taken not to distort the meaning of the psalm.

It is useful to observe this division, especially in a choral celebration in Latin; the Glory to the Father is added at the end of each section.

**It is permissible, however, either to keep this traditional way or to pause between the different sections of the same psalm or to recite the whole psalm and its antiphon as a single unit without a break.**

125. In addition, when the literary genre of a psalm suggests it, the divisions into strophes are marked in order that, especially when the psalm is sung in the vernacular, the antiphons may be repeated after each strophe; in this case the Glory to the Father need be said only at the end of the psalm.

#### Chapter III-IV. **Plan for the Distribution of the Psalms in the Office**

126. **The psalms are distributed over a four-week cycle in such a way that very few psalms are omitted, while some, traditionally more important, occur more frequently than others;** morning prayer and evening prayer as well as night prayer have been assigned psalms appropriate to these hours. [5]

127. Since morning prayer and evening prayer are particularly designed for celebration with a congregation, the psalms chosen for them are those more suited to this purpose.

130. **Three psalms (78, 105, and 106) are reserved for the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter,** because they throw a special light on the Old Testament history of salvation as the forerunner of its fulfillment in the New.

131. **Three psalms (58, 83, and 109) have been omitted** from the psalter cycle because of their curses; in the same way, **some verses have been omitted from certain psalms,** as noted at the head of each. The reason for the omission is a certain psychological difficulty, even though the psalms of imprecation are in fact used as prayer in the New Testament, for example, Rv 6:10, and in no sense to encourage the use of curses.

132. Psalms too long to be included in one hour of the office are assigned to the same hour on different days so that they may be recited in full by those who do not usually say other hours. Thus **Ps 119 is divided in keeping with its own internal structure and is spread over twenty-two days** during daytime prayer, because tradition has assigned it to the day hours.

133. **The four-week cycle of the psalter is coordinated with the liturgical year in such a way that on the First Sunday of Advent, the First Sunday in Ordinary Time, the First Sunday of Lent, and Easter Sunday the cycle is always begun again with Week I (others being omitted when necessary).**

After Pentecost, when the psalter cycle follows the series of weeks in Ordinary Time, it begins with the week indicated in the Proper of Seasons at the beginning of the appropriate week in Ordinary Time.

## Chapter III-V. Canticles From the Old and New Testaments

136. **At morning prayer between the first and the second psalm a canticle from the Old Testament is inserted, in accordance with custom.** In addition to the series handed down from the ancient Roman tradition and the other series introduced into the breviary by St. Pius X, several other canticles have been added to the psalter from different books of the Old Testament, in order that each weekday of the four-week cycle may have its own proper canticle and on Sunday the two sections of the Canticle of the Three Children may be alternated.

138. The gospel Canticles of Zechariah, of Mary, and of Simeon are to be treated with the same solemnity and dignity as are customary at the proclamation of the gospel itself.

## Chapter III-VI. Readings From Sacred Scripture

### Reading of Sacred Scripture in General

140. The reading of sacred Scripture, which, following an ancient tradition, takes place publicly in the liturgy, is to have special importance for all Christians, not only in the celebration of the eucharist but also in the divine office. The reason is that this reading is not the result of individual choice or devotion but is the planned decision of the Church itself, in order that in the course of the year the Bride of Christ may unfold the mystery of Christ "from his incarnation and birth until his ascension, the day of Pentecost, and the expectation of blessed hope and of the Lord's return." [6] In addition, **the reading of sacred Scripture in the liturgical celebration is always accompanied by prayer in order that the reading may have greater effect** and that, in turn, prayer - especially the praying of the psalms - may gain fuller understanding and become more fervent and devout because of the reading.

141. In the liturgy of the hours there is a longer reading of sacred Scripture and a shorter reading.

142. The longer reading, optional at morning prayer and evening prayer, is described in no. 46.

### Short Readings

156. The short readings or "chapters" (*capitula*) are referred to in no. 45, which describes their importance in the liturgy of the hours. **They have been chosen to give clear and concise expression to a theme or an exhortation.** Care has also been taken to ensure variety.

157. Accordingly, **four weekly series of short readings have been composed for Ordinary Time.** They are incorporated into the psalter in such a way that the reading

changes during the four weeks. **There are also weekly series for the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter. In addition there are proper short readings for solemnities, feasts, and some memorials,** as well as a one-week series for night prayer.

158. The following determined the choice of short readings:

- a) in accordance with tradition, exclusion of the Gospels;
- b) respect for the special character of Sunday, or even of Friday, and of the individual hours;
- c) use only of the New Testament for the readings at evening prayer, following as they do a New Testament canticle.

### **Chapter III-IX. Responsories**

172. In a similar but simpler way, **the responsory at morning prayer, evening prayer, and night prayer** (see nos. 49 and 89), and the verse at daytime prayer, **are linked to the short reading as a kind of acclamation,** enabling God's word to enter more deeply into the mind and heart of the one listening or reading.

### **Chapter III-XI. Intercessions, Lord's Prayer, and Concluding Prayer**

#### **The Prayers or Intercessions at Morning and Evening Prayer**

179. The liturgy of the hours is a celebration in praise of God. Yet Jewish and Christian tradition does not separate prayer of petition from praise of God; **often enough, praise turns somehow to petition.** The Apostle Paul exhorts us to offer prayers, petitions, intercessions, and thanksgiving for all: for kings and all in authority, so that we may be able to live quiet and peaceful lives in all reverence and decency, for this is good and acceptable before God our Savior, who wishes all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (I Tm 2:1-4). **The Fathers of the Church frequently explained this as an exhortation to offer prayer in the morning and in the evening.**  
**[14]**

181. Since traditionally morning prayer puts the whole day in God's hands, there are invocations at morning prayer for the purpose of commending or consecrating the day to God.

183. In the interest of variety and especially of giving fuller expression to the many needs of the Church and of all people in relation to different states of life, groups, persons, circumstances, and seasons, **different intercessory formularies are given for each day of the four-week psalter in Ordinary Time and for the special**

**seasons of the liturgical year, as well as for certain feasts.**

187. Since the liturgy of the hours is above all the prayer of the whole Church for the whole Church, indeed for the salvation of the whole world, [16] **universal intentions should take precedence over all others**, namely, for: the Church and its ministers; secular authorities; the poor, the sick, and the sorrowful; the needs of the whole world, that is, peace and other intentions of this kind.

188. **It is permissible, however, to include particular intentions at both morning prayer and evening prayer.**

190. The intercessions in a celebration with a congregation or in common are thus introduced by a brief invitation, given by the priest or minister and **designating the single response that the congregation is to repeat after each petition.**

192. Each intention consists of two parts; **the second may be used as an alternative response.**

193. **Different methods can therefore be used for the intercessions.** The priest or minister may say both parts of the intention and **the congregation respond with a uniform response or a silent pause**, or the priest or minister may say only the first part of the intention and the **congregation respond with the second part.**

### **Lord's Prayer**

194. In accord with ancient tradition, the Lord's Prayer has a place suited to its dignity, namely, after the intercessions at morning prayer and evening prayer, the hours most often celebrated with the people.

195. Henceforth, therefore, **the Lord's Prayer will be said with solemnity on three occasions during the day: at Mass, at morning prayer, and at evening prayer.**

### **Concluding Prayer**

197. The concluding prayer at the end marks the completion of an entire hour. In a celebration in public and with a congregation, **it belongs by tradition to a priest or deacon to say this prayer. [17]**

199. The concluding prayer at morning prayer and evening prayer is **taken from the proper on Sundays, on the weekdays of the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter, and on solemnities, feasts, and memorials.** On weekdays in Ordinary Time the prayer is the one given in the four-week psalter to express the character of these two hours.

## Chapter III-XII. Sacred Silence

201. It is a general principle that care should be taken in liturgical services to see that "at the proper times all observe a reverent silence." [18] **An opportunity for silence should therefore be provided in the celebration of the liturgy of the hours.**

202. In order to receive in our hearts the full sound of the voice of the Holy Spirit and to unite our personal prayer more closely with the word of God and the public voice of the Church, it is permissible, as occasion offers and prudence suggests, to have an interval of **silence. It may come either after the repetition of the antiphon at the end of the psalm, in the traditional way, especially if the psalm-prayer is to be said after the pause (see no. 112), or after the short or longer readings, either before or after the responsory.**

Care must be taken to avoid the kind of silence that would disturb the structure of the office or annoy and weary those taking part.

## Chapter IV-III. Calendar and Option to Choose an Office or Part of an Office

### Calendar to be Followed

241. The office in choir and in common is to be celebrated according to the proper calendar of the diocese, of the religious family, or of the individual churches. [3]

## Chapter V: Rites for Celebration in Common

263. All taking part **stand** during:

- a. the introduction to the office and the introductory verses of each hour;
- b. the hymn;
- c. the gospel canticle;
- d. the intercessions, the Lord's Prayer, and the concluding prayer.

264. All sit to listen to the readings, except the gospel.

265. The assembly either sits or stands, depending on custom, while the psalms and other canticles (with their antiphons) are being said.

266. All **make the sign of the cross**, from forehead to breast and from left shoulder to right, at:

- a. the beginning of the hours, when *God, come to my assistance* is being said;

b. the beginning of the gospel, the Canticles of Zechariah, of Mary, and of Simeon.

The sign of the cross is made on the mouth at the beginning of the invitatory, at Lord, open my lips.

## Chapter V-II. Singing in the Office

267. In the rubrics and norms of this Instruction, the words "say . . . recite," etc., are to be understood to refer to either singing or recitation, in the light of the principles that follow.

**268. "The sung celebration of the divine office is more in keeping with the nature of this prayer and a mark of both higher solemnity and closer union of hearts in offering praise to God. . . . Therefore the singing of the office is earnestly recommended to those who carry out the office in choir or in common." [2]**

269. The declarations of Vatican Council II on liturgical singing apply to all liturgical services but in a special way to the liturgy of the hours. [3] Though every part of it has been revised in such a way that all may be fruitfully recited even by individuals, **many of these parts are lyrical in form and do not yield their fuller meaning unless they are sung, especially the psalms, canticles, hymns, and responsories.**

270. Hence, **in celebrating the liturgy singing is not to be regarded as an embellishment superimposed on prayer;** rather, it wells up from the depths of a soul intent on prayer and the praise of God and reveals in a full and complete way the community nature of Christian worship.

**Christian communities of all kinds seeking to use this form of prayer as frequently as possible are to be commended.** Clerics and religious, as well as **all the people of God, must be trained by suitable catechesis and practice to join together in singing the hours in a spirit of joy,** especially on Sundays and holydays. But it is no easy task to sing the entire office; nor is the Church's praise to be considered either by origin or by nature the exclusive possession of clerics and monks but the property of the whole Christian community. Therefore **several principles must be kept simultaneously in mind if the sung celebration of the liturgy of the hours is to be performed correctly and to stand out in its true nature and splendor.**

271. It is particularly appropriate that there be singing at least on Sundays and holydays, so that the different degrees of solemnity will thus come to be recognized.

272. It is the same with the hours: all are not of equal importance; thus it is desirable that those that are the true hinges of the office, that is, **morning prayer and evening prayer, should receive greater prominence through the use of singing.**

273. A celebration with singing throughout is commendable, provided it has artistic and spiritual excellence; but **it may be useful on occasion to apply the principle of "progressive solemnity."** There are practical reasons for this, as well as the fact that in this way the various elements of liturgical celebration are not treated indiscriminately, but each can again be given its connatural meaning and genuine function. The liturgy of the hours is then not seen as a beautiful memorial of the past demanding intact preservation as an object of admiration; rather it is seen as open to constantly new forms of life and growth and to being the unmistakable sign of a community's vibrant vitality.

**The principle of "progressive solemnity" therefore is one that recognizes several intermediate stages between singing the office in full and just reciting all the parts.** Its application offers the possibility of a rich and pleasing variety. The criteria are the particular day or hour being celebrated, the character of the individual elements comprising the office, the size and composition of the community, as well as the number of singers available in the circumstances.

With this increased range of variation, it is possible for the public praise of the Church to be sung more frequently than formerly and to be adapted in a variety of ways to different circumstances. There is also great hope that new ways and expressions of public worship may be found for our own age, as has clearly always happened in the life of the Church.

274. **For liturgical celebrations sung in Latin, Gregorian chant, as the music proper to the Roman liturgy, should have pride of place, all other things being equal.** [4] Nevertheless, "the Church does not exclude any type of sacred music from liturgical services as long as the music matches the spirit of the service itself and the character of the individual parts and is not a hindrance to the required active participation of the people." [5] At a sung office, if a melody is not available for the given antiphon, another antiphon should be taken from those in the repertoire, provided it is suitable in terms of nos. 113 and 121-125.

275. Since the liturgy of the hours may be celebrated in the vernacular, **"appropriate measures are to be taken to prepare melodies for use in the vernacular singing of the divine office."** [6]

276. But it is permissible to sing the various parts in different languages at one and the same celebration. [7]

277. The decision on which parts to choose for singing follows from the authentic structure of a liturgical celebration. This demands that the significance and function of each part and of singing should be fully respected. **Some parts by their nature call for singing: [8] in particular, acclamations, responses to the greetings of priest and ministers, responses in litanies, also antiphons and psalms, the verses and**

**reprises in responsories, hymns and canticles. [9]**

278. **Clearly the psalms are closely bound up with music** (see nos. 103-120), as both Jewish and Christian tradition confirm. In fact **a complete understanding of many of the psalms is greatly assisted by singing them** or at least not losing sight of their poetic and musical character. Accordingly, **whenever possible singing the psalms should have preference**, at least for the major days and hours and in view of the character of the psalms themselves.

279. **The different ways of reciting the psalms have been described in nos. 121-123.** Varying these ways should depend not so much on external circumstances as on the different genres of the psalms to be recited in the same celebration. Thus the wisdom psalms and the narrative psalms are perhaps better listened to, whereas **psalms of praise and thanksgiving are of their nature designed for singing in common.** The main consideration is to ensure that the celebration is not too inflexible or elaborate nor concerned merely with formal observance of rules, but that it matches the reality of what is celebrated. **The primary aim must be to inspire hearts with a desire for genuine prayer and to show that the celebration of God's praise is a thing of joy (see Ps 147).**

280. Even when the hours are recited, **hymns** can nourish prayer, provided they have doctrinal and literary excellence; but of their nature they are designed for singing and so, as far as possible, **at a celebration in common they should be sung.**

281. **The short responsory after the reading at morning prayer and evening prayer (see no. 49) is of its nature designed for singing and indeed for congregational singing.**

282. The responsories following the readings in the office of readings by their very nature and function also call for their being sung. In the plan of the office, however, they are composed in such a way that they retain their power even in individual and private recitation. Responsories set to simpler melodies can be sung more frequently than those responsories drawn from the traditional liturgical books.

283. The longer readings and **the short readings are not of themselves designed for singing.** When they are proclaimed, great care should be taken that the reading is dignified, clear, and distinct and that it is really audible and fully intelligible for all. The only acceptable melody for a reading is therefore one that best ensures the hearing of the words and the understanding of the text.

284. **Texts that are said only by the person presiding**, such as the concluding prayer, **can be sung gracefully and appropriately**, especially in Latin. This, however, will be more difficult in some languages, unless singing makes the texts more clearly audible for all.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE \*BOOK OF PSALMS FROM THE 2010 NABRE

*\*indicates a word defined or further explained in the Glossary which follows*

The Hebrew *\*Psalter* (*\*Tehillim*) numbers 150 songs. The corresponding *\*number* in the *\*Septuagint* differs *because of a different division of certain Psalms*. Hence **the numbering in the Greek Psalter (which was followed by the Latin *\*Vulgate*) is usually one digit behind the Hebrew**. In the *New American Bible* [and the *Revised Grail Psalter* translation used here] the numbering of the verses follows the *Hebrew* numbering; [in addition] many of the traditional English translations are often a **verse** number behind the Hebrew because *they do not count the *\*superscriptions* as a verse*.

*The superscriptions derive from pre-Christian Jewish tradition, and they contain technical terms, many of them apparently liturgical, which are no longer known to us.* Seventy-three Psalms are attributed to *\*David*, but there is no sure way of dating any Psalm. Some are *\*preexilic* (before 587 BC), and others are *\*postexilic* (after 539 BC), but not as late as the *\*Maccabean period* (ca. 165 BC). The Psalms are the product of many individual collections (e.g., *Songs of Ascents*, Ps 120–134), which were eventually combined into the present work [the bible *\*‘book of psalms’*] in which **one can detect five “books,” [or sections] because of the *\*doxologies* which occur [at the end of a book or section] at 41:14; 72:18–19; 89:53; 106:48 [and 150]**.

Two important features of the Psalms deserve special notice. First, **the majority were composed originally precisely for liturgical worship**. This is shown by the frequent indication of liturgical leaders interacting with the community (e.g., Ps 118:1–4). Secondly, **they follow certain distinct patterns or literary forms**. Thus, **the hymn is a song of praise [hence the Hebrew designation for all the Psalms *\*Tehillim*, which translates ‘praises,’]**, in which a community is urged joyfully to sing out the praise of God. Various reasons are given for this praise (often introduced by “for” or “because”): the divine *\*work of creation and sustenance* (Ps 135:1–12; 136). Some of the hymns have received a more specific classification, based on content. **The “Songs of *\*Zion*” are so called because they exalt Zion (= Jerusalem), the city in which God dwells among the people** (Ps 47; 96–99). Characteristic of the songs of praise is the joyful summons to get involved in the activity; Ps 104 is an exception to this, although it remains universal in its thrust.

Another type of Psalm is similar to the hymn: **the thanksgiving Psalm**. This too is a *song of praise acknowledging the Lord as the rescuer of the psalmist from a desperate situation*. Very often the psalmist will give a flashback, recounting the past distress, and the plea that was uttered (Ps 30; 116). The setting for such prayers seems to have been the offering of a *\*todah* (a “praise” sacrifice) with friends in the Temple.

There are more **Psalms of lament** than of any other type. They may be **individual** (e.g., Ps 3–7; 22) or **communal** (e.g., Ps 44). Although they usually *begin with a cry for*

*help*, they develop in various ways. The description of the distress is couched in the broad imagery typical of the Bible (one is in \*Sheol, the Pit, or is afflicted by enemies or wild beasts, etc.)—in such a way that one cannot pinpoint the exact nature of the psalmist's plight. However, **Ps 51 (cf. also Ps 130) seems to refer clearly to deliverance from sin.** Several laments end on a note of certainty that the Lord has heard the prayer (cf. Ps 7, but contrast Ps 88), and the Psalter has been characterized as a movement from lament to praise. If this is somewhat of an exaggeration, it serves at least to emphasize the *frequent expressions of trust which characterize the lament.* In some cases it would seem as if the theme of trust has been lifted out to form a literary type all its own; cf. Ps 23, 62, 91. Among the communal laments can be counted Ps 74 and 79. They complain to the Lord about some national disaster, and try to motivate God to intervene in favor of the suffering people.

Other Psalms are clearly classified on account of content, and they may be in themselves laments or Psalms of thanksgiving. Among the **“\*royal” Psalms** that deal directly with the currently reigning king, are Ps 20, 21, and 72. Many of the royal Psalms were **given a \*messianic interpretation by Christians.** In Jewish tradition they were preserved, even after kingship had disappeared, because they were read in the light of the \*Davidic covenant reported in 2 Sm 7. Certain Psalms are called **wisdom Psalms** because they seem to betray the influence of the concerns of the ages (cf. Ps 37, 49), but there is no general agreement as to the number of these prayers. Somewhat related to the wisdom Psalms are *the “torah” Psalms*, in which the \*torah (instruction or law) of the Lord is glorified (Ps 1; 19:8–14; 119). Ps 78, 105, 106 can be considered as **“historical” Psalms.** Although the majority of the Psalms have a liturgical setting, there are certain prayers that may be termed “liturgies,” so clearly does their structure reflect a liturgical incident (e.g., Ps 15, 24).

It is obvious that **not all of the Psalms can be pigeon-holed into neat classifications,** but even a brief sketch of these types help us to catch the structure and spirit of the Psalms we read. It has been rightly said that **the Psalms are “a school of prayer.”** They not only provide us with models to follow, but inspire us to voice our own deepest feelings and aspirations. [This is the way they are \*used in Catholic worship.]

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## Glossary for the Book of Psalms

### Apocrypha

A word of caution to the reader. Depending on the denominational context, the term *apocrypha* [*adjective apocryphal*] is to be found in the dictionary used with various meanings, including 'hidden,' 'esoteric,' 'spurious,' 'of questionable authenticity' and 'Christian texts that are not canonical.'

However, both Catholics and Protestants generally use the term in a technical sense to refer to Christian **texts that are not canonical**—in other words, writings after the style of the Scriptures that are *not* included in the list of Bible books [the \**canon of Scripture*] that are accepted as inspired [*by the Christian denomination in question*—whether Protestant or Catholic].

At the point of agreeing on that *definition of the word* apocrypha Protestants and Catholics part ways. Catholics follow the practice of the early Church in accepting the contents of the Greek \*Septuagint (LXX) while Protestants accept only the list of books in Hebrew definitively approved by Jewish Rabbis only in the period between about 90 and 200 AD (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century **AD**): the result is a difference over whether or not to include 7 complete books and parts of others. (See deuterocanonical books.)

**“That the [Hebrew] canon was not completed until the Christian era is recognized by most critical scholars today, and many suggest the rivalry offered by Christian books was a spur for the closing of the Jewish canon. ... It has been proposed that about 90-100 [AD] the council of the rabbis at Jamnia settled once and for all time the definitive list of inspired books, namely, “the Palestinian canon,” consisting of the books now called \*protocanonical by Catholics. ... [However], there is no evidence that any list of books was drawn up at Jamnia [a town near the west coast of Palestine]. ... [Therefore], the safest statement about the closing of the Jewish canon is one which recognizes that ... there was no rigidly fixed exclusive Hebrew canon until the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.”** NJBC 66:35

### Breviary

The word breviary is from the Latin *brevis*, which means 'short' or 'concise.' The Breviary is the [one] volume containing the daily hours of Roman Catholic prayer which was published as the *Breviarium Romanum* (Roman Breviary) until the reforms of Paul VI, when it became known as the *Liturgy of the Hours* and expanded to four volumes. However, these terms are used interchangeably to refer to the \*[Divine] Office in all its forms.

### Book of Psalms

In Jewish usage, the *Book of Psalms* (\*Tehillim) is divided, after the analogy of

the Pentateuch, into **five books, each closing with a doxology** or benediction (see Ps 41:14; 72:18–19; 89:53; 106:48, 150:

1. The **first** book comprises **the first 41 Psalms**. All of these are ascribed to David except Psalms 1, 2, 10, and 33, which, though untitled in the Hebrew, were also traditionally ascribed to David. While Davidic authorship cannot be confirmed, this *probably is the oldest section* of the Psalms.

2. The **second** book consists of the next 31 Psalms (42–72). Eighteen of these are ascribed to David. Psalm 72 begins 'For Solomon,' but is traditionally understood as being written by David as a prayer for his son. The rest are anonymous.

3. The **third** book contains seventeen Psalms (73–89), of which Psalm 86 is ascribed to David, Psalm 88 to Heman the Ezrahite, and Psalm 89 to Ethan the Ezrahite.

4. The **fourth** book also contains seventeen Psalms (90–106), of which Psalm 90 is ascribed to Moses, and Psalms 101 and 103 to David.

5. The **fifth** book contains the remaining 44 Psalms. Of these, 15 are ascribed to David, one (Psalm 127) as a charge to Solomon.

Psalm 136 is generally called "**the great \*Hallel\***", but the *\*Talmud\** [the Hebrew bible *commentary*] also includes Psalms 120–135. Psalms 113–118 constitute the *Hallel*, which is recited on the three great feasts, (**Passover**, Weeks, and Tabernacles); at the new moon; and on the eight days of Hanukkah. A version of Psalm 136 with slightly different wording appears in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Psalms 120–134 are referred to as *Songs of Ascents*, and are thought to have been used as **hymns of approach by pilgrims to the Temple in Jerusalem** which is reached by climbing up to the city from sea level.

**Psalm 119 is the longest Psalm**. It is composed of 176 verses, in sets of eight verses, each set beginning with one of the 22 Hebrew letters of the alphabet. Several other Psalms also have alphabetical arrangements. These psalms are believed to be written (rather than oral) compositions from the first, and thus of a relatively late date.

**Psalm 117 is the shortest Psalm**, containing only two verses.

### Canon of Scripture

"In early ecclesiastical usage *kanōn* [Greek: rule or list] referred to the **rule** of faith, the *norm* of revealed truth. ... The [doctrinal] decisions of the Council of Nicaea (AD 325) were designated as canons, as were the disciplinary decisions of synods, which functioned as *rules* for Christians to live by." [NJBC 66:7]. Hence we can see the origins of using the term today to refer to the body of Church law as in the Code of **Canon Law** and its use as a norm of faith in the **Roman Canon**, or Eucharistic Prayer I. "In current terminology, a **canonical**

**book [of Scripture] is one that the church acknowledges as belonging to its list of sacred books, as inspired by God**, and as having a regulating (rule) value for faith and morals. In Roman Catholic terminology OT books are divided into protocanonical books (39) and deuterocanonical books(7). The latter are Tob, Jdt, 1-2 Macc, Wis, Sir, Bar (plus parts of Esth and Dan). This distinction, which seems to have been contributed by Sixtus of Siena (1520-1569) [in the *sixteenth* century!], **does not imply that protocanonical books are more canonical than deuterocanonical, or were canonized first**. Rather, protocanonical books were *accepted with little or no debate*, whereas there was serious questioning about deuterocanonical books. (See Septuagint below.)

### **David's authorship**

73 out of 150 Psalms are attributed to David, while thirteen Psalms have headings (or *\*superscriptions*, see below) that refer to some event in the life of David. These Psalms are 3, 7, 18, 34, 51, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 60, 63 and 142. Edwin Thiele dates David's life to circa 1040–970 BC, his reign over Judah circa 1010–1003 BC, and his reign over the united Kingdom of Israel c. 1003–970 BC. The Books of Samuel, 1 Kings, and 1 Chronicles are the only source of information on his life and reign.

### **Davidic covenant**

The Davidic covenant described in 2 Samuel 7 establishes David and his descendants as the **rightful kings of Judah from whom also the Messiah comes**. [Gen 49:10] In Christian theology, the Davidic covenant is an important element of Jesus' claim to be the Messiah.

### **dating the Psalms**

In the above introduction, the NABRE indicates that there is internal evidence to date *some* of the 150 psalms, although not all psalms can be dated from their contents. Some psalms make reference to events that are known to have occurred in the historical period *before* the Exile (*\*pre-exilic*) and others make reference to events that are known to have occurred after the Exile (*\*post-exilic*). However, all the psalms are considered to have been written before the time of the *\*Maccabees* (2<sup>nd</sup> century BC). See pre and post-exilic below.

### **deutero-canonical books of Scripture**

Deutero-canonical books is a term used since the sixteenth century in the Catholic Church and Eastern Christianity to describe certain **books** and passages of the Christian Old Testament **that are not part of the Hebrew Bible**. The term is used in contrast to the proto-canonical books, which are those contained in the Hebrew Bible [that is, those not contained in the *\*Masoretic* text]. This distinction had previously contributed to debate in the early Church about whether they should be read in the churches and thus be classified as canonical texts. The **Deuterocanonical books** are considered canonical by Catholics and Eastern Orthodox, but are considered non-canonical by most

**Protestants.** The word deuterocanonical comes from the Greek meaning 'belonging to the second canon.'

Of particular interest to our discussion of the *Liturgy of the Hours* is the inclusion in the Hours of several passages from deuterocanonical books, most notably the beautiful **chapter three of the Book of Daniel**. (See Old Testament canticles.)

The Catholic deuterocanonical scriptural texts are: **Tobit, Judith**, Additions to Esther (Vulgate Esther 10:4-16:24), **Wisdom, Sirach** (or Ecclesiasticus), **Baruch**, including the Letter of Jeremiah (Additions to Jeremiah in the \*Septuagint), Additions to Daniel: Prayer of Azariah and Song of the Three Holy Children (Vulgate Daniel 3:24-90), Susanna (Vulgate Daniel 13, \*Septuagint prologue), Bel and the Dragon (Vulgate Daniel 14, \*Septuagint epilogue), **1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees**.

### Divine Office

The Divine Office (Latin: *Officium Divinum*) is the term used for the *Liturgy of the Hours* prior to Vatican II. Literally an *officium* is a function (*Latin: munus*) of the mission of the Church in teaching, sanctifying and governing. Hence the term gets at the fact that one of the *duties* of the clergy and religious in fulfilling their role of *sanctifying* the Church is to *pray* without ceasing for the Church *and* on her behalf. See the term \*Breviary.

By the end of the fifth century, the Divine Office was composed of **seven** offices, of which Compline seems to be the last to appear, since the fourth-century *Apostolic Constitutions* VIII, iv, 34 do not mention it in the exhortation: 'Offer up your prayers in the morning, at the third hour, the sixth, the ninth, the evening, and at cock-crowing.'

An **eighth** hour, Prime, was added by Saint Benedict of Nursia in the sixth century. These eight hours are known by the following (transliterated Latin) names:

- Matins** [*Matutinum*] (during the night, at midnight with some), sometimes referred to as Vigils or Nocturns, or in monastic usage the Night Office
- \*Lauds** [*Laudes*] Morning Praise or Dawn Prayer (at Dawn, or 3 am)
- Prime** [*Prima*] or Early Morning Prayer (First Hour = approximately 6 am)
- Terce** [*Tertia*] or Mid-Morning Prayer (Third Hour = approximately 9 am)
- Sext** [*Sexta*] or Midday Prayer (Sixth Hour = approximately 12 noon)
- None** [*Nona*] or Mid-Afternoon Prayer (Ninth Hour = approximately 3 pm)
- \*Vespers** [*Vesperae*] or Evening Prayer ('at the lighting of the lamps', generally 6 pm)
- Compline** [*Completorium*] or Night Prayer (before retiring, generally at 9 pm)

Saint Benedict of Nursia (c. 480 – 543 AD) is credited with having given this organization to the Divine Office. However, his scheme was taken from that described by Saint John Cassian, in his two major spiritual works, the *Institutes* and the *Conferences*, in which he described the monastic practices of the Desert Fathers of Egypt. Taylor Marshall has demonstrated how these Christian cycles of daily prayer derived from Jewish customs of prayer. [Taylor Marshall, *The Crucified Rabbi: Judaism and the Origins of the Catholic Christianity*, Saint John Press, 2009 pages 133-5.]

### **doxology**

A doxology (from the Greek *doxa* "glory" + *-logia*, "saying") is a **short hymn of praises** to God, **often added to the end of canticles, psalms, and hymns**. The tradition derives from a similar practice in the Jewish synagogue, where some version of the *Kaddish* [a Jewish prayer of praise to God] serves to terminate each section of the synagogue service.

#### **Perfect modern Christian examples of a doxology are:**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit...

Through him, with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all glory and honor are yours almighty Father...

### **Gemara**

The *Gemara* (also transliterated Gemora or, less commonly, Gemorra; from Aramaic *gamar*, literally, "[to] study" or "learning by tradition") is **the component of the \*Talmud comprising rabbinical analysis of and commentary on the \*Mishnah**.

### **The Hallel**

The 'Lesser' *Hallel* (Hebrew: 'Praise') is a Jewish prayer—a **verbatim recitation of Psalms 113–118**, which is used for praise and thanksgiving that is recited by observant Jews on Jewish holidays, such as the three pilgrim festivals of *Passover*, *Shavuot*, and *Sukkot* (the "bigger" Jewish holy days: Passover, Weeks, and Tabernacles). Psalm 136 which in Jewish liturgy is called 'the Great *Hallel*' is recited after the 'Lesser *Hallel*' during *Grace after Meals* (in Hebrew the *Birkat hamazon*) in the **Passover** Seder service. See an occasion of Jesus using the Hallel at Mt 26:30.

### **Historical Psalms**

In a broader sense the historical psalms are those basing their message on the **history of God's dealings with His people**. They are in two general classes:

- ◆ Those using a historical narrative of some part of Israel's history and "telling the \*deeds of the Lord"... such as Psalms 78, 105, 106, 135, 136 (Monday Evening, Week IV) [See Works of God, mighty deeds]
- ◆ Those using a personal reflection or meditation that is based on a

historical reality... such as Psalms 44, 66, 89, 107, etc.

However, in the GILH the “historical” Psalms referred to are Ps 78 (77), 105 (104), 106 (105). They are used in the Office of Readings **only in special seasons**<sup>2</sup> (on Friday and Saturday, Week IV; Saturday, Week I; and Saturday, Week II respectively) but they are not used in the Psalter of Ordinary Time.

*GILH “130. Three psalms (78, 105, and 106) are **reserved for the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter**, because they throw a special light on the Old Testament history of salvation as the forerunner of its fulfillment in the New.”*

### Imprecatory Psalms

The “imprecatory” Psalms are those that invoke judgment, calamity, or **curse**s, upon one's enemies or those perceived as the enemies of God. In the post-Vatican II reform of the *Liturgy of the Hours* **one of the main goals was to restore the Hours to use by the faithful** and considerable discussion surrounded the question of whether to exclude entire Psalms or verses of Psalms which curse others from the Psalter. In the end the decision of Pope Paul VI was to exclude Psalms 58 (57), 83 (82) and 109 (108) as well as the following verses:

Psalms 5:11; 21:9-13; 28:4-5; 31:18-19; 35:3:a-b, 4-8, 20-21, 24-26; 40:15-16; 54:7; 55: 16; 56:8; 59:6-9, 12-16; 63:10-12; 69:23-29; 79:6-7, 12; 110:6; 137:7-9; 139:19-22; 140:10-12; 141:10; 143:12

Leaving the following Psalms to be used as indicated:<sup>3</sup>

Psalms 5, vv. 2-10, 12-13. Monday Morning, Week I  
21 (20), vv. 2-8, 14. Tuesday Evening, Week I  
28 (27), vv. 1-3, 6-9. Friday Daytime, Week I  
31 (30), vv. 1-17, 20-25. Monday Readings, Week II  
35 (34), vv. 1, 2, 3c, 9-19, 22-23, 27-28. Friday Readings, Week I  
40 (39), vv. 2-14, 17-18. Monday Daytime, Week II  
54 (53), vv. 1-6, 8-9. Tuesday Daytime, Week II  
55 (54), vv. 2-15, 17-24. Wednesday Daytime, Week II  
56 (55), vv. 2-7b, 9-14. Tuesday Daytime, Week II  
59 (58), vv. 2-5, 10-11, 17-18 Friday Daytime, Week II  
63 (62), vv. 2-9. Sunday Morning, Week I  
69 (68), vv. 2-22, 30-37. Friday Readings, Week III  
79 (78), vv. 1-5, 8-11, 13. Thursday Daytime, Week III  
110 (109), vv. 1-5, 7. Christmas & Epiphany Evening Prayer II;  
Sunday EP II, Weeks I-IV

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<sup>2</sup>The Reform of the Liturgy 1948-1975 by Annibale Bugnini, Footnote 28 on page 511.

<sup>3</sup>The Reform of the Liturgy 1948-1975 by Annibale Bugnini, Footnote 29 on page 511.

137 (136), vv. 1-6. Tuesday Evening, Week IV  
139 (138), vv. 1-18, 23-24. Wednesday Evening, Week IV  
140 (139), vv. 1-9, 13-14. Friday Daytime, Week IV  
141 (140), vv. 1-9. Sunday Evening Prayer I, Week I  
143 (142), vv. 1-11. Thursday Morning, Week IV

In every case this selection of verses is indicated in the Psalter.

*GILH "131. Three psalms (58, 83, and 109) have been omitted from the psalter cycle because of their curses; in the same way, some verses have been omitted from certain psalms, as noted at the head of each. The reason for the omission is a certain psychological difficulty, even though the psalms of imprecation are in fact used as prayer in the New Testament, for example, Rv 6:10, and in no sense to encourage the use of curses."*

### **Lauds**

The transliterated Latin former name for Morning Prayer. In the pre-Vatican II \*Breviary the various Hours of the \*Divine Office are known by the transliteration of their Latin names as Matins, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, \*Vespers and Compline. Occasionally **these terms are still used interchangeably with the newer English names**. In the English translation of the revised and renamed "Liturgy of the Hours" Matins is known as the Office of Readings, Lauds as Morning Prayer, [the hour of Prime has been combined with Lauds], Terce, Sext and None are collectively referred to as Daytime Prayer and individually as Midmorning, Midday and Mid-afternoon Prayer respectively and Compline is known as Night Prayer.

### **Maccabean period (ca. 165 BC)**

After the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC, parts of his vast empire achieved independence. By 160 BC the kingdom of Judea as well as that of Egypt (Ptolemaic Kingdom) and Syria (Seleucid Empire) were among them. The **Maccabees were a Jewish rebel army** who rose up against *Syrian* rule and took control of Judea (in a war between 167 and 160 BC), which had been a client state of the Seleucid Empire of Syria. The Maccabees founded the *Hasmonean* dynasty, which ruled Judea from 164 BC to 63 BC and reasserted the Jewish religion. [They were conquered by the **Romans** in 63 BC.] The Maccabean revolt is described in the two books of Maccabees in the Old Testament as a fight against the increasing *Hellenization* (adoption of Greek culture) of Judaism. See dating the Psalms, above.

### **Masoretic text**

Ancient Hebrew was written **only in consonants**, from *right to left*, and without spacing between letters. This gave no indication of the **vowels** and often left the *reader* to determine from the context what the word really was. The last paragraph below discusses the later *mesorah* system of putting *markings on the consonants to indicate the appropriate vowels*.

The Masoretic *Text* (abbreviated MT) is **the authoritative Hebrew text of the Jewish Bible** and is regarded as **Judaism's** official version of the *\*Tanakh* [*a Hebrew abbreviation used in Judaism for the canon of the Hebrew Bible*]. While the Masoretic Text defines the books of the Jewish canon, **it also defines the precise letter-text of these biblical books, with their vocalization and accentuation known as the *Masorah***. The MT is also widely used as the basis for translations of the Old Testament in Protestant Bibles, and in recent years (since 1943) also for some Catholic Bibles, although the Eastern Orthodox continue to use the *\*Septuagint*, as they hold it to be *divinely inspired*. In modern times the Dead Sea Scrolls have shown the MT to be **nearly identical to some texts of the *\*Tanakh* [the Hebrew Bible] dating from 200 BC but different from others**.

The MT was primarily copied, edited and distributed by a group of Jews known as the **Masoretes** between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries **AD**. Though the consonants differ little from the text generally accepted in the early 2nd century (and also differ little from some Qumran texts that are even older), it has numerous differences of both greater and lesser significance when compared to (extant 4<sup>th</sup> century) manuscripts of the *\*Septuagint*, a Greek translation (made in the 3rd to 2nd centuries BC) of the Hebrew Scriptures that was in popular use in Egypt and Israel and that is believed by scholars to be **the source often quoted in the New Testament** when the Hebrew Scriptures are cited in the text.

The Hebrew word *mesorah* refers to the transmission of a tradition. In a very broad sense it can refer to the entire chain of Jewish tradition (see *torah* below), but in reference to the Masoretic Text **the word *mesorah* has a very specific meaning**: the diacritic markings [points on the consonants indicating the vowel sounds] of the text of the Hebrew Bible and concise marginal notes in manuscripts (and later printings) of the Hebrew Bible which note textual details, usually about the precise spelling of words.

The **oldest extant manuscripts** of the Masoretic Text date from approximately the 9<sup>th</sup> century AD, and the Aleppo Codex (once [that is until before the Qumran discoveries of Dead Sea Scrolls] the oldest complete copy of the Masoretic Text, but now missing its *Torah* section) dates from the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

### **messianic interpretation**

Old Testament Judaism looked forward to God sending a Messiah to save Israel. The term Messiah is derived from the Hebrew '*Mashiach*', which *means* '*the anointed one*,' and refers to the ancient practice of anointing future kings with oil. In the Hebrew Bible messiahs are priests and kings, who were traditionally anointed with holy anointing oil as described in Exodus 30:22-25. In later Jewish messianic tradition and eschatology [understanding of the end times], **messiah refers to a leader anointed by God**, and in some cases, **a future King** of

Israel, **physically descended from the Davidic line**, who will rule the united tribes of Israel and herald the Messianic Age of global peace. [It was in this sense that Jesus was asked if he was the Messiah.] **The translation of the Hebrew word Mašiah as (Khristós) in the Greek \*Septuagint [see below] became the accepted Christian designation and title of Jesus of Nazareth**, indicative of the principal character and function of his ministry. Christians believe that prophecies in the Hebrew Bible (especially Isaiah) refer to a **spiritual** savior [as opposed to a conquering king] and believe Jesus to be that Messiah (Christ).

**Midrash** (preaching on the law)

*Midrash* (Hebrew; plural *midrashim*, lit. "to investigate" or "study") is **a homiletic method of biblical exegesis**. The term also refers to the whole compilation of homiletic teachings on the Bible.

*Midrash* is **a way of interpreting biblical stories** that goes beyond simple distillation of religious, legal or moral teachings. It fills in many gaps left in the biblical narrative regarding events and personalities that are only hinted at.

**Mishnah** (the oral law)

The Mishnah or Mishna (Hebrew: "repetition", from the verb *shanah*, or "to study and review", also "secondary" (derived from the adj.) is **the first major written redaction of the Jewish oral traditions** called the "Oral Torah". It is also the first major work of Rabbinic Judaism. Most of the *Mishnah* is written in Hebrew. The *Mishnah* does not claim to be the development of *new* laws for Judaism, but merely **the collection of existing oral laws, traditions and traditional wisdom**. The rabbis who contributed to the *Mishnah* are known as the *Tannaim*, of whom approximately 120 are known. It was redacted c. 220 AD by Judah haNasi when, according to the *Talmud*, the persecution of the Jews and the passage of time raised the possibility that the details of the oral traditions dating from Pharisaic times (536 BC – 70 AD) would be forgotten. It is thus named for being both **the one written authority (codex) secondary (only) to the \*Tanakh as a basis for the passing of judgment, a source and a tool for creating laws, and the first of many books to complement the Bible in a certain aspect**. The *Mishnah* is also called *Shas* (an acronym for *Shisha Sedarim* - the "six orders"), in reference to its six main divisions. Rabbinic commentaries on the *Mishnah* over the next three centuries were redacted as the \*Gemara, which, coupled with the *Mishnah*, comprise the *Talmud*.

**New Testament Canticles in the Hours**

In the reform of the Divine Office "The psalmody will be enriched by some New Testament canticles that will become part of the psalmody at Vespers, just as

Old Testament canticles are already part of the psalmody at Lauds.”<sup>4</sup>

“There are seven canticles for the weekly cycle in Vespers: Eph 1:3-10; Col 1:3, 12-20; Phil 2:6-11; Rev 4:11 and 5:9-10, 12; Rev 11:17-18 and 12:10b-12a; Rev 15:2-4; and Rev 19:1-7. 1 Pet 2:21-24 is used on the Sundays of Lent and 1 Tim 3:16 on the solemnities of the Lord’s Epiphany and Transfiguration.”<sup>5</sup>

### Old Testament Canticles in the Hours

“Twenty-six Old Testament canticles are used in Lauds [Morning Prayer]. Those found in the old Breviary have been retained, and twelve new ones have been added. They are distributed throughout the four weeks of the \*Psalter.<sup>6</sup> These include: **Week I, Dan 3:57-88, 56 [repeated in odd weeks; the passage begins in Week IV]; 1 Chron 29:10-13; Tob 13:1-8 [passage continued in Week IV]; Jud 16:2-3a, 13-15; Jer 31:10-14; Is 45:15-25; Ex 15:1-4a, 8-13, 17-18; Week II, Dan 3:52-57 [repeated in even weeks; continued in odd]; Sir 36:1-5, 10-13; Is 38:10-14, 17-20; 1 Sam 2:1-10; Is 12:1-6; Hab 3:2-4, 13a, 15-19; Dt 32:1-12; Week III, Dan 3:57-88, 56; Is 2:2-5; Is 26:1-4, 7-9, 12; Is 33:13-16; Is 40:10-17; Jer 14:17-21; Wis 9:1-6, 9-11; Week IV, Dan 3:52-57; Is 42:10-16; Dan 3:26, 27, 29, 34-41 [starts here and continued in even weeks]; Is 61:10-62:5; Is 66:10-14a; Tob 13:8-11, 13-15 [continued from Week I]; Eze 36:24-28. In a four week Psalter a total of 28 canticles would be needed. The 26 suffice by repeating two passages from Daniel chapter 3. This chapter is actually used 5 times in three different sections. A second continuous passage is that from Tobit. Notice the extensive use of Isaiah throughout.**

### preexilic and postexilic: before and after the Babylonian Exile (6<sup>th</sup> century BC)

The **Babylonian Exile** was the period in Jewish history during which the Jews of the ancient Kingdom of Judah were held **captives in Babylon** —conventionally regarded as between 586–538 BC. According to the Hebrew Bible, there were three deportations of Jews to Babylon:

1. in 597 BC, involving King Jeconiah and his court and many others;
2. in 587/6 BC, of his successor King Zedekiah **and the rest of the people;**
3. and a possible deportation after the assassination of Gedaliah, the Babylonian-appointed governor of Yehud Province, possibly in 582 BC.

The forced exile ended in 538 BC after the fall of Babylon to the **Persian** king **Cyrus** the Great, who gave the Jews permission to return to Yehud province and to **rebuild the Temple**; but most Jews chose to remain in Babylon. The Babylonian captivity and subsequent return to the Land of Israel and the

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<sup>4</sup>The Reform of the Liturgy 1948-1975 by Annibale Bugnini, page 502.

<sup>5</sup>The Reform of the Liturgy 1948-1975 by Annibale Bugnini, Footnote 15 on page 526.

<sup>6</sup>The Reform of the Liturgy 1948-1975 by Annibale Bugnini, Footnote 15 on page 526.

rebuilding of the Second Temple in Jerusalem are considered significant events in Jewish history and culture, which had a far-reaching impact on the development of Judaism. Note: the ruins of ancient Babylon are about 55 miles south of modern Baghdad, Iraq and the Second Temple is the one referred to in the New Testament.

## Psalter

**A psalter is a volume containing the Book of Psalms, and often intended for use at prayer.** The word Psalm translates as ‘song’ or ‘hymn’ from both Hebrew and Greek. \*Superscriptions (or headings) in many of the Psalms provide musical references and some direction, in some cases even references to melodies that would have been well known by early congregations. Songs that can be identified as such in the Psalms include songs of thanksgiving (e.g., Ps 30), hymns of praise (e.g., Ps 117) and royal psalms (see below), which may have been used in coronations and weddings. Identification of some psalms as prayers is also seen within the text, for example in the conclusion to Psalm 72, ‘The prayers of David son of Jesse are ended.’ **The largest category of Psalms, though not grouped as such in the text, is that of lament** (expressions of complaint and pleas for help from God). There appears to also have been an instructional function of the psalms as seen in their references to the law (e.g., Ps 1 and 119). See *torah* below.

## Psalm Numbering

The organization and numbering of the Psalms differs slightly between the (\*Masoretic) **Hebrew** and the (\*Septuagint) **Greek** manuscripts as indicated in the chart at right.

Christian traditions vary:

- ◆ Catholic official *liturgical* texts follow the Greek (and Vulgate) numbering, but **modern Catholic Bible translations often use the Hebrew numbering, sometimes adding, in parenthesis, the Greek numbering as well – that is what has been done in presenting the Psalms in the parish Psalter.**
- ◆ Eastern Orthodox translations are based on the Greek numbering.
- ◆ Protestant translations are based on the Hebrew numbering.

Hebrew	Greek
<b>1-8</b>	<b>1-8</b>
9-10	9
11-113	10-112
114-115	113
116	114-115
117-146	116-145
147	146-147
<b>148-150</b>	<b>148-150</b>

## Royal Psalms

Hermann Gunkel (a Protestant Old Testament scholar, d. 1932) categorized ten psalms by their subject matter of kingship as the 'royal psalms'. Specifically **the royal psalms deal with the spiritual role of kings in the worship of Yahweh.** Aside from that single qualification, there is nothing else which specifically links the ten psalms. Each of the psalms make explicit references to their subject, the king; some refer to events in the life of a king. However, it has been posited that other psalms, which do not mention the king directly, may have been written for royalty (e.g. Psalm 22).

The Royal Psalms are 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 101, 110, 132, 144.

**Some of these royal psalms describe an idealized ruler, and these are sometimes termed the 'messianic psalms' *par excellence* because today Christians see their fulfillment in Jesus Christ.** See for example Ps 110, which is repeated at Morning Prayer every Sunday in the Psalter of the *Liturgy of the Hours*.

## Septuagint or LXX

The Septuagint, or simply "LXX", is **an ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible.** The term was *originally* the designation for the *Koine Greek* (*Common Greek*) translation of the *Pentateuch* [the 1<sup>st</sup> 5 books of the bible, only], but came in time to refer to **the Greek translation of the entire Old Testament adopted by the Early Church from Judaism.** The translation process from Hebrew into Koine Greek for use of the Jews spread (diaspora) throughout the Hellenistic world of the former empire of Alexander the Great [d. 323 BC] was undertaken in stages between the 3rd century BC and the 1st century AD, initially in Alexandria, Egypt. Although the translation was not completed for some time, it **reached completion before 132 BC.** In short, **the LXX is the Greek version (translation and contents of the Old Testament) used by St Paul and cited by the evangelists and the Early Church.**

The LXX incorporates the translations of all the books of the Hebrew Bible AND books later considered either \*apocryphal [or NOT part of the inspired bible accepted by Protestants] or \*deutero-canonical [or those considered AS PART of the inspired bible accepted by Catholics (and Orthodox)], some of which were composed in Greek and some of which are translations.

**The LXX played a significant role in the development of the Catholic canon of the Old Testament.** Historically, the LXX translation was the 'Bible' of the Early Church even before the earliest Christians began recognizing as inspired by God new writings that are now part of the New Testament. In other words, the \*deutero-canonical books, written closer to the time of Jesus and mostly in Greek, were **used and treated as part of the inspired Word of God (that is, as *canonical*) from the earliest times in the life of the Church. This is true**

**notwithstanding the fact that the canon of the Bible was the subject of much discussion for centuries before it was definitively settled by the Council of Trent.** These Greek books have their own history which includes their being **rejected** from the Hebrew canon at the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century **by Jewish Rabbis** concerned about the ways Christians read them as authenticating Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah and the impact this had on comments made by St Jerome when he translated them into Latin—and then influenced the decision by Martin Luther to reject them as well. In modern Protestantism Luther's decision stands and the books known to Catholics as \*deutero-canonical are sometimes included in Protestant Bibles but they do not accept them as inspired and therefore Protestants call them \*Apocrypha.

Incidentally the Eastern Orthodox Bibles include additional books in the Old Testament: **3 Maccabees** and **1 Esdras**.

### **Sheol, the Pit**

Sheol is the 'grave', 'pit', or 'abyss' in Hebrew. **She'ol is the earliest conception of the afterlife in the Jewish scriptures.** Often oversimplified as 'hell' it is a place of darkness to which **all** dead go, regardless of the moral choices made in life, and where they are 'removed from the light of God' (see the Book of Job).

### **superscriptions or headings in a psalm**

In both the Hebrew and Greek \*Septuagint versions of the Psalm manuscripts, there are **blocks of information that precede the actual song** in many of the manuscripts. Within these texts, referred to as *superscriptions* [because they appear at the beginning], we find primarily technical, descriptive terms and phrases that relate to the work they are attached to. **In traditional English translations, the superscription is often listed as a separate verse**, as a header to the work following the psalm number, or as part of the initial verse itself. This accounts for some of the variances in the numbering scenarios [in the verses] between the Hebrew versions and traditional English translations of the same texts. Note that *in praying the Psalter the superscriptions are usually omitted*.

### **Talmud** (commentary on the law)

The *Talmud* (Hebrew: *talmud* "instruction, learning", from a root *lmd* "teach, study") is a central text of mainstream Judaism. It takes the form of **a record of rabbinic discussions pertaining to Jewish law, ethics, philosophy, customs and history.**

**The Talmud has two components: the \*Mishnah** (c. 200 AD), the first written compendium of Judaism's Oral Law; and **the \*Gemara** (c. 500 AD), a discussion of the *Mishnah* and related *Tannaitic* writings that often ventures onto other

subjects and expounds broadly on the \**Tanakh*.

The terms *Talmud* and *Gemara* are often used interchangeably. The *Gemara* is the basis for all codes of rabbinic law and is much quoted in other rabbinic literature. The whole Talmud is also traditionally referred to as *Shas*, a Hebrew abbreviation of *shisha sedarim*, the "six orders" of the *Mishnah*.

### **Tanakh**

*This is a Hebrew abbreviation used in Judaism to refer to the entire canon of the Hebrew Bible.*

### **Tehillim**

The Hebrew name of the biblical *Book of Psalms*.

### **Todah** (a "praise" sacrifice)

The *todah* or **sacrifice of praise** was one of the most significant sacrifices of the Jews. A *todah* sacrifice would be offered by someone whose life had been delivered from great peril, such as disease or the sword. The redeemed person would **show his gratitude to God** by gathering his closest friends and family for a *todah* sacrificial meal. The *lamb* would be sacrificed in the Temple and the *bread* for the meal would be consecrated the moment the lamb was sacrificed. The bread and meat, along with wine, would constitute the elements of the sacred *todah* meal, which would be **accompanied by prayers and songs of thanksgiving**, such as Psalm 116.

**What does the word 'todah' mean? It is Hebrew for 'thanksgiving,' although it also connotes a confession of praise in addition to gratitude.**

There are many examples in the Old Testament of people offering *todah* — thanks — to God. Jonah, while in the belly of the whale, vows to offer up a *todah* sacrifice in the Temple if he is delivered (cf. Jon. 2:3-10). King Hezekiah offers up a *todah* hymn upon recovering from a life-threatening illness (cf. Is. 38). However, the best example of *todah* sacrifice and song is found in the life of King David (see 1 Chron 16). **At the *todah* celebration that brought the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem, David gave the Levites a new mandate — their primary job was to 'invoke, to thank, and to praise the Lord' (1 Chron. 16:4).**

The Hebrew word for 'invoke' is *zakar*, which literally means *to remember* — the noun form signifying "memorial" (*zikkaron*). **One of the most important purposes of a *todah* meal was to remember the saving \*deeds of the Lord.** Indeed, this is one of the functions of the *todah* psalms: to recount the \*mighty deeds of God (cf. Ps. 22:28). *Note: Todah* would translate into Greek as ***eucharistia***.

### **Torah** (instruction or law)

The word '*Torah*' in Hebrew is derived from a root word which means 'to teach' (cf. Lev. 10:11). The meaning of the word is therefore 'teaching,' 'doctrine,' or 'instruction'. Strictly speaking the commonly accepted translation 'law' risks giving a wrong impression because *the English word law has other implications*. Other translational contexts in the English language include custom, theory, guidance, or system—in other words, more than a simple expression of laws, this describes *a way of life*. This is more to the point of the Hebrew usage.

**The term '*Torah*' is therefore also used in the general sense to include both Judaism's written law and oral law, serving to encompass the entire spectrum of authoritative Jewish religious teachings** throughout history, including the *\*Mishnah [oral law]*, the *\*Talmud [commentary]*, the *\*Midrash [preaching]* and more. In short in the Psalms it refers to the *entire body of teaching that is transmitting a way of life for the Chosen People*.

It is in that sense and context that *The Torah* (Hebrew: 'Instruction') consists of the **first five books** of the Jewish scriptures. It consists of the Books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. It is known in Christianity as the **Pentateuch** (Greek: from *penta-* [five] and *teuchos* [tool, vessel, book]); it is the Five Books of Moses — the entirety of Judaism's founding legal and ethical religious texts.

As such The Torah (Hebrew Bible), the first of three parts of the ***Tanakh*** [*a Hebrew abbreviation used in Judaism for the canon or contents of the entire Hebrew Bible*], is divided into five books [Gen, Ex, etc], whose names in Hebrew are one of the first few words in the initial verses of the book.

### **use of the Psalms by Catholics**

The Psalms have always been an important part of Catholic liturgy. The *Liturgy of the Hours* is centered on **chanting or recitation of the Psalms**, using fixed melodic formulas known as **psalm tones**. Early Catholics employed the Psalms widely in their individual prayers also; however, **as knowledge of Latin (the language of the Latin Rite) became uncommon, this practice ceased among the unlearned**. However, **until the end of the Middle Ages** it was not unknown for the laity to join in the singing of the *Little Office of Our Lady*, which was a shortened version of the *Liturgy of the Hours* providing a fixed daily cycle of twenty-five psalms to be recited, and nine other psalms divided across Matins (now called the *Office of Readings*).

The *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours*, # 122 sanctions three modes of singing/recitation for the Psalms:

- ◆ *directly* (all sing or recite the entire psalm);
- ◆ *antiphonally* (two choirs or sections of the congregation sing or recite

alternate verses or strophes); and  
◆ *responsorially* (the cantor or choir sings or recites the verses while the congregation sings or recites a given response after each verse).

Of these three the *antiphonal* mode is the most widely followed in religious communities gathered in 'choir' to sing/say the *Liturgy of the Hours*. Technically any mix of the three is permitted.

### Vespers

The former name for Evening Prayer. See Lauds and Divine Office.

### Vulgate

The **Vulgate** is a late 4<sup>th</sup>-century Latin translation of the Bible. It was largely the work of **St. Jerome**, who was commissioned by **Pope Damasus I** in 382 AD to make a consistent revision of the old Latin translations **using the original languages**. By the 13<sup>th</sup> century this revision had come to be called the *versio vulgata*, that is, the 'commonly used translation', and ultimately it became the definitive and officially promulgated Latin version of the Bible in the Roman Catholic Church. As such its current edition is officially known as the *Nova Vulgata*, the new Latin common translation, also called the **Neo-Vulgate**.

### Works of God, the mighty deeds

The Psalms often make reference to the marvelous works of God (see Ps 136:4), occasionally referring to them in some translations as his "mighty deeds." (See RSV Ps 150:2, 77:12; or Luke 1:51 in others.) **These deeds are the reason for the human praise and thanksgiving offered to God.** Psalm 136 for example starts with the works of *creation* and moves on to the works of *redemption* from the slavery of Egypt and even to his work of *sustenance* by providing us with food (Ps 136:25).

In addition to God being praised in his works another reason for human praise and thanksgiving is the *torah* (teaching us a way of life) which is explained in greater detail above.

### Zion

Zion (also transliterated Sion, Tzion or Tsion) is a place name often **used as a synonym for Jerusalem**. The word is first found in 2 Samuel 5:7 dating to c.630-540 BC. **It commonly referred to a specific mountain near Jerusalem** (Mount Zion), on which stood a Jebusite fortress of the same name that was conquered by David and was named the City of David. **Jerusalem/Zion are often understood in Catholic liturgy to refer to the Church.** In effect *the Church is now the city in which God dwells among his people and the full meaning of the Psalm is revealed.*

## The Four Week Psalter for Morning and Evening Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours

### Week 1

Sat Week I EP 1	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Ps 141:1-9 Ps 142 <b>Phil 2:6-11</b>							
	Ps 63:2-9 <b>Dan 3:57-88, 56 [odd]</b> Ps 149	Ps 5:2-10, 12-13 1 Chron 29:10-13 Ps 29	Ps 24 Tob 13:1-8 Ps 33	Ps 36 Jud 16:2-3a, 13-15 Ps 47	Ps 57 Jer 31:10-14 Ps 48	<b>Ps 51</b> Is 45:15-25 <b>Ps 100</b> <b>[odd]</b>	<b>Ps 119:145-152 (Koph)</b> <b>[odd]</b> Ex 15:1-4a, 8-13, 17-18 <b>Ps 117</b> <b>[odd]</b>
	<b>Ps 110:1-5, 7</b> Ps 114 <b>Rev 19:1-7</b> <b>Lent: 1 Pt 2:21-24</b>	Ps 11 Ps 15 <b>Eph 1:3-10</b>	Ps 20 Ps 21:2-8, 14 <b>Rev 4:11; 5:9, 10, 12</b>	Ps 27:1-6 Ps 27:7-14 <b>Col 1:12-20</b>	Ps 30 Ps 32 <b>Rev 11: 17-18, 12:10b-12a</b>	Ps 41 Ps 46 <b>Rev 15:3-4</b>	Evening Prayer I of Week II

**Week II**

Sat Week II EP 1	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Ps 119:105-112 (Nun) Ps 16 <b>Phil 2:6-11</b>							
	<b>Ps 118</b> [even] <b>Dan 3:52-57</b> [even] <b>Ps 150</b> [even]	Ps 42 Sir 36:1-5, 10-13 Ps 19:2-7	Ps 43 Is 38:10-14, 17-20 Ps 65	Ps 77 1 Sam 2:1-10 Ps 97	Ps 80 Is 12:1-6 Ps 81	<b>Ps 51</b> Hab 3:2-4, 13a, 15-19 <b>Ps 147:12-20</b> [even]	<b>Ps 92</b> [even] Dt 32:1-12 <b>Ps 8</b> [even]
	<b>Ps 110:1-5, 7</b> Ps 115 <b>Rev 19:1-7</b> <b>Lent: 1 Pt 2:21-24</b>	Ps 45:2-10 Ps 45:11-18 <b>Eph 1:3-10</b>	Ps 49:2-13 Ps 49:14-21 <b>Rev 4:11; 5:9, 10, 12</b>	Ps 62 <b>Ps 67 *</b> <b>Col 1:12-20</b>	Ps 72:1-11 Ps 72:12-19 <b>Rev 11: 17-18, 12:10b-12a</b>	Ps 116:1-9 Ps 121 <b>Rev 15:3-4</b>	Evening Prayer I of Week III

**Week III**

Sat Week III EP 1	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Ps 113 Ps 116:10-19 <b>Phil 2:6-11</b>							
	Ps 93 <b>Dan 3:57-88, 56</b> Ps 148	Ps 84 Is 2:2-5 Ps 96	Ps 85 Is 26:1-4, 7-9, 12 <b>Ps 67 *</b>	Ps 86 Is 33:13-16 Ps 98	Ps 87 Is 40:10-17 Ps 99	<b>Ps 51</b> Jer 14:17-21 <b>Ps 100</b>	<b>Ps 119:145-152 (Koph)</b> Wis 9:1-6, 9-11 <b>Ps 117</b>
	<b>Ps 110:1-5, 7</b> Ps 111 <b>Rev 19:1-7</b> <b>Lent: 1 Pt 2:21-24</b>	Ps 123 Ps 124 <b>Eph 1:3-10</b>	Ps 125 Ps 131 <b>Rev 4:11; 5:9, 10, 12</b>	Ps 126 Ps 127 <b>Col 1:12-20</b>	Ps 132:1-10 Ps 132:11-18 <b>Rev 11: 17-18, 12:10b-12a</b>	<b>Ps 135:1-12</b> Ps 135:13-21a <b>Rev 15:3-4</b>	Evening Prayer I of Week IV

**Week IV**

Sat Week IV EP 1	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Ps 122 Ps 130 <b>Phil 2-6-11</b>							
	<b>Ps 118</b> <b>Dan 3:52-57</b> <b>Ps 150</b>	Ps 90 Is 42:10-16 <b>Ps 135:1-12</b> *	Ps 101 Dan 3:26, 27,29, 34-41 Ps 144:1-10	Ps 108 Is 61:10- 62:5 Ps 146	Ps 143:1-11 Is 66:10-14a Ps 147:1-11	<b>Ps 51</b> Tob 13:8-11, 13-15 <b>Ps 147:12- 20</b>	<b>Ps 92</b> Eze 36:24- 28 <b>Ps 8</b>
	<b>Ps 110:1-5, 7</b> Ps 112 <b>Rev 19:1-7</b> <b>Lent: 1 Pt 2:21-24</b>	Ps 136:1-9 Ps 136:10- 26 <b>Eph 1:3-10</b>	Ps 137:1-6 Ps 138 <b>Rev 4:11; 5:9, 10, 12</b>	Ps 139:1-12 Ps 139:12- 18, 23-24 <b>Col 1:12-20</b>	Ps 144:1-8 Ps 144:9-15 <b>Rev 11: 17- 18, 12:10b- 12a</b>	Ps 145:1-13 Ps 145:14- 21 <b>Rev 15:3-4</b>	Evening Prayer I of Week I

Notes:

1. The following texts are used every week in the Psalter: **Phil 2:6-11**, Sat PM; **Ps 110:1-5, 7**, Sun PM; **Eph 1:3-10** Mon PM; **Rev 4:11; 5:9, 10, 12** Tue PM; **Col 1:12-20** Wed PM; **Rev 11: 17-18, 12:10b-12a** Thu PM; **Rev 15:3-4** Fri PM; **Ps 51**, Fri AM.

Also the *Invitatory Ps 95* and other *Invitatory* options: Ps 100, 67, 24 [each of which is otherwise included at different times]; **Lk 1:68-79** AM (Canticle of Zechariah); and **Lk 1:46-55** PM (Canticle of Mary or Magnificat).

2. The following texts are used every other week on the even week: **Ps 118** Sun AM; **Dan 3:52-57** Sun AM; **Ps 150** Sun AM; **Ps 147:12-20** Fri AM; **Ps 92** and **Ps 8** Sat AM

3. The following texts are used every other week on the odd week: **Dan 3:57-88, 56**, Sun AM; **Rev 19:1-7** Sun PM  
**Lent: 1 Pt 2:21-24** Sun PM; **Ps 100** Fri AM; **Ps 117** Sat AM.

4. **Ps 67** Wed PM Week 2 **and** Tues AM Week 3; **Ps 135:1-12** Mon Am Week 4 **and** Fri PM Week 3.