

Liturgy of the Hours / Divine Office / Breviary

All three names refer to the same reality, the official prayer of the Church offered at various times of the day in order to sanctify it. Clergy and religious have a canonical obligation to pray the Liturgy of the Hours as official representatives of the Church. Increasingly, the laity are also praying it, though they do not do so in the name of the Church.

Liturgy of the Hours - From *liturgia horarium* (L.) and the Greek *liturgia*, a service performed by an official.

Divine Office - From *officium divina* (L.), a divine service or duty.

Breviary - From *breviarium* (L.), a compendium (of the canonical hours).

The Divine Office is also called the *Opus dei* (Work of God).

History

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

After the people returned to Judea, and the Temple was re-built, the prayer services developed in Babylon for the local *assemblies* (synagogues) of the people were brought into Temple use, as well. We know that in addition to Morning and Evening Prayer to accompany the sacrifices, there was prayer at the Third, Sixth and Ninth Hours of the day. The Acts of the Apostles notes that Christians continued to pray at these hours (Third: Acts 2:15; Sixth: Acts 10:9; 10: 3, 13). And, although the Apostles no longer shared in the Temple sacrifices—they had its fulfillment in the "breaking of the bread" (the Eucharist)—they continued to frequent the Temple at the customary hours of prayer (Acts 3:1).

Monastic and eremitical (hermit) practice as it developed in the early Church recognized in the Psalms the perfect form of prayer and did not try to improve upon it. The practices were quite individual from monastery to monastery. Among the earliest Psalter cycles of which we have a record is the division given by St. Benedict in his with canonical hours of Lauds (Morning Prayer) offered at sunrise, Prime (1st hour of the day), Terce (3rd hour, or Mid-morning), Sext (6th hour or Midday), None (9th hour or Mid-Afternoon), Vespers (Evening Prayer) offered at sunset, and Compline (Night Prayer) before going to bed. In addition, the monks arose to read and pray during the Night. This Office of Matins (Readings) likewise had its divisions, into nocturnes, corresponding to the beginning of each of the "watches of the night" (Ps. 63:6), that is, 9 pm, midnight and 3 am. With the reforms of the Second Vatican Council the traditional one-week Psalter cycle became a four-week cycle.

Although the Divine Office has gone through various forms, and reforms, including that of Vatican II, its basic structure, combining Psalms, prayers, canticles and readings, has been relatively constant since the 11th century. When the Franciscan Order was looking for a convenient one volume Office for its much-traveled friars to use, it adopted this *Breviarium Curiae*, but substituting the Gallican (French) Psalter for the Roman. This modified Roman Breviary was then spread throughout Europe by the Franciscans. Pope Nicholas III (c. 1270) would then adopt this popularized Franciscan version of the Breviary as the Breviary of Rome itself.

Full Versions of the Roman Breviary

Liturgy of the Hours, US edition is published in 4 volumes. The 4 volumes correspond to the liturgical seasons (Advent/Christmas, Ordinary Time 1-17, Lent/Easter, Ordinary Time 18-34)

Abbreviated Versions

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

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

Shorter Morning and Evening Prayer

The Various Hours and their Names

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

The Rites within the Hours

Rite	Office of Readings	Morning & Evening Prayer	Daytime Prayers	Night Prayer
Invitatory - Invitatory Antiphon - Psalm Antiphon - Invitatory Psalm - Doxology - Psalm Antiphon	Said only before the first Hour recited each day			
Opening Antiphon & Doxology	X	X	X	X
Examination of Conscience				X
Hymn	X	X	X	X
Psalter: - Antiphon - Psalm or Canticle - Doxology - Psalm Prayer (US edition) - Antiphon (pattern repeated 1-3 times)	3	3	3	1 or 2
Antiphon (before the Readings)	X			
Scripture Reading & Responsorial	X	X	X	X
Ecclesiastical Reading & Responsorial	X			
Te Deum & optional Responsorial	Sundays Solemnities Feasts			
Gospel Canticle - Antiphon - Canticle - Doxology - Antiphon		Benedictus (MP) Magnificat (EP)		Nunc Dimittis
Intercessions		X		
Our Father		X		
Prayer	X	X	X	X
Conclusion/Dismissal	X	X	X	X
Marian Antiphon/Hymn				X

Liturgical Gestures

Sign of the Cross

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

Bows

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

Postures During the Liturgy of the Hours

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

Stand - Invitatory, Opening Antiphon, Psalm and Hymn

Sit - Psalmody, Reading, Responsory

Stand - Canticle until the end

General Notes

Psalter. The core of the Office is the 4 week cycle of the Psalter - Sunday Week 1, Monday Week 2, etc., through Saturday Week 4. The Psalter is found in the middle of each volume, dividing the Propers in the front, from the Saints and Commons in the back.

Saints. On a saint's feast day the special prayers and texts are found in the saints' section behind the Psalter. This section is usually the minimum necessary, that is, only what pertains uniquely to that saint. This unique material (e.g. St. Dominic) is then combined with general saint material from the Commons, depending on the category of saint (e.g. for Dominic, Common of Pastors, or, Common of Religious).

Guidebooks. The St. Joseph's Guide to the Office for the upcoming liturgical year is published yearly. It gives the page numbers in the 4 volume Liturgy of the Hours for every part of every office on every day of liturgical calendar. It is highly recommended for novices.

THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS
Instructions for Morning and Evening Prayers
Christian Prayer: One Volume version
May be recited individually or as a community

Praying as a community:

The community is divided into two sides and a leader is selected to lead the prayers

Leader says words in **Bold Capitals**

Community responds in *italic type*

Community is to pray in unison at the pace of the leader, and reflectively with short pauses between the psalms. At the section following the Reading, a longer pause is required to allow for reflection on the message.

Using the coloured ribbons for markers to the relevant sections:

- **Select the reading for the day according to the Proper of the Season** (see reverse side for instruction) and Feast Days- Proper of Saints – page 1060).
- **Select Hymn** from the Reading in accordance with the Season and time of day.
- Apply ribbon to the section of the **Canticle of Zechariah** (for Morning Prayer) or to the **Canticle of Mary** (for Evening Prayer) pg.696.
- Apply ribbon to the **Feast Days or Proper of Saints** if applicable (pg. 1060.)

OPENING:

Leader: **O God come to our assistance** (makes the sign of the Cross)

All: (makes the sign of the Cross) **O Lord, make haste to help us.**

Leader: **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit**

All: *As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end, Amen (Alleluia)*

Antiphon 1: read by the Leader

Psalm 1 **Leader:** reads **First line of the psalm**

Side 1 (is the side on which the Leader is located)

Side 1: Continues to read with the Leader, the second line of the psalm to the end of the verse (this applies to all 3 psalms)

Side 2: Reads the second verse of the psalm, and this is alternated between Sides 1 and 2, reading one verse each and continued through the Gloria.

Psalm Prayer – read by the Leader

Antiphon 1 is repeated by all.

Antiphon 2: read by the Leader

The Canticle is read alternating between sides, starting with the Leader's side.

Gloria is repeated with alternating sides. (sometimes the Gloria is omitted).

Psalm Prayer recited by the Leader.

Antiphon 2 is repeated by all.

**** Antiphon 3, Psalm 3 and Gloria are prayed following the same order as in the previous section.**

Reading: Is read (reflectively) by the Leader or someone designated by the Leader. The reader recites the first line of the Responsory and the community together reads the next line, alternating with the reader until the end.

Leader: says the Antiphon of the Canticle

All: *recite the Canticle together (Canticle of Zechariah - in the morning prayer) (Canticle of Mary – Evening Prayer)*

Gloria: recited together.

Antiphon repeated together.

Intercessions: Read by the Leader...the community in unison respond to the intercessions.

Our Father is prayed together.

Final Prayer: read by the Leader

The Blessing/ Dismissal: Is done by a priest/deacon. If a priest or deacon is not available, the conclusion is recited as on Pg. 694 (Morning Prayer) or Pg 698 for (Evening Prayer).