

# Liturgy of the Hours

The Liturgy of the Hours, also known as the Divine Office or the Work of God (Opus Dei), is the daily prayer of the Church, marking the hours of each day and sanctifying the day with prayer. The Hours are a meditative dialogue on the mystery of Christ, using scripture and prayer. At times the dialogue is between the Church or individual soul and God; at times it is a dialogue among the members of the Church; and at times it is even between the Church and the world. The Divine Office "is truly the voice of the Bride herself addressed to her Bridegroom. It is the very prayer which Christ himself together with his Body addresses to the Father." (SC 84) The dialogue is always held, however, in the presence of God and using the words and wisdom of God. Each of the five canonical Hours includes selections from the Psalms that culminate in a scriptural proclamation. The two most important or hinge Hours are Morning and Evening Prayer. These each include a Gospel canticle: the Canticle of Zechariah from Luke 1:68-79 for Morning Prayer (known as the Benedictus), and the Canticle of Mary from Luke 1:46-55 for Evening Prayer (known as the Magnificat). The Gospel canticle acts as a kind of meditative extension of the scriptural proclamation in light of the Christ event. Morning and Evening Prayer also include intercessions that flow from the scriptural proclamation just as the Psalms prepare for it.

<https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgy-of-the-hours>

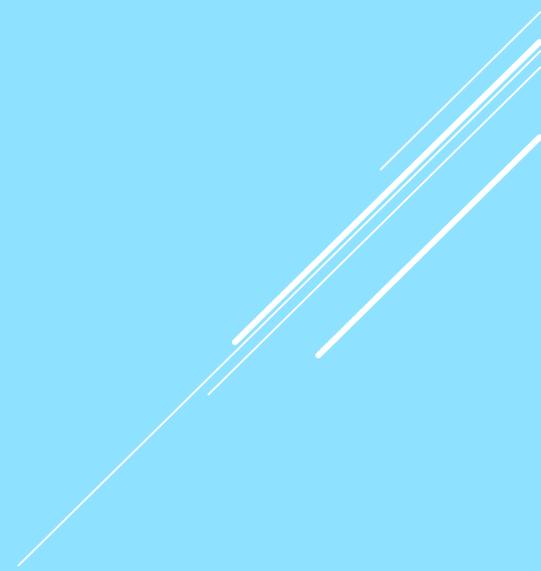
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- In the Hours, the royal priesthood of the baptized is exercised, and this sacrifice of praise is thus connected to the sacrifice of the Eucharist, both preparing for and flowing from the Mass.
- "The hymns and litanies of the Liturgy of the Hours integrate the prayer of the psalms into the age of the Church, expressing the symbolism of the time of day, the liturgical season, or the feast being celebrated. Moreover, the reading from the Word of God at each Hour (with the subsequent responses or troparia) and readings from the Fathers and spiritual masters at certain Hours, reveal more deeply the meaning of the mystery being celebrated, assist in understanding the psalms, and prepare for silent prayer." (CCC 1177)
- The five Hours of the Divine Office are:
  - Office of Readings
  - Morning Prayer
  - Daytime Prayer
  - Evening Prayer
  - Night Prayer

# Liturgy of the Hours

CCC: 1174-1178, 1196

**CCC 1174** The mystery of Christ, his Incarnation and Passover, which we celebrate in the Eucharist especially at the Sunday assembly, permeates and transfigures the time of each day, through the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, "the divine office." This celebration, faithful to the apostolic exhortations to "pray constantly," is "so devised that the whole course of the day and night is made holy by the praise of God." In this "public prayer of the Church," The faithful (clergy, religious, and lay people) exercise the royal priesthood of the baptized. Celebrated in "the form approved" by the Church, the Liturgy of the Hours "is truly the voice of the Bride herself addressed to her Bridegroom. It is the very prayer which Christ himself together with his Body addresses to the Father.



# Liturgy of the Hours

CCC: 1174-1178, 1196

**CCC 1175** The Liturgy of the Hours is intended to become the prayer of the whole People of God. In it Christ himself "continues his priestly work through his Church." His members participate according to their own place in the Church and the circumstances of their lives: priests devoted to the pastoral ministry, because they are called to remain diligent in prayer and the service of the word; religious, by the charism of their consecrated lives; all the faithful as much as possible:

"Pastors of souls should see to it that the principal hours, especially Vespers, are celebrated in common in church on Sundays and on the more solemn feasts. the laity, too, are encouraged to recite the divine office, either with the priests, or among themselves, or even individually."

**CCC 1176** The celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours demands not only harmonizing the voice with the praying heart, but also a deeper "understanding of the liturgy and of the Bible, especially of the Psalms."

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CCC: 1174-1178, 1196

**CCC 1177** The hymns and litanies of the Liturgy of the Hours integrate the prayer of the psalms into the age of the Church, expressing the symbolism of the time of day, the liturgical season, or the feast being celebrated. Moreover, the reading from the Word of God at each Hour (with the subsequent responses or troparia) and readings from the Fathers and spiritual masters at certain Hours, reveal more deeply the meaning of the mystery being celebrated, assist in understanding the psalms, and prepare for silent prayer. the lectio divina, where the Word of God is so read and meditated that it becomes prayer, is thus rooted in the liturgical celebration.

**CCC 1178** The Liturgy of the Hours, which is like an extension of the Eucharistic celebration, does not exclude but rather in a complementary way calls forth the various devotions of the People of God, especially adoration and worship of the Blessed Sacrament.

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CCC: 1174-1178, 1196

**CCC 1196** The faithful who celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours are united to Christ our high priest, by the prayer of the Psalms, meditation on the Word of God, and canticles and blessings, in order to be joined with his unceasing and universal prayer that gives glory to the Father and implores the gift of the Holy Spirit on the whole world.

