

DIOCESAN LITURGICAL COMMISSION NEWSLETTER

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LITURGY OF THE HOURS: MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER

What has happened to the public prayer of the Church since the Second Vatican Council?

One of the best kept secrets of the renewal of the liturgy is the *General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours (GILH)*. This document, promulgated by the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship in 1971, has called us to be a people of prayer. We recognize that through our baptism, we have a serious responsibility to pray the prayer of the Church, to intercede for the world, to offer praise to our God and to grow in holiness as God's people.

It is now almost forty years since the promulgation of this document and very few parishes have implemented the official Prayer of the Church. We are very fortunate to have a number

of lay people trained through the Faith Development and Ministry Program to prepare and preside at this liturgy for and with the people. All that is needed is the support of your parish to move forward.

Pastors should see to it that the chief hours, especially vespers, are celebrated in common in church on Sundays and the more solemn feasts. The laity, too, are encouraged to recite the divine office...." (CSL 100).

The Jewish synagogue, at the time of Jesus, was the place where the community gathered for prayer and reflection on the word of God. The psalms were an integral part of the prayer of the Hebrew people as they still are today.

There was no one style of prayer in the Church of the first centuries after Christ. People prayed in the Church of the first centuries after Christ. People prayed publically and privately, in small groups and as families. However, one characteristic marked the theology of prayer. A person prayed as a member of the Church, as part of the "Body of Christ". The concept of "me and my "God" was foreign to early Christians.

Prayer was always an experience of praying with and for others.

During the Middle Ages, the liturgy in general, including the divine office became the domain of clerics and they were obligated to pray the office in the name of the Church. During this time, many devotional practices sprang up.

In Canada, we have one of the most up-to-date resources for the Payer of the Church in the *Catholic Book of Worship 111*. It provides detailed formats for Morning Prayer (13A-I) and Evening Prayer (14A-M).

The Celebration of the Word is properly a service for Sundays when it is not possible to celebrate Eucharist. On weekdays when there is no Mass, Morning/Evening Prayer is a much better choice for the people who wish to gather.

Lent and Advent are two excellent times to introduce this prayer in a parish. The season of Lent calls us to a spirit of repentance and conversion. Sunday Evening is an ideal time to gather the community to prayerfully conclude the Lord's Day with Evening Prayer.

The GILH calls us to make this prayer again the normal form of communal public prayer in mornings and evenings, during the week and on Sunday evening.

The Liturgy of the Hours provides a rhythm for Christian daily living in much the same way the liturgical year lays the pattern of paschal mystery over the calendar year. The liturgy is a manner of praying unceasingly, as St. Paul directed (1 Thes 5:17). "The whole course of the day and night is

made holy by the praises of God" (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy 84). "Pastors should see to it that the chief hours, especially vespers, are celebrated in common in church on Sundays and the more solemn feasts. The laity, too, are encouraged to recite the divine office...." (CSL 100).

Some resources your parish may become familiar with are:

1. Sunday Celebration of the Word and Hours – CCCB 1995
2. Pastoral Notes, Sunday Celebration of the Word and Hours CCCB 1995
3. CBW 111 choir edition.
4. Companion to CBW 111 pages 138 to 145
5. Preparing Morning and Evening Prayer – James Riichards. Preparing Series, Novalis 1997
6. National Bulletin on Liturgy
#58, volume 10, March/April 1977
#114, volume 21, September 1988
#158, Volume 32, Fall 1999



THE ROLE OF MARY IN ADVENT

Although May and October are Marian Months by popular custom, there is no Marian theology rooted in Scripture for this time in the Liturgical Year. Every century and culture has interpreted Mary in different ways.

In Advent we read Luke's infancy narrative. The Annunciation scene depicts Mary being called to the vocation of being God's partner in the work of redemption on the model of the call to Moses at the burning bush.

Mary gives her free consent to God's call and sets out on a life where she walks by faith, not knowing what the future would hold for her. Mary gives us a tremendous example of walking by faith through a difficult life.

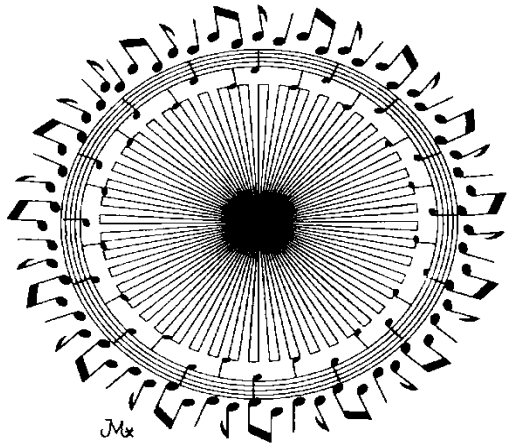
Though Mary is poor and lowly, and an insignificant woman in her culture, God does great things to her and all the poor, bringing down the mighty from their thrones; exalting the lowly; filling the hungry with good things and sending the unrepentant rich away empty. All this is happening in fulfillment of the ancient promise – and in Mary's very being. Mary sings out the work of liberation in her **Magnificat** (Luke 1: 46-55). In this great prayer Mary sings of the future when finally peaceful justice will take root among all people.

Every time we participate in the **Evening Prayer of the Church**, we sing this magnificent hymn. This is one reason why it is very appropriate to introduce Liturgy of the Hours to a parish during Advent.

In 1975 Pope Paul VI wrote an apostolic exhortation on Mary, *Marialis Cultus (To Honor Mary)*. When he began his letter he suggested that our approach to Mary reflected outdated ideas of the Middle Ages and the Counter-Reformation period of the Church. He suggested our Marian theology should have five characteristics:

- 1) Biblical – rooted in the testimony of Scripture.
- 2) Liturgical – in tune with the Liturgical seasons, especially Advent, where Mary joins the Church in expecting the birth of the Messiah, and then Pentecost, the coming of the Spirit of the Church.
- 3) Ecumenical – in harmony with the agreements we have reached with fellow Christian Churches.
- 4) Anthropological – aware of the changing role of women in society.
- 5) Theological – have God at the center – with Mary placed in relation to Christ and to the Church.

A theological sound view of Mary in the 21st century can empower us to be voices of hope in this difficult world and, like Mary, will be rejoicing in God our savior and announcing the justice that is to come.



MUSIC FOR THE REVISED ROMAN MISSAL

The Atlantic Liturgy Conference will sponsor a Study Day for the music of the Mass affected when the revised Roman Missal is published. This will take place in Charlottetown on Monday evening May 9th and all day Tuesday May 10th (more information will follow at a later date).

The facilitator for this event will be Heather Reid. Heather holds degrees in music, education and liturgy. She is coordinator of music ministry at St. Basil's Parish in Ottawa. Heather has taught and given workshops in music and liturgy across Canada. Heather is editor of *"Preparing Music for Celebrations"* - Novalis 1996.

Because the revised Missal deals with the texts and rubrics of the Mass, the familiar hymns we

currently sing will not be affected by the revision of the Roman Missal. But it appears there will be more emphasis on the singing *of* the mass rather than singing *at* the mass. Definite changes will be noticed in the parts of the Mass we currently sing such as the Gloria, and the Holy, Holy. New music will have to be learned by the assembly. In addition the revised missal will include new chants and tones to assist the celebrant and the assembly.

As part of the preparation for the implementation of the Missal, the Bishops of Canada will be issuing catechetical resources to assist Canadian Catholics in preparing for the revised translation. However, these materials can only be finalized once the approved text of the Missal, as well as the adaptations and the liturgical calendar, have been received for use in Canada.

Plan now to take the opportunity to attend the sessions in May and learn the new music for the Revised Roman Missal.

*How good it is
to sing praise to the Lord our
God. Psalm 147*

