

Ponderings ...

The Liturgy of the Hours

Evening Prayer

and the

The Consecrated Virgin



Ponderings...

From the sphere of the Diocese with its traditions, its Saints, its values, its limits and its problems, you broaden your horizons to the universal Church, sharing above all in her liturgical prayer, which is also entrusted to you so that *"the praise of our heavenly Father be always on your lips; pray without ceasing"*, (RCV, n. 28). In this way your prayerful "I" will gradually be enlarged, until there is no longer anything except a great "we" in the prayer. This is ecclesial prayer and the true liturgy.

That your whole life may be a faithful witness of God's love and a convincing sign of the Kingdom of heaven", (RCV n. 17). Take care always to radiate the dignity of being a bride of Christ, expressing the newness of Christian existence and the serene expectation of future life. Thus, with your own upright life you will be stars to guide the world on its journey.

The choice of virginal life, in fact, is a reference to the transient nature of earthly things and an anticipation of future rewards. Be witnesses of attentive and lively expectation, of joy and of the peace that characterizes those who abandon themselves to God's love. May you be present in the world, yet pilgrims bound for the Kingdom.

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Year of Saint Joseph
Month of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
Saint Philomena
Saint Clare

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Introduction

This series of *Ponderings* comes from the example of Our Blessed Lady...

The exhortation we received in the Homily from the Mass of Consecration

“Imitate the Mother of God.

Desire to be called and be handmaids of the Lord.”

Included here for your pondering is the text from the Roman Pontifical.

Remember also the exhortation of the Holy Father from the Year of Consecrated Life, remember the past, return to our roots and appreciate the original charism of those who have gone before us.

In our vocation, Holy Mother Church herself has given us our purpose and direction.

Embrace with joy the words given to us for the salvation of souls.

We too ponder and treasure these words in our Hearts.

Year of St Joseph
Month of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Dear Reader,
This little book of "Ponderings" for the day that is at its end. This time of pondering and reflecting is a natural grace.

Our gift is to use the graces from our consecration and pray for the needs of the Church as a bride of Christ.

All time is holy. Let us use it well for the glory of God in time and into Eternity.
Let us live mindfully.

God's choicest blessings,
barb



PRESENTATION OF THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS

28 Then, if it seems appropriate, the Bishop gives the newly consecrated the book containing the prayer of the Church, saying these or similar words:

Receive the book of the Liturgy of the Hours,
the prayer of the Church;
may the praise of our heavenly Father
be always on your lips;
pray without ceasing
for the salvation of the whole world.

All reply together:

Amen.

The newly consecrated come before the Bishop, who gives each a copy of the liturgy of the hours. After receiving it, they return to their places and remain standing.

29 Then, if appropriate, this or some other suitable antiphon is sung.

I am espoused to him whom the angels serve;
sun and moon stand in wonder at his glory.

From the Roman Pontifical Introduction

II. PRINCIPAL DUTIES OF THOSE CONSECRATED

2 Those who consecrate their chastity under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit do so for the sake of more fervent love of Christ and of greater freedom in the service of their brothers and sisters.

They are to spend their time in works of penance and of mercy, in apostolic activity, and in prayer, according to their state in life and spiritual gifts.

To fulfill their duty of prayer, they are strongly advised to celebrate the Liturgy of Hours each day, especially Lauds or Vespers. In this way, by joining their voices to those of Christ the High Priest and of his Church, they will offer unending praise to the heavenly Father and pray for the salvation of the whole world.

V. FORM OF THE RITE

7 For the consecration of women living in the world the rite described in Chapter I of this Ritual is to be used.

The rite consists of these parts:

g) the presentation of the insignia of consecration to symbolize a spiritual dedication.

“Unending praise to the Heavenly Father...” with our consecration we are part of this mystery of grace and prayer.

When we consider that our vocation has the grace of the Church guiding us how to not only spend our time but also how to fulfill our duty of prayer we recognize we are blessed.

Called to follow Christ in the spirit of the Gospel with our acts of mercy as we heard not only in the Homily but also from the lips of Jesus on the Mount of the Beatitudes and fulfilled on the altar of the Cross, we as His brides have a rich path we are invited to walk.

Even given the gift of the
“Liturgy of the Hours, the prayer of the Church”
we join in the prayer of Christ Himself.

How does our prayer, our life fulfill the directive given by Holy Mother Church...

“may the praise of our heavenly Father
be always on your lips;
pray without ceasing
for the salvation of the whole world.”

Remembering the “ponderings” of other parts of the Divine Office we build upon these insights.

We as consecrated virgins are called to “be the heart and hands of the local church” using the words of Pope Saint John Paul the II.

We take to heart and prayer the needs of our local Church.

When the Liturgy of the Hours enriches and guides our day then we have fulfilled the charge given us on the day of our consecration.

This Evening Prayer is a time to ponder the way our God and Father has been there for us, to ponder the graces received from the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass or a Spiritual Communion to bring Christ to those we encountered during the day.

Thanks be to God Holy Mother Church gives her children guidelines to fulfill the Father’s plan for our holiness and union with Him when praying the Liturgy of the Hours.

The General Instruction #39 presents a fine reflection. “When evening approaches and the day is already far spent, Evening Prayer is celebrated in order that “we may give thanks for what has been given to us, or what we have done well during the day.” Saint Basil the Great

I encourage you to read these sections on Evening Prayer from the General Instructions.

The reflections from the saints, the scripture references to the psalms, raising of our hands, an evening oblation, burning incense, the Lord's last supper with His apostles. The list continues. All these help us fulfill our "job" of being a prayer of the Divine Office.

Evening Prayer is the other "hinge" of the entire office. The two psalms, or one longer psalm divided in two reflect the hour of the day. Following the structured much the same as Morning Prayer the beautiful canticles used in Evening Prayer are taken from the New Testament letters of the apostles or the Book of Revelation.

They are the voice of Christ through the Apostles, the witnesses of the Gospel, living examples for us, giving thanks!

Following the Psalms and Canticle, the reading and the responsory come from the ordinary, the liturgical season, solemnity, proper of saints or the common.

This Evening Prayer is our sacrifice of Praise. We unite our voice with that of the whole Church.

We come to the Gospel Canticle of Mary, the Magnificat. Our heart rejoices!

Recall the words of both Pope Saint John Paul and Pope Benedict XVI in their exhortations to the

international gatherings for consecrated virgins in Rome in 1995, 2008. "Be with Mary..."

This canticle is where we as consecrated virgins are given an invitation to join with her and be one with her in this song of praise.

Our whole day that we offered to the Lord in the morning should now be reflected in this evening song of praise.

Following the Canticle of Mary, we bring our intercessions much as we do for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Intercessions already given are timeless.

Either from Ordinary Time, the Liturgical Seasons, Proper of the saints or the Commons we present our needs with the whole Church to the Father. As Consecrated Virgins we are given particular intercessions and we bring these to the Heart of the Father as well.

Closing with the Our Father, a Closing Prayer and blessing we prepare for another day.

So you see the "receiving" of the Liturgy of the Hours at our consecration is both a gift to us and in turn our gift to the Father.

Let us grow in knowledge and appreciation of this treasure.

*The responsibility of prayer for the
consecrated virgin is one given to her
on the day of her consecration...*

*the Liturgy of the Hours,
the Divine Office, especially
Morning and Evening Prayer.*

*The "hinges" of her day
have within them, in the words of*

Pope Benedict XVI

"The Lord's Prayer,

the school of hope."

*May we learn from Jesus with the
grace of our Consecration.*

