

Ponderings ...

The Liturgy of the Hours

The Gospel Canticle

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

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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" reflects upon the Gospel Canticle used in Evening Prayer and Morning Prayer. Praying them every day the depth and beauty of these Scripture passages are sometimes overlooked or prayed quickly. So, we take this time to ponder.

All time is holy and our use of it is a grace for us and the whole Church, the whole world when we live mindfully.

May this reflection help enrich your time.
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.

We begin our meditation with the Gospel Canticle for Evening Prayer. The Magnificat. You may find this odd since the day begins in the morning.

However, looking at the visitation and Mary's response to Elizabeth comes before the birth of St John the Baptist and the proclamation of Zechariah.

Also, looking at each office book you find Sunday Evening Prayer I as the beginning "Hour" for the week.

This passage from the General Instruction found in Volume I page 21 suggests the normal progression but also has the imagery of the lamp...

"The witness of the early Church teaches us that individual Christians devoted themselves to prayer at fixed times...the last hour of the day when evening draws on and the lamp is lighted..." is followed by this next phrase, "or the first hour, when night draws to a close with the rising of the daystar."



This also calls to mind the antiphon used in the Rite of Consecration "The Calling of the Candidate" and the rubrics that follow.

"Be wise: make ready your lamps.
Behold the Bridegroom comes;
go out to meet him."

The candidates then light their lamps or candles and accompanied by the two women mentioned above (cf. no. 10,), approach the sanctuary, and stand outside it.

Pondering the Visitation, it may have happened toward the end of the day, the journey's end. Elizabeth responds to May's greeting and grace moves all!

The encounter of souls.
The encounter of Jesus and John.

Mary's reply filled with the years of pondering God's goodness.
Our entering into this mystery pondering God's action within our lives each day.
May our voice be one with hers.

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for He has looked with favor on His lowly
servant. From this day all generations will call
me blessed, the Almighty has done great
things for me, and holy is His Name.

He has mercy on those who fear Him in every
generation. He has shown the strength of his
arm, He has scattered the proud in their
conceit. He has cast down the mighty from
their thrones and has lifted up the lowly. He
has filled the hungry with good things, and
the rich He has sent away empty. He has
come to the help of His servant Israel for He
has remembered his promise of mercy, the
promise He made to our fathers, to Abraham
and his children forever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to
the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will
be forever. Amen. Alleluia



Morning Prayer is filled with the silent anticipation for the day.

What marvels and beauty does it hold out for us to embrace?

We stand in the shadows of the home of Zechariah and Elizabeth.

We watch as the time has come for Elizabeth to bring forth her son.

Mary has been the handmaid of the Lord assisting her cousin these days, weeks, months, preparation both physically and spiritually for the birth of this long-awaited child.

Mary has helped with simple everyday things yet enriched knowing with Whom she was caring and who she was caring for, the one sent by God to prepare the way for her Son...

We can imagine after the child moved within Elizabeth's womb at the sound of her first greeting the days that followed, were days of grace for John and Jesus.

After the "quiet encouragement" we can imagine Jesus has given his cousin John in the womb of their respective mothers these past 6 months.

Now the fullness of time has come!

The child is born. The question is asked...

Zechariah writes. He writes the words that will break through the silence of the ages.

HIS NAME IS JOHN.

And with these few words all time becomes
enriched with the glories of God's mercy.

Silence is broken.

The months of Zechariah's pondering God's Word
not only in the prophets of old but in the very
Presence of Jesus within the womb of Mary who
has been helping these past months.

Grace upon grace.

The words of the song "Let all Mortal Flesh Keep
Silence" come to mind.

Now the silence begins in a new way for Zechariah.
Being able to speak he proclaims God's action
within his heart soul mind and will.

We join in this prayer of praise each day.

May we not take for granted Our Lord's presence
within our midst in the daily simple happenings.

May our pondering in the silence of prayer bring
forth words that will enrich the lives of others.
Words filled with the fruit of our quiet prayer.

Words enriched with His Divine Word made flesh
and splendor of the Father who we are privileged
to receive in the Holy Eucharist and visit in our
Churches.

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel;
he has come to his people and set them free.
He has raised up for us a mighty savior,
born of the house of his servant David.
Through his holy prophets he promised of old
that he would save us from our enemies,
from the hands of all who hate us.
He promised to show mercy to our fathers
and to remember his holy covenant.
This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham:
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
free to worship him without fear,
holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our
life.
You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the
Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
to give his people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of their sins.
In the tender compassion of our God
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the
shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

May our day begin and end with proclaiming the
greatness of our God!

*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.*

