

Ponderings ...

The Liturgy of the Hours

The Little Hours

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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Saint Philomena
Saint Clare
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" presents some thoughts on the "Little Hours" of the Divine Office not required for the consecrated virgin to pray.

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.

Today Saint Philomena and Saint Clare both little in the eyes of the world yet enriched the Church through the ages. May we learn from them today.

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 reflection with Volume I of the Liturgy of the Hours which gives the following directive for the praying of the Little Hours...

V. THE DAYTIME HOURS

74. Following a very ancient tradition Christians have been accustomed to pray out of private devotion at various times of the day, even in the course of their work, in order to imitate the Apostolic Church...

75. Liturgical custom.....has retained Midmorning, Midday, Midafternoon Prayer, principally because these Hours were linked to a commemoration of the events of the Lord's Passion and of the first preaching of the Gospel..."

Each day in the four-week cycle of the psalter includes a "Daytime Hour" that could be prayed anytime during the day.

Although the consecrated virgin is not obligated to pray these hours on a regular basis, she may find them enriching if she uses them as part of her prayer on days of retreat or days of recollection.

As with special celebrations there is one "daytime hour" proper for the saint or celebration enhancing the day also found in the COMMONS.

Begin the praying of these little hours with the introductory verse **God, come to my assistance, Lord make haste to help me. Glory to the Father...** and the **Alleluia** which is omitted in Lent.

The "Daytime Prayer" or the "little hours" as they are lovingly called are comprised of a Hymn ~ PSALMODY (three psalms or 3 parts of a longer psalm) with Antiphons ~ Reading ~ Concluding Prayer.

Located in the center of the Office Book called the "Ordinary" the hymns for Midmorning honor each member of the Holy Trinity. You have five choices. Each of the hymns for Midday and Midafternoon have a spirit of faith and trust in God's care and goodness.

Midmorning, Midday, Midafternoon

The psalms and antiphons for these little hours are located after the complete 4-week cycle of psalms and the Night Prayer office in a section entitled

COMPLEMENTARY PSALMODY.

A subtitle and scripture or saint quotation included at the beginning of the psalm as found in the sections for the office are encouraging if used during the day.

Series I (Midmorning)

Psalm 120

Longing for peace

Be patient in suffering, be constant in prayer
(Romans 12:12)

Psalm 121

Guardian of his people

Never again will they hunger and thirst, never again know scorching heat (Revelation 7:16)

Psalm 122

The Holy city, Jerusalem

You have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. (Hebrews 12:22)

Series II (Midday)

Psalm 123

The Lord is the hope of his people

Two blind men cried out: "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us" (Matthew 20:30)

Psalm 124

Our help is in the name of the Lord

The Lord said to Paul: Fear not... I am with you" (Acts 18:9-10)

Psalm 125

The Lord, the guardian of his people

Peace to God's true Israel (Galatians 6:16)

Series III Midafternoon

Psalm 126

Joyful hope in God

Companions with him in suffering, you will share his overflowing happiness (2 Corinthians 1:7)

Psalm 127

*Apart from God our labors are worthless
You are God's building (I Corinthians 3:9)*

Psalm 128

*Happiness of family life is rooted in God
"May the Lord bless you from Zion," that is, from
the Church (Arnobius)*



What a grace to realize the Holy Family would have prayed these psalms together.

When pondering the incorporation of both the Old and New Testaments in this book of prayer we grow in appreciating the wisdom of holy Mother Church in revising this official prayer for her children.

How blessed are we to have received this gift from the hands of our Bishop as part of the gift of ourselves back to the Heavenly Father on the day of our consecration.

Let each of us try to use these little hours to enrich our days off, our retreat days, maybe even a Saturday or Sunday.

Let us indeed praise the Lord and give Him thanks!

*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.*

