

Ponderings ...

The Liturgy of the Hours

Morning 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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Month of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
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Saint Philomena
Saint Clare

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Consecrated Virgin
Diocese of La Crosse

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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" will provide some simple reflections on one of the main prayers we are asked to pray when we received the consecration, Morning Prayer.

Let us enter into the beauty of this prayer with those in time into Eternity, the Mystical Body of Christ.

All time is holy and our use of it is a grace for us, the Church and 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.

"It is said in the morning in order that the first stirrings of our minds and will may be consecrated to God, and that we take nothing in hand until we have been gladdened by the thought of God..."

Saint Basil the Great

"This Hour, celebrated as it is as the light of a new day is dawning..."

These two quotations from #38, Chapter II of the General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours found in Volume I of the four-volume set of the Divine Office give us a peek into the wisdom of the saints as their wisdom and insights are included in this General Instruction.

The image of the 'stirring of our minds', the 'light of a new day' and even the practical image of one of the 'hinges' of prayer (Evening Prayer being the other) provide opportunities for our minds and hearts to prepare for the praying of this gift we have received.

Morning Prayer begins either with the *Invitatory Lord open my lips....* or with the *Introductory verse God come to my assistance...* if you have already prayed the Office of Readings.

If you understand the praying of both Morning and Evening Prayer the General Instruction may add some rich reflections.

If you are not familiar with praying the Divine Office, ask someone who is familiar to help guide you through or pray with someone.

The format is different from the Office of Readings yet follows the tradition of the Church. First the hymn, then a morning psalm and antiphon, followed by a canticle from the Old Testament, an antiphon and another praise psalm. A Reading follows then a response to the reading.

The rich Liturgical Seasons and celebrations of the life of Our Lady and the Saints provide additional inspiration for meditation and prayer for all parts of Morning Prayer.

One of the beautiful traditions in the Roman Church is the praying of the Gospel Canticle of Zechariah and its antiphon as an “expression of praise and thanksgiving for our redemption.” #50 Chapter II General

Instruction

One can picture the joy Zechariah and Elizabeth shared with their family and friends after the months of the silent pondering of the wonders of the Word Made Flesh in the womb of Mary helping in the daily workings of their home.

This is an example to find God among us as we go about our daily responsibilities whether we live alone, with family or friends.

After the canticle, the presentation of petitions or intercessions for the “consecration of the day and its work to God” #51 Chapter II General Instruction followed by the Lord’s Prayer, and a closing prayer.

One of the riches of the Morning Prayer is the celebration of a Solemnity or Liturgical Season calls for the praying of Morning Prayer from Sunday Week I. The words just reach into the heart!

"O God, you are my God, for you I long; for you my soul is thirsting, my body pines for you like a dry weary land without water. So I gaze on you in the sanctuary to see your strength and your glory"

Where is the strength and glory of the Lord found? In the hiddenness of Our Lord in His Eucharistic Presence in the Tabernacle. An example of what the words of the Homily for the Rite calls us to, "let your life be hidden with Christ in God." Hidden in the simple things we do for His glory. That is how we begin our day....

"For your love is better than life, my lips will speak your praise." These words of the psalmist are engraved on the heart of the consecrated virgin.

"So I will bless you all my life, in your name I will lift up my hands, my soul shall be filled as with a banquet my mouth shall praise you with joy..." our focus for the day, our work, our interaction with others. Psalm 63:2-9 continues leading into the Canticle from the Book of the Prophet Daniel 3:57-58, 56 and the New Testament quotation from the Book of Revelation 19:5, *All you servants of the*

Lord, sing praise to him, leading into the final Psalm 149, The joy of God's holy people. Let the sons of the Church, the children of the new people, rejoice in Christ, their King (Hesychius).

Once you begin to pray the Liturgy of the Hours this Morning Prayer, Sunday Week I invitation will indeed make your heart sing!

The COMMONS also offer additional rich selections of psalms, antiphons, canticles and readings for celebrations of the Dedication of a Church, Our Blessed Mother, Apostles, Martyr(s), Pastors, Doctors of the Church, Virgins, Holy Men, Holy Women, Religious, those who work with the Underprivileged, Teachers, and last but not least the Office for the Dead.

Each of these have hours of food for thought.

Or just take a little bit for your "Pondering".

*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.*

