

The Mission of the Seminar is to Provide an Awareness to the Liturgy of the Hours and its Link to the Universal Church

Seminar Developed by Dr. Noberto Cruz, Jr., EdD with the Course Material
Used with Permission From the Christ in the Desert Monastery.

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Chapter 1 The Mission of this Seminar

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7w-leNR9ko> (Orchestra)
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cgeum_lZ0XI (Movie Scene)
- What are the objectives of this seminar?
 - **To start a Mission at St Joseph's for the laity to embrace the Liturgy of the Hours**
 - **To Understand the history of the Divine Office (The Liturgy of the Hours.)**
 - **To Understand that one of the main purposes of the Liturgy of the Hours is to unite us to the whole Catholic Church.**
 - **To Understand that the prayers in the Liturgy of the Hours are part of the precepts of the Catholic Church**
 - **To Understand that rendering praise to God, has the function of leading Christians to a gradual and deeper participation in the saving mystery of Christ by means of prayer and dialogue with the Blessed Trinity.**

Chapter 1 The Mission of this Seminar (Continued)

- The subsequent material is basically the reasons why the Liturgy of the Hours is so vital to our Catholic faith.
- **The Opus Dei is part of the larger Liturgy of the Catholic Church, which of course includes the Eucharist and the other sacraments of the Church as well as the sacramentals (the Way of the Cross, the Rosary, etc.), all of them are celebrated in what is called the Catholic Church's "Liturgical Year."**
- The Liturgy of the Hours has a special role as the official prayer of the Church,
- The Divine Office, in addition to rendering praise to God, has the function of leading Christians to a gradual and deeper participation in the saving mystery of Christ by means of prayer and dialogue with the Blessed Trinity.

Chapter 1 The Mission of this Seminar (Continued)

- **As a clearly Christian expression of prayer, the Opus Dei, though drawing from the Hebrew Scriptures, is centered on the Risen Christ.**
- **As a prayer that considers the entire day, week and year, with the intention of sanctifying all time, the Opus Dei is an expression of each one gathered to pray,** but also of the entire Church at prayer, yearning be saved in Christ. The importance of the Liturgy of the Hours in the life of the Church is found in the fact that “public and common prayer by the people of God is rightly considered to be among the primary duties of the Church”
- **Clearly the Liturgy of the Hours is in its essence prayer. Endorsed and designed by the Church and refined by Monastics, the Divine Office asks for the conscious participation of each one taking part in it.** We might even say that our praying the Divine Office is part of the very “breathing” of the Church. In our prayer offered up before the throne of the Divine Majesty, and in the fullness of grace poured out upon God’s faithful, we experience the “breathing of the Mystical Body of Christ.”

Chapter 1 The Mission of this Seminar (Continued)

- **The praying of the Liturgy of the Hours is an activity of the Church united through Christ to the Father in the Holy Spirit. It is an act of glorifying God and sanctifying man at the same time.** The moments of praying the Opus Dei in common or in solitude unite us to the saving events of Christ's passion, death and resurrection. These events happened millennia ago but are ever new and alive in the life of believers.
- **“O Lord, open my lips and my mouth shall proclaim your praise” (Ps 50:17), we begin each new day of praying the Divine Office. These words express so well our daily desire to return to the Lord, from whom we’ve strayed in our thoughts, words and deeds.** With that versicle of Psalm 50 we call to mind that it is God who awakes and who satisfies our desires. It is God who must open our lips to speak with him and to sing his praises. Prayer is a gift from God. We need to be worthy of such a gift and use it with responsibility. Of course we are never fully worthy or responsible, but only by God's help do we even come near to being so!

Chapter 1 The Mission of this Seminar (Continued)

- Video: Divine Office with Abbott Fr. Driscoll
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5doP7gchgo&t=2s>
- OH LORD OPEN MY LIPS AND MY MOUTH SHALL PROCLAIM
YOUR PRAISE.

Chapter 2 Topics to the Liturgy of the Hours

- **Topics to be Covered**
 - **The Roots of the Liturgy of the Hours**
 - **Early Monastic Office**
 - **Divine Office Today**
 - **Approach to the Psalms**

Chapter 2 Topics to the Liturgy of the Hours(Continued)

- **Understanding the Structure of the Liturgy of the Hours**
 - **The Eight Daily Prayer Periods**
 - **Vigils, the Night Office**
 - **Lauds, the Morning Office**
 - **The Office of Prime**
 - **The Offices of Terce, Sext, and None: the Remaining Little Hours**
 - **Vespers**
 - **Compline**

Chapter 2 Topics to the Liturgy of the Hours Continued)

- **Symbolism of the Various Hours of the Divine Office**
- **The Hymns of the Divine Office**
- **The Spirit of the Monastic Office**
- **Begin with Morning Prayer**
- **Resources: Books, Apps, and Websites to Aid in Prayer**
- **Relation Between the Liturgy of the Hours and the Holy Eucharist**
- **Harmony of Mind and Voice**
- **The Opus Dei As Liturgy**

Chapter 2 Topics to the Liturgy of the Hours(Continued)

- **Format of the Seminar**

- The Primary Method for sharing the information on the Liturgy of the Hours and the Monastic Influence will be in a lecture format.
- There will be opportunity for Questions and Answers.
- Additionally, there will be videos shown to reinforce the importance of the Liturgy of the Hours.

Chapter 3 Early Monastic Office



Chapter 3 Early Monastic Office (Continued)

- **We know that monastic communities were established in various places by the fourth century, particularly in Egypt, Palestine, and Syria. With the existence of these communities' regular times of common prayer came into being, especially in the morning and evening.**

Chapter 3 Early Monastic Office (Continued)

- **We now call these times Lauds and Vespers. Since the monastic life was structured around the call to “pray without ceasing,” early on the “little hours” or “minor hours” also came into being.**
- **But perhaps the most characteristic monastic Office was and is Vigils, the pre-dawn assembly, longer than other Offices and perhaps richest in content. It was kept not only on great feasts but every day, and**
- **Then the monks did something most ordinary Christians would not be inclined to do: rise well before dawn and gather in church for prayer. The time was to be spent in prayerful watching, in vocal and silent prayer and psalmody, as well as the proclamation of and listening to God’s inspired Word and commentary by Fathers of the Church.**

Chapter 3 Early Monastic Office (Continued)

- **The celebration of the Office in the early monastic communities included solo cantors who read or chanted while the rest of the assembly listened and then responded with simple refrains.**
- **We might ask why that was so. Perhaps it was due to the simple reality of a lack of books and inadequate lighting in the prayer place. This form of praying the hours might seem to us today to have been a more passive, if not boring, kind of celebration than what we associate with the Office today, with everyone able to join in for most of the office.**

Chapter 3 Early Monastic Office (Continued)

- Approaching the Office in a contemplative spirit, the monks of old might have felt it was completely fitting that most of them listen rather than actively contribute with vocal participation.
- In those days there was no preoccupation with “active participation,” a hallmark of post-Vatican II worship, but emphasis was more on truly listening to God’s Word in silence, pondering it in the heart, and making simple response by a few words only. This is still a valid approach to celebrating the Office.

Chapter 3 Early Monastic Office (Continued)

- **Admittedly, those in ancient times or today who are not actually doing the soloist chanting or reading could tend to fall asleep instead of actually contemplatively listening and praying in the dark. Most likely no one would ever know. But hopefully the majority are listening and praying with the soloist cantors.**

Chapter 3 Early Monastic Office (Continued)

- **In any case, the early monastic Office, however it was carried out, had a definite form. In other words, the monks knew what to expect when they went to pray in common.**
- **One of the norms or expectations of the long Office of Vigils, for example, was the praying of twelve psalms.**
- **The story is told that Saint Pachomius (+345 A.D.)—often called the “Father of Cenobitic Monasticism”—received the vision of an angel who warned Pachomius not to go beyond twelve psalms at Vigils. Later on Saint Benedict held to this norm, though in fact some of the longer psalms he divided, thus making two psalms out of what is technically just one psalm.**

Chapter 3 Early Monastic Office (Continued)

- **The recitation or chanting of the entire Book of Psalms, often called the “Psalter,” within a week was also an early monastic custom. Many monks before Saint Benedict settled on the weekly praying of the Psalter, as is clear in Benedict’s outline, though several of the psalms were to be repeated daily (namely, Psalms 3 and 94 at Vigils, Psalms 66 and 50 at Lauds, and Psalms 4, 90, and 133 at Compline).**

Chapter 3 Early Monastic Office (Continued)

- **We have to acknowledge that there is no set number of psalms or prayer times that is automatically pleasing to God. What is essential, though, is that the Office be carried out reverently and regularly. Heartfelt prayer is the goal, so that God may be worshiped, and the participants be led to the Maker of all. As such, each Office should be characterized by reverence and care. We believe the all-Holy God is present always and everywhere, but especially so when we gather in his name. “Where two or three in My name are gathered together,” our Lord Himself said, “there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20).**

Chapter 3 Early Monastic Office (Continued)

- **Saint Benedict devised a fairly strict pattern of psalm distribution, which was already a tradition before him, and a break from another tradition, which favored what has been called a “running Psalter,” that is, simply praying the Psalms in their numerical order, one after another. Benedict’s tradition was to assign specific psalms to specific hours of the day or night. Both traditions were used in early monastic Offices, but the Benedictine one became more widely accepted as time went on, and that is still so today. Other Christian Churches, such as present-day Coptic Christians of Egypt, continue to favor the tradition of the running Psalter. In either case, once again, the strict interpretation of using the Psalter was to complete all 150 psalms in a week.**

Chapter 3 Early Monastic Office (Continued)

- **The history of monasticism saw other practices, many of them going to the extremes, such as praying the psalter in a day or the Laus perennis, that is, choirs chanting the Office non-stop, as in the Middle Ages, but generally the virtue of discretio won the day. Until Vatican II the entire Psalter was usually prayed by monks in the course of a week. Today there is a variety from a one week to a four-week distribution of the Psalter, all of them approved by Rome for use by laity and religious.**

Chapter 3 Early Monastic Office (Continued)

- **Today: Every community that prays the Divine Office, however large or small that community might be, should be aware of being a praying Church which represents the Universal Church.**
- **For those in more contemplative and monastic communities the Opus Dei is a special charism, that is, gift of the Holy Spirit. It could be said that the Holy Spirit bestows the gift or charism of prayer, or a ministry of prayer, to the individual members and to the contemplative community as a whole.**
- **The monastic community is one that has received the call to “pray without ceasing.” This does not mean a perpetual presence in church, but rather a call to “pray always,” in whatever occupation is being undertaken. The prayer is for the Church and the good of all, outwardly directed, for “the growth of the Body of Christ” as Saint Paul calls it in Ephesians 4:15.**
- **This does not discount the charism of perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament to which some contemplative communities are devoted. Many parishes today also maintain this venerable custom.**

Chapter 3 Early Monastic Office (Continued)

- **Christ is present in our liturgical prayer uniting himself with the praying community in a relationship of Master and disciple, Head and member, Bridegroom and bride, Creator and creature. The members of the praying community–the monastic choir–are in communion with their Head, Christ, and participate in Christ’s saving work. The ritual celebrations of the Divine Office are a strong means of entering into a dialogue of praise and contemplation of the God who saves us.**
- **The Opus Dei thus becomes a powerful part of every day and thus should not be neglected for other matters, however urgent they might be. So many monastic communities today have dropped Vigils, for example, because of the demands of the apostolate or other works, or even because the priority of getting more rest is preferred to the Work of God. Those who have the leisure to spend more time with God, so to speak, should diligently carry out the full round of Offices in the monastic tradition.**

Chapter 3 Early Monastic Office (Continued)

- **Approach to the Psalms**
- **The 150 Psalms of the Old Testament are the principal element of the entire Opus Dei, however short or long it may be. Other Scripture texts are used at the Offices as well, such as canticles, verses and responses, as well as in the readings or lessons themselves, which are longer at Vigils and shorter at the other hours. The main bulk of the office, however, remains the psalms. How should we approach them? The most common monastic approach is to use the psalms as our prayers directed to Christ, though the notion of Christ praying them to his heavenly Father may also be used.**

Chapter 4 The Eight Daily Prayer Periods (Now 7)

- In a letter from the year 384, Saint Jerome wrote the following:
- “The Apostle indeed admonishes us to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17), and with the Saints their very sleep should be a prayer. Nevertheless, we must set aside stated hours for the duty of praying.
- Then, should any occupation keep us away from it, the hour itself will remind us of that duty. As such prayer times everyone knows of the third, sixth and ninth hours, the morning and the evening hours.
- Nor should you ever take nourishment without beginning to do so with a prayer. Likewise, you should not leave the table without discharging your duty of thanks to the Creator.

Chapter 4 The Eight Daily Prayer Periods (Now 7) (Continued)

- **In the night, too, one should rise from his couch two or three times and therewith recall what he has learned by heart from the Scriptures [during the daytime].**
- **On leaving his abode he should arm himself with prayer.**
- **Also, he should say a prayer upon his return before he seats himself again.**
- **After that only is the life entitled to its nourishment and the body to its rest.**
- **Before every action, at the beginning of every undertaking, let the hand make the sign of the cross” (Letter XXII, 37).**

Chapter 4 The Eight Daily Prayer Periods (Now 7) (Continued)

- **In the Rule of Saint Benedict, written in the early 6th century, we hear of eight prayer periods: 1. Matins/Vigils 2. Lauds 3. Prime, 4. Terce 5. Sext 6. None 7. Vespers, and 8. Compline. Since the time of Saint Benedict's Rule, there generally has been understood to be eight canonical hours in the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. We presume, though, that Saint Benedict took over the number from an existing tradition familiar to him. Perhaps centers of Church life and monasticism already existing in Rome, Milan, Naples, and Lerins in Gaul (modern-day France) influenced him in taking on the same number of prayer periods.**

Chapter 4 The Eight Daily Prayer Periods (Now 7) (Continued)

- In Saint Benedict's plan of distributing the 150 Psalms over a one-week period, the eight canonical hours afforded the basic structure on which to assign the Psalms. Besides the Psalms, of course, the Liturgy of the Hours in Saint Benedict's time included readings from other Scripture texts and commentaries as well as hymns, antiphons, and verses that were not necessarily direct Scripture quotations. These elements still comprise the Liturgy of the Hours of the Church in our own time.
- Sometimes at Christ in the Desert we are asked why we don't use the four-volume set of the Liturgy of the Hours published for use by Catholics and used by many religious as well. We explain that the four-volume set is actually an "abbreviation" of the complete monastic office that traditionally distributes the 150 psalms over one week with repetitions of some psalms each and every day (i.e., Psalms 3, 94, 66, 50, 148-150, 4, 90, and 133).

Chapter 4 The Eight Daily Prayer Periods (Now 7) (Continued)

- The published Roman version distributes the Psalms over a four-week cycle and leaves out sections of some psalms. Consequently the offices during the course of the day are sometimes significantly shorter. As autonomous Religious Orders in the Church (Benedictines are actually a Confederation of Congregations), we are allowed to do the fuller Office and hopefully one day we can have a better printed and bound version once the revisions are complete. It took the Church many centuries to finalize the Antiphonale Monasticum in use by most Benedictines for the Divine Office until Vatican II, so it is presumed it will still be some years until we can print a complete set of books for use at the Monastery or by friends using a one-week schema or distribution of the Psalter basically as found in the Rule of Saint Benedict.

Chapter 4 The Eight Daily Prayer Periods (Now 7) (Continued)

- Vigils, the Night Office
- First, the Night Office, sometimes called Matins or Vigils. At Christ in the Desert we always call it Vigils. The term “matutini,” from which the word Matins is derived, really means morning, so is more technically applied to the Office as the sun is rising, though the term Lauds is mostly commonly used for the Office at daybreak. Perhaps the term “Matins” is better left unused because of potential confusion. In any case the Office at night, before dawn, is a very ancient monastic prayer time, probably going back to Apostolic times, with the goal of breaking up the night and sanctifying those hours, at least in private, and eventually in common, especially in monastic communities.

Chapter 4 The Eight Daily Prayer Periods (Now 7) (Continued)

- **Note: The Church today has combined the Traditional Hours of The Divine Office into 7 Hours Below**
- **1. MATINS & VIGILS**, usually BETWEEN **12:00 AM to 5:00 AM** (Night)
- **2. MORNING PRAYERS (PRIME)** This is when “Lauds” were recited. **6:00 AM**
- **3. MID MORNING PRAYERS (TERCE) 9:00 AM**
- **4. MIDDAY PRAYERS (SEXT) 12 NOON**
- **5. AFTERNOON PRAYERS (NONE) 3:00 pm**
- **6. EVENING PRAYERS (VESPERS) 6:00 PM**
- **7. COMPLINE 8:00 PM**

Chapter 4 The Eight Daily Prayer Periods (Now 7) (Continued)

- **The content of the night vigil for monks has always consisted mostly of psalms, some lessons from Scripture or the patristic tradition and Collects, but the whole idea of an Office of Readings is a bit foreign to the ancient monastic ritual, which traditionally places more emphasis on the psalmody, usually 12 in number, as well a set or Nocturn of Old Testament canticles of a psalm-like structure, on Sundays and Solemnities. That is not to diminish the importance of the other Scripture readings or the patristic commentaries assigned to the Office, nor the amount of time they would take up in the Vigil, but still the prominent place in the service should be given to the psalms and canticles in a monastic office that follows a more classic structure.**

Chapter 4 The Eight Daily Prayer Periods (Now 7) (Continued)

- The idea of praying at night either in private or in public pre-dates monasticism in the Church, but the early monks took up the custom with fervor. **The Night Vigil came to be considered a very characteristic monastic practice, not to be neglected, or placed at some other hour of the day.** The only exception, as previously noted, and still the custom on Mount Athos in Greece, for example, the stronghold of Greek Orthodox monasticism, is to begin great feasts with a Night Vigil starting at sundown the evening before and extending it all through the night until the next morning's break of day, usually celebrating the Eucharist at the end of the all-night Vigil, as it is called. On Mount Athos the monks ordinarily begin this vigil around 8:00 P.M, and conclude around 7 or 8 A.M the next morning.

Chapter 4 The Eight Daily Prayer Periods (Now 7) (Continued)

- **The Office of Prime** is the “**First Hour,**” roughly at 6:00 A.M. OR 7:00 AM (Recall that in the Roman system counting began at sunrise, approximately 6:00 A.M.). **John Cassian mentions that this first hour was instituted to prevent the monks of Bethlehem from returning to bed between the end of Lauds and the hour of Terce.** Prime is historically the most recent of the Little Hours, since Terce, Sext and None all seem to be of an earlier origin. We know that Prime was being prayed in the West at Lerins (modern France) by the end of the fifth century. The first mention of it is in a document by Saint Caesarius of Arles (+543 A. D.) in his *Rule for Nuns*, chapter 64. It seems to have taken a while for the Office of Prime to receive general acceptance in the West. By the time of Saint Benedict in the early 500s it does seem to have been an accepted office.

Chapter 4 The Eight Daily Prayer Periods (Now 7) (Continued)

- **Terce, Sext, and None (the Remaining Little Hours) correspond to the third, sixth and ninth hours of the day, and thus follow Lauds which begins at sunrise, approximately 6:00 am.** Terce is Latin for third, Sext means sixth, and None means ninth. In the primitive Church there is evidence that the apostles and early Christians prayed at these times, either in private or in common.

Chapter 4 The Eight Daily Prayer Periods (Now 7) (Continued)

- **Vespers, whose name literally means shadows, is the traditional evening prayer of the Catholic Church.** Its celebration was and is to take place when evening comes and lamps are lit, though Saint Benedict implies it should be done before any lamps are needed. **The origins of this Office pre-date monasticism itself and are linked to the evening sacrifice of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem at sunset.** Like the prayer in common at sunrise, a protracted evening prayer was likely part of the liturgical life of the earliest monastic communities.

Chapter 4 The Eight Daily Prayer Periods (Now 7) (Continued)

- **Compline**

- The closing Office of the day, held after sunset, when night begins, seems to be of monastic origin, though eventually it became part of the Roman Office as well. Compline is mentioned by Saint Basil the Great, who died in 379 A.D., and also by Saint John Chrysostom, who died in 407 A.D.. Traditionally the same three psalms were prayed each night: 4, 90 and 133. Hence, the psalms could be prayed by heart, often in the dark. These three psalms contain clear references to the night, going to rest, dwelling in the shelter of the Most High, protection of the angels, etc., and so are perfect for the end of the day.

Seminar Break

- Let's take a break for 10 minutes.
- The next seminar presenter is Reverend Deacon Kevin Boudreaux
- He will focus on the [Spirit of the Monastic Office](#), Mechanics, Tools and Resources for Liturgy of the Hours

Chapter 5 The Spirit of the Monastic Office

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCOPwlufhaQ>
- Mepkin Abbey

Chapter 5 The Spirit of the Monastic Office – (Continued)



Chapter 5 The Spirit of the Monastic Office – (Continued)

- The vocation of the monk is to be a living prayer, a perpetual “pray-er,” whose praise of God goes on inside and outside the church, and whose day is marked by continually returning to church or cell to pray to God. This breaking up of the day by returning at fixed hours to church and the choral office is meant to promote a continual communion with the living God. Sometimes this approach to prayer drives the newcomers to distraction, asking us, “Why are you wasting so much time going to and coming from choir?” Of course they are missing the point, and eventually they either get the picture of the process or move on to another way of life!

Chapter 5 The Spirit of the Monastic Office – (Continued)

- The monastic liturgy, comprised of both the Opus Dei and the Holy Eucharist, is fundamentally a contemplative praise of God, where monks recount in word and song the great and saving deeds of God for the human race in Jesus Christ. By this daily and repeated calling to mind, monks are striving to “glorify God in all things,” as Saint Benedict puts it in his Holy Rule. This glorification of God is possible only because we are sanctified, that is “made holy,” by God’s grace. We are able to glorify God because he has first reached us in our depths and called us by name.

Chapter 5 The Spirit of the Monastic Office – (Continued)

- The Opus Dei is supposed to be the “source of spirituality and nourishment for personal prayer,” according to Vatican II’s Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (90). When praying the Divine Office is linked to genuine personal prayer, then there is a clear relationship between the Opus Dei and the rest of one’s life of prayer, which is what our life is supposed to be all about. The entire life of a consecrated man or woman, every hour of every day, is capable of being a liturgy, by which is offered to God a sacrifice of love. The Opus Dei becomes an important part of this offering, especially since it occupies a sizeable part of our waking hours.

Chapter 5 The Spirit of the Monastic Office – (Continued)

- The Liturgy of the Hours is meant to be a daily encouragement for our Christian and monastic life. We may not always feel up to it or enthused about being present in choir—that should never surprise or alarm us—but gradually and deep down we should desire to persevere in our life of prayer, though not surprised at our weakness or laziness, and willing to strive for active participation in the *Opus Dei*, hence not seeking excuses to absent oneself from the common (or when necessary solitary) praying of the offices.
- God’s plan of salvation for us as individuals and community, as Church at large, is revealed to us in the concrete circumstances of our life in Christ, which includes daily participation in the common or private praying of the *Opus Dei* and the community Holy Mass. We consecrate ourselves to this work by the vows we make. At prayer in common or in private we are invited to experience the real and active presence of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, bestowing grace on us who are God’s creatures, loved into being. We are invited as well to “taste and see the goodness of the Lord,” as the psalmist puts it.

Chapter 5 The Spirit of the Monastic Office – (Continued)

- The Liturgy of the Hours is meant to be a contemplative prayer. Carried out in the beauty of the oratory, surrounded by sacred images, candles, incense and bells, accompanied by sacred music, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, we are transported from the earthly realm to a spiritual one, which as our Eastern Christian brethren call it “heaven on earth.” This is especially so of the Holy Eucharist, but also of the Opus Dei. We are called to open our eyes to God’s presence in the liturgy we celebrate, to contemplate and rejoice that our God is so near. The liturgy is meant to open our hearts gradually and fully to all that God has in store “for those who love him.”

Chapter 6 Start with One or Two Prayer Times

- **Begin with Morning Prayer (Lauds) or Evening Prayer (Vespers).** These are pivotal Hours and a manageable starting point.
- Familiarize Yourself with the Structure: Each Hour follows a set Pattern
 - opening prayer,
 - hymn,
 - psalms/canticles,
 - scripture
 - reading,
 - responsory,
 - Gospel canticle,
 - intercessions,
 - Our Father,
 - concluding prayers,
 - and a blessing.

Chapter 6 Start with One or Two Prayer Times (Continued)

- Getting to know this structure will make the prayer flow more naturally.
- Set Your Ribbons or Bookmarks: If using a book, use the ribbons to mark the sections, you'll be praying each day.
- In an app, explore how to navigate to the correct prayers for the day.
- Pray at a Consistent Time:
 - Try to pray at the same time each day to establish a rhythm. It's more about the regular encounter with God than the exact timing.

Chapter 6 Start with One or Two Prayer Times (Continued)

- Tips for Integrating the Liturgy of the Hours into Daily Life
 - Integrate Prayer into Your Daily Routine: Attach the Liturgy of the Hours to other daily habits, such as morning coffee for Morning Prayer or winding down in the evening with Night Prayer.
 - Set alarms or notifications on your phone to remind you of prayer times until they become a habitual part of your day.

Chapter 6 Start with One or Two Prayer Times (Continued)

- Pray with Others:
 - Whenever possible, pray with family members, friends, or a community. This can enhance the experience and provide mutual encouragement.
- Be Patient with Yourself:
 - Learning the Liturgy of the Hours takes time. Don't get discouraged by initial complexity or missed prayers.
 - It's a journey of growth.
 - Embrace Flexibility: While consistency is ideal, life happens. If you miss an Hour, you can always return to prayer at the next scheduled time without guilt.

Chapter 7 Relation Between the Liturgy of the Hours and the Holy Eucharist

- Theoretically for the entire Church, but certainly for religious who pray the Divine Office in public or in private, there is an intimate link between the Divine Office and the Holy Eucharist. I say theoretically for the entire Church, for you know as well as I that perhaps for the majority of the Catholic faithful the Liturgy of the Hours has little or no place in their piety and prayer life. This is a lamentable reality but is certainly different for us who consecrate a good part of every day to chanting the Divine Office in chapel or cell. The Liturgy of the Hours forms a part of Catholic liturgy as a whole. At the heart and center of the Church's liturgy, of course, is the Eucharistic liturgy, the Mass.

Chapter 7 Relation Between the Liturgy of the Hours and the Holy Eucharist - Continued

An important element of Catholic liturgy is the Divine Office, which is ever-reflecting the liturgical season being celebrated in the Mass: the cycle of Advent, Christmas, Ordinary Time, Lent, Easter, etc., as well as the day of the week, the memorials, feasts and solemnities of our Lord, the Blessed Mother and the angels and saints all of which are experienced in the Divine Office as well as the Mass. The two—the Divine Office and the Eucharist—are meant to exist in harmony, thus mutually enriching the spiritual life of those who participate in both, such as us monks.

There are elements or characteristics in both the Mass and Divine Office that are common to both. There are also elements proper to either the Mass or the Liturgy of the Hours, distinguishing one from the other. Let us consider various elements now.

Chapter 7 Relation Between the Liturgy of the Hours and the Holy Eucharist - Continued

- Praise is a fundamental duty of a Christian toward God. As Saint Ignatius of Loyola put it: “Man was created to praise, venerate and serve the Lord his God, and in this way to save his soul.” We might ask, though, what is praise? Like most realities and attitudes—life, death, love, and the like—praise is difficult to define precisely. But we can say it is essentially the unlimited appreciation of God, expressed in words, song, silence and gestures. Praise acknowledges that there is Another above and beyond us, to whom we owe our very existence. Praise is our total admiration and love for the Creator of heaven and earth. Our basic attitude in both the Liturgy of the Eucharist (Mass) or the Divine Office is the praise of God. I think we all know what that means, though it is difficult to define it. In any case, the vocal praise, so characteristic of Catholic worship, is a visible sign of praising God, day and night, year in and year out.

Chapter 7 Relation Between the Liturgy of the Hours and the Holy Eucharist - Continued

Thanksgiving is another important element in Catholic liturgy. While praise considers God in himself, thanksgiving considers God in relation to us. We thank our God for all that he has done for us, for all that we are, all that we have. This means much more than material things, of course, and is primarily concerned with the spiritual life we have in God. God pours out life and grace upon us, even without our asking for it. Thanksgiving is a response to the infinite love of God. Thanksgiving is our acknowledgement of an infinite debt that we owe to God yet can never completely repay. “How can I repay the Lord for his goodness to me?” the psalmist so eloquently asks in Psalm 115.

Thanksgiving is a vital part of Christian worship and always will be.

Of course, the word Eucharist essentially means “thanksgiving.” The Mass is the supreme sacrifice of thanksgiving, unceasingly expressed in words, silence and gestures. At the Eucharist we receive the Body and Blood of the Lord, who poured himself out for us and in turn calls us to give our lives for him and one another.

Chapter 7 Relation Between the Liturgy of the Hours and the Holy Eucharist - Continued

Church, is also a prayer of praise and thanksgiving. Since it consists primarily of the Book of Psalms, which is in essence a collection of poetic hymns of thanksgiving and praise, the office is another act of rendering the Divine Majesty our never-ending obligation of praise and thanksgiving. Harmony clearly exists in these elements of the Eucharist and the Divine Office. The Liturgy of the Hours is both a genuine preparation for Mass and a fitting continuation of the Mass.

The same zeal we show for the Mass should also be expressed for the Liturgy of the Hours. Both are times of encounter with Christ in our midst. “Where two or three in my name are gathered together, there am I in the midst of them,” as the Lord himself has promised.

Chapter 7 Relation Between the Liturgy of the Hours and the Holy Eucharist - Continued

Saint Benedict in his *Rule* speaks of *Mens concordet voci*, “let the mind or spirit be in harmony with the voice.” Presumably Saint Benedict got this notion from earlier patristic sources, such as Saint Cyprian of Carthage (+258 A. D.) who wrote: “God does not hearken to the voice, but to the heart” (De or.dom. 4). And Saint Augustine (+430 A. D.) who said: “What the voice pronounces should linger on in the heart” (Praec 2,3). In modern times someone put: “If the heart doesn’t pray, the tongue only plays.”

The point seems to be seeking a positive interior disposition in our prayer, fighting against mere “piety of the lips,” or “lip service,” which allows God as far as the threshold of the mouth—since it is God’s word we pronounce—but not into the dwelling of the heart. In the work of prayer the most important dimension is really the interior, since anyone, even a parrot, can recite the words, but only a human can express with love the words being spoken.

Now who among us can say that every time we gather for prayer in common or in solitude that we truly “cry with joy,” as Psalm 94 has it, or that we are going to “dance for the Lord” as another psalm puts it? Perhaps we are feeling half asleep, totally distracted, or in a disagreeable mood. What then? Should we simply not pray until we are fully awake, focused on what we’re doing or in a good mood? We know that would be impossible in our way of life, with its specific demands of time and place. What parent would only tend its child when that parent was feeling up to it or truly loving and self-giving? So for us, with the task of “raising our prayer to God,” like a parent raising a child, we go about doing the work in season and out, both when we feel up to it and when we really don’t feel like it.

Chapter 7 Relation Between the Liturgy of the Hours and the Holy Eucharist - Continued

Maybe more accurately we would say on some or many days: “I am exhausted with my groaning; every night I drench my pillow with tears; I bedew my bed with weeping. My eye wastes away with grief” (Psalm 6:7-8). We have to admit it is probably very hard or impossible even to achieve perfect harmony between the mind and the voice. Part of the challenge is that the sentiments we find in the Psalms are so extreme and follow one another so rapidly, even within the same psalm. The danger is to lose interest in the sacred texts, think of it all as a mere formality and withdraw our full participation and interest. We must fight this tendency, of course, and continue to strive to pray the psalms with heart and mind lifted up to God.

We all struggle each day to bring our attention, feeble as we may feel it to be, to the Divine Office. We believe that we will find nourishment there, even if we are never fully ready for God’s action within us. Indeed, we are slowly formed and informed by a willing participation in the Office each and every day. The Liturgy of the Hours becomes an education, literally a “calling forth,” of our energy, sentiments, and love, in the service of God and neighbor.

Chapter 7 Relation Between the Liturgy of the Hours and the Holy Eucharist - Continued

We must come to every liturgical celebration with a living faith. I am part of the mystery of the whole Church, overflowing with praise and thanksgiving to God. Though a less than perfect member, sinful and broken, I am called to holiness in the mystery of the Church redeemed in the Blood of Christ. And the same Christ, who promised to send the Holy Spirit to assist us in our weakness, is with us when we pray.

- Whatever is being proclaimed in the psalm, I am praying also: be it lamentation or rejoicing, for example. These are not necessarily the deepest sentiments of my individual self at this particular moment, but are sentiments of the praying Church under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The people of God, all baptized Christians, long to see God's face, and are yearning for the courts of our God (Psalm 83:3).

Chapter 7 Relation Between the Liturgy of the Hours and the Holy Eucharist - Continued

As a “work of the Church”, the Liturgy of the Hours should be considered as inspired and unified by the Holy Spirit, who prays in us. The example and command of our Lord and the apostles to “pray always” is expressed concretely in the gathered assembly that prays the Divine Office. It should not be considered a mere legal formality, or a “burden that must be fulfilled” to “be a good religious.” Rather, the Office is a fount from which we get daily nourishment and refreshment for our spiritual journey, from the God who calls us.

Thus the Liturgy of the Hours is not an optional activity for religious, but a vital occupation. It is indeed an obligation that we undertake willingly, trusting that God will manifest himself to us through the Church and in Christ Jesus, who first called us to this way of life. We believe our Lord will not abandon us even if we are unfaithful or frail, so we go forward and pray the Liturgy of the Hours each and every day, in good times and bad, rain or shine.

Chapter 7 Relation Between the Liturgy of the Hours and the Holy Eucharist - Continued

- As praying communities who publicly carry out the praying of the Office, we represent the entire Church at prayer, building up the whole mystical Body of Christ by offering a sacrifice of praise to our God. The Liturgy of the Hours should build up our personal prayer as well, helping to renew within us an awareness of God throughout the day, ever present, yet easily overlooked in our lives, even in the cloister, where we are “concerned with many things,” like Martha of Bethany (Luke 10:41), to keep the life going and financially solvent. At the Office we turn to God, look to Christ, place our hope in him, really the whole of our life in him.

Chapter 7 Relation Between the Liturgy of the Hours and the Holy Eucharist - Continued

The Opus Dei As Liturgy

As already mentioned, at the time of our Lord, prayer was often attached to determined hours and places in daily life. In the New Testament, then, we find not only the precept “to pray,” but also a doctrine about the way to pray and a theology of prayer, especially when we consider the example and teaching of Jesus and his apostles, as well as the numerous fragments of Christological hymns that found their way into the writings of Saint Paul and other New Testament texts, as for example the famous, “Christ Jesus humbled himself, even to accepting death, death upon a cross,” of Philippians 2: 6-11 (see also Colossians 1:15-20, for example).

Pondering the entire New Testament, as we are encouraged to do in our *Lectio Divina* and participation in the Church’s liturgy, we find a theology of prayer. The New Testament witnesses understood and spoke of various elements that contributed to what developed into the Church’s Liturgy of the Hours, the *Opus Dei*. Let us look at six of these elements now.

Chapter 7 Relation Between the Liturgy of the Hours and the Holy Eucharist - Continued

1. First, the prayer of *anamnesis*. We have the English word amnesia, to forget. An-amnesia is to not forget, to recount, to call to mind, to remember something. In the present context, what is recounted or remembered are the saving deeds of Jesus Christ, for the life of the world. “Do this in remembrance of me,” Jesus said (Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:25-26).

This is a clear form of *anamnesis*, a call to respond with praise and thanksgiving for all God’s mighty deeds. This becomes the thrust of all Christian prayer, that is, to have in mind the Gospel message and to repeat the Lord’s deeds over and again, even daily, for our Christian life revolves around the ongoing recounting of all that God has done to save us. This is *anamnesis*.

2. The second prayer element to consider is that of unceasing prayer, to pray without ceasing, which has become a New Testament command, found in various passages, such as:

Luke 18:1, “Jesus told them a parable about the need to pray continually.”

Ephesians 6:18, “In all your prayer and entreaty keep praying in the Spirit on every possible occasion.”

Colossians 4:2, “Be persevering in your prayers and be thankful as you stay awake to pray.”

- 1 Thessalonians 5:17, “Pray constantly.”

Chapter 7 Relation Between the Liturgy of the Hours and the Holy Eucharist - Continued

3. A third element essential to Christian prayer is the prayer of vigilance. This is exemplified for us in Jesus' teaching, "stay awake and pray" (Matthew 26:41), and in the words of our Lord, "pray at all times" (Luke 21:36) and "be persevering in your prayers," from Saint Paul (Colossians 4:2). Luke 6:12 tells us, "Jesus spent the whole night in prayer to God." Our Lord's example of a life devoted to frequent prayer is really the model for all who wish to have a "life of prayer."

4. Prayer at fixed hours is a fourth element of vital Christian prayer. The Hebrew practice of praying at precise hours or times—morning and evening for example—became an important tradition the early followers of Christ and their descendents adhered to. In later cathedral and monastic contexts, the pivotal hours of common prayer were Lauds in the morning and Vespers in the evening, which continue to the present in the Church. Expanding the notion of prayers at fixed hours of the day, the idea of "seven times a day I praise you," as found in Psalm 118:164, was easily incorporated into the Church's Liturgy of the Hours, providing for major hours and minors hours each day.

Chapter 7 Relation Between the Liturgy of the Hours and the Holy Eucharist - Continued

5. Prayer of psalmody is a fifth element or form of Christian prayer. Hebrew common prayer is largely taken from the Book of Psalms, and so too Christian prayer. The four Gospels and the letters of the New Testament are filled with references to the Psalms, so we know this book held pride of place for the early Christians. They interpreted the psalms most often in a Christological sense, as either spoken by Jesus, “My God, my God why have you forsaken me?” (Psalm 21) uttered from the cross, or spoken to Christ, as for example in Psalm 90:12, “God’s angels shall bear you upon their hands, lest you strike your foot against a stone” (see Matthew 4:5).

The Book of Psalms is another heritage from our Hebrew ancestors who knew how to pray and praise the God of Israel. The 150 Psalms have always been the principal texts for the Catholic Church’s Liturgy of the Hours, and as essentially songs of praise, they give to the *Opus Dei* a character of praise as well as of thanksgiving, intercession and adoration.

Chapter 7 Relation Between the Liturgy of the Hours and the Holy Eucharist - Continued

6. God as light, the sixth form of Christian prayer, derives from an image of God and salvation connected to the sun and light. Both pre-Jewish and Jewish antiquity recognized the powerful image of the sun and daylight. Pagans worshiped the sun, whereas Jews and later on Christians, saw the sun and light as good images for describing God and his mighty deeds. In the New Testament literature, especially the Gospel accounts and the letters of John, as well as the Church's post-Apostolic literature, that is the patristic tradition, as well as the Church's liturgy, we find "God is light," and "Christ is light," apt terms for expressing realities about the Holy Trinity, source of all being and life.

These notions have been readily incorporated into the Church's worship at Mass and at the Liturgy of the Hours. Think of the Easter Vigil when the Paschal candle is lit and the chant rings out: "Christ our Light." Or at the canonical hour of Vigils when we begin in the dark waiting for the dawning of the new day, or at Lauds when we praise our God who is "the rising sun" or the "dawn from on high" who "will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death" (Luke 1:78). Clearly we are to see in light a fitting image of the gift of salvation from God.

Chapter 7 Relation Between the Liturgy of the Hours and the Holy Eucharist - Continued

- At Vespers each day we gather as the sun is setting, and raise our voices in praise “like an evening sacrifice,” to the God who has been our light up to that moment. We often use incense at Vespers as well, to symbolize our prayers ascending as the day is coming to a close. Finally, at Compline, prayed as darkness sets in or it is already dark, we pray for God to guide and guard us as we retire for the night: “May your holy angels dwell here and keep us in peace,” we pray at Compline. The little hours of Terce, Sext and None reflect the ever-changing placement of the sun, which we associate with the saving deeds of Christ: his betrayal, his crucifixion, his death on the cross, associated with mid-morning, midday and mid-afternoon.

Chapter 7 Relation Between the Liturgy of the Hours and the Holy Eucharist - Continued

The just-described six approaches, elements or forms of prayer that Christians have incorporated into the *Opus Dei*, all contribute powerfully to the public celebration of our life in Christ. Our Christian existence, our spiritual lives, are built up and sustained by our public worship of God. The Church and each of her members, who comprise the Mystical Body of Christ on earth, are linked to the eternal priestly prayer of Christ her Head. The Church is a true participant in the saving work of Christ.

- If our true identity as baptized people, as Church, is to be the Body of Christ, and if Christ, eternally present in his Church, is an eternal hymn of praise before God's throne in heaven, then our vocation consists in entering into Christ's saving work and living that same life of praise that Christ lives. This is the vocation of the "praying Church," to be united to Christ, the Head of the Body.

Chapter 7 Relation Between the Liturgy of the Hours and the Holy Eucharist - Continued

When considering the *Opus Dei* it is good to remember that the entire day is the basic structure upon which is built the theology and spirituality of the Divine Office. It is not an individual hour but the entire day, which is the basis of the Liturgy of the Hours. Within the structure of the day we recognize the various hours; namely, pre-dawn, dawn, mid-morning, midday, mid-afternoon, sunset, night. Each of these periods or hours is associated with a specific office: Vigils, Lauds, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, Compline. The day is not a simple adding up of the hours, but the hours are a division or part of the larger entity, the day, dedicated to God. And of course this gets extended to days becoming weeks, and weeks becoming the Liturgical Year.

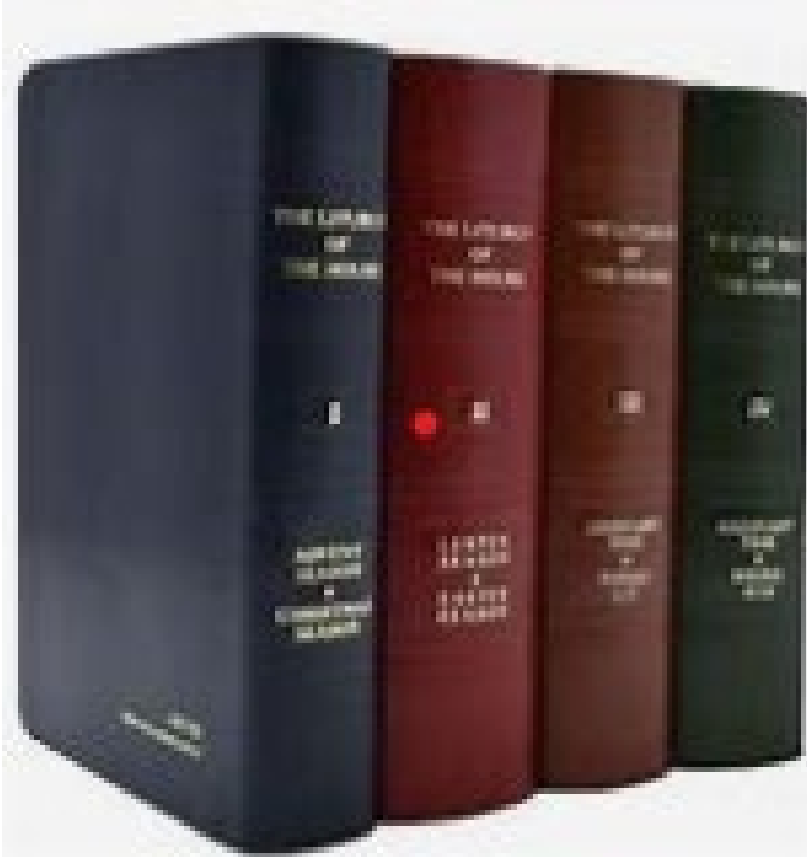
- Day and night, light and darkness compose what might be called a symphony of sanctified time, for it is all given over to God when consecrated in the various liturgical hours of each day. Of course, the Holy Eucharist is the source and summit of our daily praise, and completely complements and fills out, so to speak, the offices we gather to pray each day outside the Eucharist.

Chapter 7 Relation Between the Liturgy of the Hours and the Holy Eucharist - Continued

In the history of the Divine Office, initially the morning and evening praise of God, along with the Holy Eucharist, were the principal means by which the Church celebrated as community her liturgy of remembering (*anamnesis*), expressed in praise and thanksgiving, in unceasing prayer. The morning and evening times probably initially had no mystical significance, but they were the beginning and the end of the day, so naturally were seen as symbolic moments, associated with beginning and end, birth and death, in the lives of Christians, to help add quality to their day. Later, the hours of morning and evening were seen as sacramentals, of the mystery of Christ, or perhaps better put, time was sanctified by gathering at these two pivotal moments—morning and nightfall—in the lives of believers.

The rhythm of day and night, light and darkness is perceived by the Christian as a structure worthy of being sanctified, made holy, since it is given over to God. Time is even “transfigured” by the ritual action of the praying community, in the course of the day, week and liturgical season being celebrated. Hence, it is only fitting to pray Lauds closer to daybreak than at noon, and having Vespers at nightfall rather than at mid-afternoon.

Chapter 8 Resources: Books, Apps, Websites to Aid



“Christian Prayer: The Liturgy of the Hours” and “The Liturgy of the Hours” (four-volume set), both by the by International Commission on English in the Liturgy, are essential for those preferring traditional breviaries. They offer a comprehensive prayer experience but may require some time to learn how to navigate.

Chapter 8 Resources: Books, Apps, Websites to Aid



Divine Office: Another Popular choice for praying the Liturgy of the Hours.

Chapter 8 Resources: Books, Apps, Websites to Aid



iBreviary: A popular choice for praying the Liturgy of the Hours on the go, offering daily prayers in a user-friendly format.

Chapter 8 Resources: Books, Apps, Websites to Aid



Laudate: Includes the Liturgy of the Hours, along with a plethora of other Catholic prayers and readings.

Chapter 8 Resources: Books, Apps, Websites to Aid

- **Websites:**

- DivineOffice.org: Offers audio and text for praying the Liturgy of the Hours, useful for those who appreciate praying along with others.
- Praystation Portable Podcast: For those who prefer an auditory experience, this podcast provides a daily recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours.

Summary and Wrap Up

- Thanks for attending this brief Seminar on the Liturgy of the Hours.
- Special thanks to the Benedictine Monks at Christ in the Desert Abbey.
- Questions and Comments.
- Final Prayer prior Dismissal