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# Sewing New Theological Cloth on an Old Liturgical Cloak: New Theological Expressions & Tensions Created By The Liturgical Reforms of Vatican II in The Liturgy Of The Hours

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SEWING NEW THEOLOGICAL CLOTH ON AN OLD LITURGICAL CLOAK:  
NEW THEOLOGICAL EXPRESSIONS & TENSIONS  
CREATED BY THE LITURGICAL REFORMS  
OF VATICAN II IN THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS

By

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A Thesis Presented to the

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## INTRODUCTION

The ancient maxim, “*lex orandi, lex credendi*,” (the law of praying [is] the law of believing)<sup>1</sup> suggests that our most basic theological statements are contained in the words we pray and the way we pray them. Accepting the direction of this simple wisdom, a possible corollary might state that changes made to the way we pray, specifically reforms to our Liturgy, are unsettling for most and even traumatic for some because of this intimate connection between our words and manner of prayer and our deeply held religious beliefs. In this thesis I will argue that the theology expressed in the Roman Catholic Liturgy of the Hours, reshaped as it was in both structure and content by the liturgical reforms initiated by Vatican Council II, now embodies theological expressions of prayer more suitable for our times, yet not without raising certain tensions of its own. To demonstrate by example, I will pay particular attention to some of the theological tensions that shaped and are now imbedded in the current form of Evening Prayer, one of the two primary Hours in the Liturgy of the Hours. While the reforms of the whole Liturgy of the Hours represent both a dynamic break with the past as well as great reverence for tradition, it is in the Hour of Evening Prayer that the theological tensions between new and former are most dramatic, where the “*lex orandi*” and, hence, the “*lex credendi*” have been refocused most demonstratively. Even as we observe the fiftieth anniversary of the promulgation of the “Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*), the

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<sup>1</sup> Attributed to St. Prosper of Aquitaine.

conciliar directives for reform, with but a few noted exceptions, have yet to be incorporated into the ritual praxis of the People of God. Hence, a study of this kind is warranted.

Recognizing that Liturgical Theology in general and the Liturgy of the Hours in particular are not areas of familiarity to most of the People of God, I begin my project by supplying some background information and context. In Chapter One, I will offer definitions of basic terms such as prayer, worship, and liturgy, describing the relationship of these activities as one of subsets. I will describe the liturgical characteristics of rubric and historical consciousness as part of the definition of liturgy and will differentiate between the term liturgy and the common Catholic understanding of “the Liturgy” as an interchangeable descriptor for “the Mass.” I will identify the terms Psalter, Psalm and Canticle, and will briefly comment on the history and use of the biblical Book of Psalms, which represents the majority of the content of the Liturgy of the Hours. I will conclude the introductory chapter with an overview of the history of the Liturgy of the Hours to demonstrate at least a plausible connection to the patterns of Jewish daily prayer of the apostolic era (as suggested in Acts of the Apostles and noted by Eusebius) and the Liturgy’s continuous use through the Christian era up to the 20th century (noting the influence of St. Benedict and the monastic and cathedral traditions), concluding with a description of Evening Prayer as defined by the reform of Pius X, the last major change to the Hours prior to Vatican II).

Chapter Two will focus on the process of the liturgical reform since the process itself is instructive in terms of gaining a deeper understanding the theology of the current Liturgy of the Hours. The initial voice in this conversation is that of the Council Fathers in the form of the general directives given for reform in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, especially that the Liturgy was to be understood as the work of the entire People of God. I will place these conciliar directives in conversation with some of the discussions and debates of the committees charged with

reforming the Liturgy and the recollections of various members of those committees as recorded by Stanislaus Campbell, F.S.C., in his book *From Breviary to Liturgy of the Hours: The Structural Reform of the Roman Office 1964-1971*. How the experts, who were called upon to craft the reform of the Hours, understood their task and how they balanced competing theological priorities in their efforts to follow the Council's directives is crucial to understanding the theology of the final product.

Chapter Three will discuss the theological implications of the changes to the structure and rubrics of the Hours in general and Evening Prayer in particular. I will present a detailed comparison of the structure of the pre-Vatican II Vespers of Pius X with the post-Vatican II Evening Prayer of Paul IV, using *The General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours According to the Roman Rite*, the final statement of the reform committees with respect to the theology of the prayer, as the roadmap for the comparison. This comparison is important in that it will demonstrate by example how the priorities of reform for the Liturgy of the Hours were applied to the structure of Evening Prayer and the expressions of belief and theological tensions that have resulted.

In addition to the identification of the theological implications of the structure of the Evening Prayer, an analysis of the content of the Hour, that is of how the particular groupings of scriptural prayers for the Hour have been revised and how those prayer groupings work together theologically, is equally as important. In Chapter Four, I will engage in Scriptural exegesis to discover the themes of belief articulated in the specific scriptural prayers of Evening Prayer for Ordinary Time Week I, employing a canonical exegetical method—identifying sympathetic as well as tensive theological articulations—to put the groups of scriptural prayers (Psalms, Canticles, Readings, etc.) that are prayed together in a daily setting in conversation with one



another. My focus on this subset of Evening Prayer is pragmatic in the sense that I am again limiting the scope of the investigation but doing so in a manner that enables fairly direct comparison to the pre-Vatican II single week cycle of Evening Prayer. The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that the content of the reformed Evening Prayer represents a change of theological focus and expression as compared with the past, and to an even greater degree than the changes in structure.

In Chapter Five, my purpose is to identify evidence in tension with my thesis, in particular the fact that the current Liturgy of Hours, superior as it may be to its pre-conciliar expression, might nonetheless still not be an adequate prayer of theological expression for the People of God in this present era. I will acknowledge that there remains a tension between the ideal that the Hours are the work of the entire People of God with the actual praxis of the Liturgy of the Hours as the best kept secret of Roman Catholic liturgical tradition. I will conclude with some suggestions that might continue the conversation and move the reform of the Prayer of the Church toward realization.

## CHAPTER ONE: TERMS & BACKGROUND

To get from “orandi” to “credendi” by way of the Liturgy of the Hours and Vatican II with stops for Evening Prayer and *Sacrosanctum Concilium* could seem like a circuitous journey. Before embarking I wish to present what amounts to the equivalent of a travel brochure for my thesis so that I might describe the theological areas through which I will pass, that is, both common and technical terms that I will use in the presentation that follows. For purposes of clarity and the better understanding of the relationships and differences between various concepts used in this conversation of liturgical theology, I presume the following definitions.

### Prayer

Christian prayer is any human activity that acknowledges that everywhere and always the Lord alone is God. As the ancient maxim suggests it is a statement of belief. Prayer can be thought of as a conversation with God.<sup>2</sup> It can take a variety of forms, expressions, and qualities: personal or corporate; vocal, or silent; sung or spoken; spontaneous or scripted; of praise, thanksgiving, lament, or intercession. And as conversation prayer can be understood as directional. We can readily imagine the conversation of prayer being initiated by human participant(s), where the activity of prayer starts with human words addressed to the Almighty, such as prayers of intercession where we ask the Lord for a blessing of some form or another. This direction of the conversation from the human to the divine seems to be a natural human activity. However, if prayer is truly a conversation, then we must recognize that the conversation

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<sup>2</sup> I readily acknowledge the bias that suggests that prayer is primarily an oral or mental activity. In my experience as the product of a Jesuit secondary education, the printing of the letters A.M.D.G. (Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam—For the greater glory of God—the Jesuit motto) at the top of each written assignment was standard practice, and a reminder that everything we did or made should be dedicated to God as prayer. Similarly, I acknowledge that prayer can be expressed as movement, as in liturgical dance, and that vocal prayer can be concurrent with prayer by gesture (e.g. The Sign of the Cross). But even in this larger context, my comments regarding the directional nature of prayer are still applicable.

can and does flow the other direction as well, from the Almighty back to the human. When we listen prayerfully, that is quietly, and with a reverential attitude of attentiveness, we position ourselves to hear God's side of the conversation in the proclamation or reading of Holy Scripture. When we still ourselves and allow for truly quiet moments, we can position ourselves to allow God to speak directly to our hearts. And when we allow ourselves to see with the eyes of our hearts, we can become aware of God's answer to our prayers in whatever form that answer might take. My point of emphasis is that prayer as conversation involves at least two participants and at least two directions of communication.

### Liturgy (*Liturgia*)

Worship might be thought of as any form of prayer that is prayed "where two or more are gathered,"<sup>3</sup> that is, worship can be thought of as corporate prayer. Liturgy, in one sense, can be thought of as ritual worship. Liturgy has a normative structure and a specific set of instructions (rubrics) for word and gesture. The normative structure is a key element in understanding a liturgy's theology. Liturgy also has a pedigree—it is ritual with a historical consciousness.<sup>4</sup> Liturgy does change, though typically it evolves . . . gradually, through a process of adaptation where over time small increments of "better" are joined to the "already in place", "better" sometimes being synonymous simply with "additional." For example, if concluding Vespers with the Lord's Prayer is good, adding the Lord's Prayer to the beginning of Vespers might be

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<sup>3</sup> Mt 18:20

<sup>4</sup> In his article "Can We Avoid Relativism in Worship", *Worship* (Issue 74, 2000) Maxwell Johnson uses the concept of "survivability" to describe the aspect of historicity as a criterion for identifying authentic Christian worship.

“doubly good.” Liturgy can also change dramatically, when some authority decides that substantial change is necessary, as in the case of the reforms initiated by Vatican II.<sup>5</sup>

The fact that Liturgy possesses ritual and normative structure is true enough descriptively. However, for a definition of Liturgy’s essence a look at the Greek derivation of the word is instructive. Liturgy or λειτουργία comes from the Greek words λαος (people) and εργον (work) and in its original sense referred to a work of service a benefactor did for the people out of the goodness of their heart free of charge.<sup>6</sup> In some sense the communal receipt of this kind of gift served to further define the recipients as a community. The early Christians understood their worship in this sense and recognized that in coming together to remember and celebrate the Paschal Mystery, the Passion-Death-Resurrection-Ascension of Jesus, they were remembering and making present this work of service, freely given, this λειτουργία of Christ for them.<sup>7</sup> Liturgy, in this sense of work/gift remembered and continued, is what creates the Church.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The issue of authority, that is, in whose authority are liturgical changes made is an interesting topic related to the subject of this paper, but beyond its immediate scope. In modern Roman Catholic tradition, Councils have the authority to instigate change, e.g. Vatican II *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, and Popes have the authority to implement changes, e.g. Pius X in *Divino Afflatu* (1911) and *Motu Proprio Abhinc Duos Annos* (1913), which indicated that the redistribution of Psalms and new rubrics were to be but the first steps to a comprehensive reform of the Office (See Campbell 16-17); and Paul VI in the *Apostolic Constitution Promulgation: the Divine Office Revised By Decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council* (1970). But historically, ecclesiastical authority wasn’t always the driving force or final word. Charlemagne (742-814) recognized the usefulness of the Church as an instrument in the pacification and unification of his vast dominions, and sought to impose Roman liturgical practices (Rome being the southern flank of his territory) on all of the secular clergy of his realm, and the Benedictine Rule on all of the monasteries. See George Guiver, *Company of Voices—Daily Prayer and the People of God* (New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1988), 92.

When liturgy does change one way you can tell it is liturgy is people get upset: it’s not supposed to change, it’s supposed to stay the way it has always been, in other words, just as I remember it to be from my earliest recollection.

<sup>6</sup> David W. Fagerbert, *Theologia Prima—What Is Liturgical Theology?* (Chicago: HillenbrandBooks, 2004), 11-12.

<sup>7</sup> Robert F. Taft, S.J., “The Theology of the Liturgy of the Hours” in *Handbook for Liturgical Studies, Volume 5—Liturgical Time and Space* edited by Anscar J. Chupungco (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2000), 119-120.

<sup>8</sup> Fagerbert, 11-12.

In present-day Roman Catholic usage and perspective, there is unfortunately an almost pervasive misunderstanding of what elements are included within “Liturgy.” The term “The Liturgy” (with the definite article) is frequently used to mean the specific liturgical construction that Roman Catholics refer to as “the Mass”—i.e. the Liturgy of the Word followed by the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The implication and indeed the misrepresentation is that these two elements are the sum total of Catholic liturgical definition and experience. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, “The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy,” is helpful in arriving at a more complete and accurate understanding. In *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the concept of Sacred Liturgy is clearly meant to encompass the celebrations of Word, Eucharist, Sacraments, and Hours as constituent components, for if any of these were not liturgy they would not each be the subjects of specific chapters of the document: after an introduction (Sections 1-4) and initial chapter on the general principles for liturgical restoration (Sections 5-46), the second chapter deals with the celebrations of Word and Eucharist (Sections 47-58), the third chapter with celebrations of the other sacraments (Sections 59-82), and fourth chapter with the celebration of the Divine Office or Liturgy of the Hours (Sections 83-101). The remaining chapters, like the introduction and first chapter, deal with specific aspects affecting the celebrations of all four components of Liturgy: the liturgical year, that is how the various themes and remembrances of the events of salvation history are scheduled and prioritized (Sections 102-111), sacred music (Sections 112-121), and sacred art and environment (Sections 122-130).

Appeal to the official Latin version of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* provides additional clarification: Latin does not know about definite articles. The word “the” deployed in the English translation of the Latin word *Liturgia*, as in “the Liturgy” does not exist in the Latin and reflects the bias of the translator. In this paper I use the term *Liturgia* or “Liturgy” (without the

definite article) in the inclusive sense of a single, unified work/gift which includes celebrations of Word, Eucharist, Sacraments, and Hours. Although I will refer to The Liturgy of the Hours (with a definite article and the seeming implication of a liturgical separateness), I do so reluctantly and only to be consistent with the English translation of the official documents, and only with the understanding that there is but a single Liturgy (*Liturgia*) of which the Liturgy of the Hours is but one, yet integral component. In other words, the Liturgy of the Hours and the Liturgy of the Eucharist are both *Liturgia*,<sup>9</sup> and while they might be separated in practice by separate observance, they are both part of one integral remembrance of and presence to the great work/gift of Jesus, His Passion-Death-Resurrection-Ascension, the Paschal Mystery.<sup>10</sup>

#### Liturgy of the Hours and Related Terms

The Liturgy of the Hours has been known by the Church throughout the ages as the Divine Office, the Daily Office or simply the Office. The sense of the word “office” comes directly from the Latin root *officium* which means “service,” as in something done for someone else.<sup>11</sup> In this sense we can see a reflection of the original derivation of the word “liturgy” from its Greek roots. In this paper I will use the term Divine Office to refer to the pre-Vatican II form, and the Liturgy of the Hours to refer to the post-Vatican II form, but noting that in many instances these terms are used as synonyms. Another common title for this element of *Liturgia* is The Prayer of the Church. The Breviary is the liturgical book of the Catholic tradition that contained the psalms, prayers, and readings for the Office. It was introduced during the

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<sup>9</sup> As are the Liturgy of the Word and the celebrations of the other Sacraments also *Liturgia* as stated above. In specifically connecting Eucharist and Hours I wish to emphasize that fundamentally they are of the same essence, that is *Liturgia*.

<sup>10</sup> Second Vatican Council, “Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*) 5

<sup>11</sup> Atherton, Richard. Praying the Psalms in the Liturgy of the Hours—New Light on Ancient Songs (Ligouri, Missouri: Ligouri Publications, 2004), xii

thirteenth century to assist those bound by Church law and custom to pray the Office ostensibly so that they could pray the Office in private if they could not be present with their communities at the appointed times.<sup>12</sup> It became, however, the vehicle that changed the Divine Office from a public liturgical celebration to effectively a prayer of private devotion of the clergy.<sup>13</sup> Other terms associated with the Liturgy of the Hours are the names of the various divisions, each historically associated with a particular time of day. Prime is prayer generally associated with the first hour after sunrise. Terce is prayer of the third hour according to Roman reckoning, around 9am. Sext is prayer of the sixth hour or noon. None is prayer of the ninth hour, around 3pm. Vespers is prayer associated with early evening, usually at sunset. Compline is the last prayer of the day before retiring. Matins<sup>14</sup> is prayer during the night, and is sometimes divided into three parts called Nocturnes, each associated with a different watch during the night. Lauds is the first prayer of the new day, usually associated with the hour just before dawn.

### The Psalms

The Psalms are the primary ingredient of the Liturgy of the Hours. To describe the Liturgy of the Hours as the way the Church prays the Psalms would be a fairly accurate nutshell description. The Book of Psalms,<sup>15</sup> traditionally associated with David, is the collection of

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<sup>12</sup> Guiver 98-100. The Franciscans are generally credited with the introduction of this practice. What's interesting about the introduction of the Breviary in the evolution of the practice is that it not only made the private praying of the Office a possibility, but it began a gradual shift in practice so that the private praying of the Office became the norm.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Taft, S.J., The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West: the Origins of the Divine Office and Its Meaning for Today (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1993), 299-300.

<sup>14</sup> It should be noted that depending on the particular historical tradition and location, prayer during the night might be called Vigils, and the first prayer of the new day just before sunrise might be called Matins.

<sup>15</sup> The Book of Psalms is also called the Psalter, especially when it is bound as a separate volume from the rest of the Bible and used as a book of prayer; e.g. The Revised Grail Psalms—A Liturgical Psalter (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2010). The term Psalter is also used to describe the liturgical book that contains the Psalms but in liturgical rather than biblical sequence, plus the variety of other prayers (canticles, antiphons, versicles, responsories,

Jewish prayers par excellence gathered from various places and times in Israel's history. While many Psalms are attributed to David by specific superscription, in its final form the book is the product of the post-exilic, second temple period.<sup>16</sup> As such the Book of Psalms would have not only been known by Jesus but undoubtedly prayed by him. The Synoptic tradition records Jesus' use of Psalm 110 in his teaching (Mk 12:35-37, Mt 22:41-46, Lk 20:41-44). The Psalms were certainly known and used by the early Christian communities. The New Testament itself is probably the best evidence of the use of the Psalms by early Christians: the Psalms are alluded to or cited directly 141 times by New Testament authors, more than any other book of the Old Testament.<sup>17</sup> It is no surprise really that the Psalter would become the prayer book of the Christian Church as well.

The Hebrew title of the book, *Sepher Tehillim*, means "A Book of Sung Praises"<sup>18</sup> but the style and content of the various Psalms run the gamut from wisdom sayings, to joyous anthems, to mournful laments. Various commentators further classify the Psalms into several sub-genres,<sup>19</sup> but this can quickly become complicated since many Psalms fit into more than one such category, as a result of movement within the Psalm from one purpose or emotion to another. Still, the largest group of Psalms (on the order of 40%) of the entire collection demonstrates

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intercessories, etc.) used in the Liturgy of the Hours; e.g. "The Four-week Psalter" in The Liturgy of the Hours According to the Roman Rite (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Company, 1975).

<sup>16</sup> Ps 137 could only be a product of the Babylonian exile, and Ps 51:20-21 belongs somewhere after the destruction of the first temple in 587 BCE.

<sup>17</sup> The Psalms in the New Testament, edited by Steve Moyise and Maarten J.J. Menken (New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 247-248.

<sup>18</sup> Gregory J. Polan, OSB, "Introduction to the Revised Grail Psalms," The Revised Grail Psalms, A Liturgical Psalter (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2010), xiv.

<sup>19</sup> Lawrence Boadt, CSP, Reading the Old Testament, An Introduction (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1984) 282. Boadt suggests the following categories of Psalm literary genre: hymns of praise, thanksgiving hymns, individual laments, community laments, liturgical psalms, wisdom psalms, trust songs, royal psalms of the king, Zion hymns, and royal psalms of Yahweh as king.



some characteristic of lament.<sup>20</sup> The Psalms can also be identified by the point of view of the speaker(s), singular or plural, indicating whether the psalm is a personal prayer, or a liturgical psalm associated with community celebrations or temple festivals. Another interesting aspect of psalms is their literary form. Psalms are poetry, which means they employ the literary devices of imagery, symbolism, and metaphor quite liberally. They are Hebrew poetry, meaning they are characterized by “thought rhyme, texts consisting of parallel phrases that are similar, or opposite, to each other in meaning.”<sup>21</sup> They are also lyrics, and as their Hebrew name suggests, meant to be sung.

The Book of Psalms seems to lack systematic organization, although it does appear to be made up of five separate collections or books of material suggested by the concluding doxologies<sup>22</sup> at the end of Psalms 41, 72, 89, 106, with Psalms 146-150 as a grand doxological conclusion to both the fifth collection and to the whole of Psalms.<sup>23</sup> Within the five collections there appears to be additional evidence of common heritage among smaller groupings of psalms, by similar superscription (e.g. Psalms 120-134 are “Songs of Ascent”), by common refrains (e.g. Psalms 42 and 43), or by a subsequent psalm being a continuation of an acrostic pattern begun in the previous psalm (e.g. Psalms 9 and 10), to name just three examples.<sup>24</sup> Yet there seems to be no discernible categorical organization to the sequence of the psalms in the Psalter, mirroring the

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<sup>20</sup> Boadt, 282

“The Book of Psalms” in Saint Joseph Edition of The New American Bible Revised Edition, Louis F. Hartman, C.S.S.R. editor-in-chief (New Jersey: Catholic Book Publishing Company, 2010), 629.

<sup>21</sup> Michael J. Gorman, Elements of Biblical Exegesis (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998) 86.

<sup>22</sup> A doxology is a hymn of praise, from the Greek δοξα (praise) and λογος (word). An example of a Christian doxology is the “Glory To” prayer: Glory to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning is now and will be forever. Amen.

<sup>23</sup> Boadt, 280

<sup>24</sup> Konrad Schaefer, Psalms (Collegeville, Minnesota; Liturgical Press, 2001), xxi.

NAB, 628.

Patrick D. Miller, “The Psalms” in The Harper Collins Study Bible—New Revised Standard Version (New York: HarperOne, 2006), 735

fact that life itself is not organized into neat categories. Walter Brueggemann identifies the movements within the Book of Psalms as a whole and even within some individual psalms as movements of orientation, disorientation, and new orientation<sup>25</sup> (or re-orientation). From this perspective we can make a connection to the Gospel theme of Godly reversals, especially to the ultimate Godly reversal, the Paschal Mystery. Due to the multiplicity of authorship and the historic situations in which they were written the psalms are not only conversations with God (prayer) but conversations with each other and represent multiple visions and expressions for who God is and what God does, in the differing circumstances of life.<sup>26</sup> Because the Psalms are Scripture they are the inspired Word of God, and therefore represent a unique form of prayer: when we pray the psalms we pray to God, using words that God has spoken to us through God's inspiration of the psalmist. Recalling the idea of prayer as directional, a Psalm prayer is bidirectional: we speak to God and God speaks to us, not in the sense of the cacophony of conversation in which each speaker attempts to be heard over the other, but rather in the sense of a song with a double melody, in which two voices sing their own musical lines, each of which could capably stand on its own, but which when sung together provide a complementary beauty greater than the sum of its parts. The fact that the Psalms were also prayers that Jesus prayed makes them especially dear to and appropriate for the Christian Church.

One other term of art to mention in the discussion of the Psalms and their use in Christian prayer is that of canticle. A canticle is a psalm, belonging to the same literary genre, but found in a biblical book other than the Book of Psalms. Some better known examples would include the

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<sup>25</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms, A Theological Commentary* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing, 1984) 9ff.

John F. Craghan, *Psalms For All Seasons* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1993) 5-6.

<sup>26</sup> Parrish, V. Steven. *A Story of the Psalms—Conversation, Canon, and Conversation* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2006), 10-12

Canticle of Hannah (1 Sam 2:1-10), the Canticle of the Three Men (Dan 3:56-88), the Canticle of Zechariah (Lk 1:68-79), and the Canticle of Mary (Lk 1:46-55) to name just a few.

One last complication to any discussion or deployment of the Psalms is the fact that there are two different numbering schemes in use by different communities within the Christian family. The different schemes arise from the fact that in ancient times before the psalms were numbered and before spaces were inserted between words, sometimes it was a judgment call on the part of a translator as to where one psalm ended and another began. The two numbering schemes are the Hebrew, the older of the two, and the Greek Septuagint version of the Psalter. Even though they were translated from the Hebrew, the Psalms of St. Jerome’s Vulgate (Latin translation) were numbered according to the sequence of the Septuagint. This Septuagint/Vulgate numbering was the standard psalm numbering of the Catholic tradition, for

Hebrew (post-Vatican II, English)	Septuagint/ Vulgate
1 . . . 8	1 . . . 8
9 + 10	9
11 . . . 113	10 . . . 112
114 + 115	113
116:1-9	114
116:10-19	115
117 . . . 146	116 . . . 145
147:1-11	146
147:12-20	147
148 . . . 150	148 . . . 150

Table 1: Psalm numbering schemes<sup>27</sup>

books both liturgical and scholarly, up to the era of Vatican II. When new English translations were developed after Vatican II, such as the New American Bible (the liturgical standard in the United States), the New Revised Standard (the liturgical standard in the rest of the English-speaking world), and the Grail Psalter (the standard Psalter in the English-speaking world) the Hebrew numbering was employed. This has resulted in not a little confusion:

between works of the pre- and post-Vatican II eras, or between works of differing traditions (Orthodox and Catholic, to name just one example). In this paper, psalm numberings will follow

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<sup>27</sup> Atherton, xi

the Hebrew scheme employed by the Revised Grail Psalter, the official translation used in the Liturgy of the Hours in the United States.

### Historical Background of the Divine Office

As mentioned previously, one characteristic that distinguishes liturgy from worship is liturgy's historical consciousness. Not only is *Liturgia* a present manifestation of the heavenly liturgy described by John the Seer in Revelation 4-5, *Liturgia* also connects us with the saints of past eras who prayed in the same tradition, who used a similar structure and many times the very same words to praise, thank, and petition God. A detailed investigation of the history of the Liturgy of the Hours is the subject of many books and beyond the scope of this paper. However, there are a handful of historical touch points of particular interest with potential bearing on the theology of the Liturgy of the Hours: to what extent can we find a connection between the Liturgy of the Hours and Jewish or Christian worship of apostolic times? What did the celebrations of the Hours in the traditions of the cathedrals and monasteries of the early Church contribute? And, what might the most recent changes of the 1970 promulgation by Pope Paul VI say about the theology of the Liturgy of the Hours? I will briefly review the historical elements here to set the stage for a detailed examination of the theology of the post-Vatican II reforms.

It is easy to connect the Liturgy of the Eucharist with the meal of the Last Supper through the words of institution as well as by explicit catechesis.<sup>28</sup> The connection between the Liturgy of the Word and the Jewish synagogue service of the first century is less definite mainly because we really do not know what those Jewish services entailed, as what little record we have tends to

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<sup>28</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1994), 610-611.

indicate a rather amorphous set of practices.<sup>29</sup> Yet, it is still reasonable to suggest such a connection based on the various Gospel descriptions of Jesus' activity in the synagogues, especially that in Luke 4, which describes a reading from Scripture followed by Jesus' preaching. It is sometimes suggested that a similar connection exists between the Liturgy of the Hours and the Jewish practice of daily personal prayer including the recitation of the Psalms. As in the case of the Liturgy of the Word, the historical evidence is quite limited. We do know that biblical texts made up only 24% (235 of 972) of the Dead Sea Scroll documents, but that of the 235 Scripture scrolls 37, the largest number of any single book, were Psalm scrolls.<sup>30</sup> The existence of these scrolls indicates use and possibly a preference for praying the Psalms at least at Qumran, a Jewish community of the first century. Unfortunately this is the only example we can point to of a specific community from this historical period, but it is a documented occurrence of the use of the Psalms by a community of proximate historical situation to the early Christian communities.

One thing that we might say about first century Jewish prayer and early Christian prayer is that there seems to be a pattern for the times for prayer and that this pattern has commonality with that of the Hours. There is evidence that the Qumran community prayed three times a day—morning, noon, and evening.<sup>31</sup> Flavius Josephus in *Antiquities* notes the privileged place of morning and evening prayer in contemporary Jewish practice.<sup>32</sup> In the Acts of the Apostles we see the disciples observe the third (Acts 2:1, 15), sixth (Acts 10:9), and ninth hours (Acts 3:1, 10:3, 30) as hours for prayer. However as the liturgist Robert Taft observes, prayer at the

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<sup>29</sup> Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West*, 6-7.

<sup>30</sup> Martin G. Abegg and Peter Flint and Eugene Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible: The Oldest Known Bible Translated for the First Time into English* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1999), xvii.

<sup>31</sup> Paul F. Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer in the Early Church—A Study of the Origin and Early Development of the Divine Office* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 4-6.

<sup>32</sup> Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 4, as quoted in Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West*, 9.

beginning and end of the day “are natural prayer hours in any tradition.”<sup>33</sup> It is not until Eusebius (c. 263-339), bishop of Caesarea in Palestine that we have the earliest written testimony of a universal prayer we now know as the Liturgy of the Hours:

For it is surely no small sign of God’s power that throughout the whole world in the churches of God at the morning rising of the sun and at the evening hours, hymns, praises, and truly divine delights are offered to God. God’s delights are indeed the hymns sent up everywhere on earth in his Church at the times of morning and evening . . . ‘Let my prayer be like incense before you.’” (Psalm 141:2)<sup>34</sup>

So either the early Christians, who began their existence as a Jewish sect, continued their practice of Psalm prayer, whatever that was, and passed that tradition on to the Gentile Christian Church which made it its own, or the Gentile Christian Church at least as early as the time of Eusebius had independently discovered the Psalms and incorporated some or all into their pattern of prayer. Taft concludes that while “a direct Jewish parentage cannot be demonstrated” for the Hours, nevertheless “the Liturgy of the Hours owes a clear debt to our Jewish heritage.”<sup>35</sup>

With regards to the historical development of the Liturgy of the Hours there are two parallel threads of psalm prayer tradition that contributed to the understanding and the practice of the praying of psalms at specified hours of the day. Liturgiologist Anton Baumstark referred to these two forms as “cathedral” and “monastic.”<sup>36</sup> A detailed account of their historical evolution is beyond the scope of this paper, but the patterns and content of prayer that each contributed are important to note. The monastic offices on the one hand simply followed the numerical order of the Psalter and made no attempt to coordinate the theme of the Psalm text with the nature and spirit of a particular hour of the day. The Psalms were recited simply, verse by verse, either as a

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<sup>33</sup> Taft, The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West, 11.

<sup>34</sup> Eusebius, *Commentary on Psalm 64*, as quoted in Taft, The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West, 33. Guiver, 223-224

<sup>35</sup> Taft, The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West, 10-11.

<sup>36</sup> Taft, The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West, 32.

group or by listening to the recitation by a single voice. The cathedral offices on the other hand used selected Psalms chosen because of their suitability for a particular service, for example Psalm 63 at Matins and Psalm 141 at Vespers.<sup>37</sup> The celebrations took place with the bishop, resident clerics, and the laity in attendance. Popular participation was encouraged by the addition of responsories and refrains: a soloist chanted the psalm verses, to which the assembly responded with a fixed psalm verse or alleluia. Ceremonial elements such as light, incense and processions were also features of the cathedral or “people’s” office, elements which would have been foreign to monastic usage.<sup>38</sup>

What is common to both developmental traditions is the priority of the Psalms. One other historical fact that cannot be underestimated is the influence of the Rule of St. Benedict (c.480-543) not only on the structure but on the execution of the Hours. Because Benedict’s *Rule* became the standard for monastic life for the Western Church, his codified pattern and structure for the celebration of the Hours eventually became the de facto standard for the celebration of the Hours in the Western Church, gradually supplanting the cathedral traditions.<sup>39</sup> Benedict had two priorities for the celebration of the Hours: that all 150 Psalms should be prayed within the course of a single week, and also that the Hours were not to be merely spoken, as evidenced by his clear instruction “to sing!”<sup>40</sup>

### Summation

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<sup>37</sup> Taft, The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West, 33, 42-43, 45, 47, 55, 77, 79, 83, 97, 157, 192, 212, 241, 333 Guiver 223-224

<sup>38</sup> Taft, 5 The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West, 4.

<sup>39</sup> Taft, The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West, 140, 307. Important intervening reforms by Pius V (1568) and Pius X (1911) are duly noted, see Taft, 311-312. Guiver, 57

<sup>40</sup> *Rule of Benedict* 9, 11, 17 as quoted in Taft, The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West, 138.

The purpose of this first chapter was to identify key elements, characteristics, and historical and theological context to the Liturgy of the Hours. The Liturgy of the Hours is *Liturgia*, and as such is a remembrance of, a being present to, and a celebration of the Paschal Mystery. The Liturgy of the Hours is the way the Church prays the Psalter, using the Word of God to pray to God. The historical practice of the Liturgy of the Hours dedicated the day to God by marking the day with regular intervals of Psalm prayer. The tradition of praying all 150 Psalms over the course of one week became the normative practice and was such for centuries. The Hours eventually became a private devotion primarily if not exclusively of the clergy and has been deployed by the Church as such also for centuries. The last significant change in the structure or content to the Liturgy of the Hours prior to Vatican II was at the direction of Pius X in 1911; the distribution of the Psalms in the 1911 schema is included below.

In the next chapter I will examine the priorities for the reform of the Hours as articulated in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* by the Second Vatican Council. I will also engage some of the key discussions and recommendations of the committees authorized by the Council to carry out those directives.



	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>Matins</b>	95 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 11	95 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 30	95 35, 37, 38, 39	95 45, 46, 48, 49, 50, 51	95 62, 66, 68, 69	95 78, 79, 81, 83	95 105, 106, 107
<b>Lauds</b>	93 or 51 100 or 118 63 OT canticle 148	47 or 51 5 29 OT canticle 117	96 or 51 43 67 OT canticle 135	97 or 51 65 101 OT canticle 146	98 or 51 90 36 OT canticle 147A	99 or 51 143 85 OT canticle 147B	149 or 51 92 64 OT canticle 150
<b>Prime</b>	118 or 93 or 100 119I-IV	24, 19	25	26, 52, 53	23, 72	22	94, 108
<b>Terce</b>	119V-X	27, 28	40	54, 55	73	80, 82	102
<b>Sext</b>	119XI-XVI	31	41, 42	56, 57, 58	74	84, 87	104
<b>None</b>	119XVII- XXII	32, 33	44	59, 60	75, 76	89	109
<b>Vespers</b>	110, 111, 112, 113, 114	115, 116, 120, 121, 122	123, 124, 125, 126, 127	128, 129, 130, 131, 132	133, 136, 137, 138	139, 140, 141, 142	144, 145
<b>Compline</b>	4, 91, 134	6, 7	12, 13, 16	34, 61	70, 71	77, 86	88, 103

Table 2: Distribution of the Psalms in the Weekly Psalter of the Roman Office—1911 (Hebrew numbering)<sup>41</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Stanislaus Campbell, *From Breviary to Liturgy of the Hours—The Structural Reform of the Roman Office 1964-1971* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1995), 19.

Pius Parsch, *The Breviary Explained* (St. Louis, Missouri: B. Herder Book Co, 1958), 155-159.

Richard Foster, *The Psalms and Canticles of the Breviary* (Galway, Ireland: O’Gorman Ltd. Printinghouse, 1947), 267.

## CHAPTER TWO: THEOLOGICAL OBJECTIVES OF THE PROCESS OF LITURGICAL REFORM OF VATICAN COUNCIL II

In the preceding chapter I reviewed the theological concepts of prayer and liturgy, placing the Liturgy of the Hours within the context of *Liturgia*, and subject of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and the reforms it initiated. I also observed that the Liturgy of the Hours is the way the Church prays the Psalms, and how the Psalms as Scripture represent a dialogic form of prayer: the Psalms are the inspired Word of God given to us, and the Psalms provide words for us to pray to God. In this chapter I move my focus to the process of reform initiated by *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and some of the theological issues faced by those tasked by the Council with the details of that process. An investigation of the reform process and the identification of theological issues that were raised in that process is a preliminary step to an analysis of the structure and content of the prayer itself. The reform process provides a context for the theological forms and expressions of the post-Vatican II Liturgy of the Hours. This is especially illustrative in the understanding of the theological tensions that remain in the prayer, that is, in seeing where worthy theological understandings and priorities collided and what choices and compromises were made and embodied in the result.

“The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy” was promulgated by Paul VI on December 4, 1963, making it the first of sixteen official documents produced by the Council, an indication by the bishops of the priority and urgency of the task if not of their ability to come to consensus on this issue. As the most recent pronouncement by a Church council, that is, the most recent statement of the bishops of the Church in union with the Bishop of Rome, on the subject of Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* represents the statement of highest authority by the Roman Catholic Church with respect to the theological understanding of sacred Liturgy. It must, thus,

be considered the first of the conversation partners in a dialogue on the objectives and the process of liturgical reforms initiated by the Council.

The second voice, or rather plurality of voices, I wish to consider in such a conversation on the reform of the Office are the voices of the theologian consultants to the liturgical reform commission established by Paul IV in early 1964. In this regard I rely on the scholarship of Brother Stanislaus Campbell, F.S.C.<sup>42</sup> His distillation of the documents published by the Consilium for the Implementation of the Constitution on the Liturgy (hereafter referred to as the Consilium) and his documentation of personal interviews he subsequently conducted with members of and consultants to the Consilium, willing to go on the record, is documented in his book *From Breviary to Liturgy of the Hours: The Structural Reform of the Roman Office 1964-1971*. The Consilium held oversight responsibility for the process of the liturgical reforms, but delegated the study of the theological details and the organizing of specific recommendations for changes to the structure and the content of the Divine Office to various committees of liturgists, theologians and others with special expertise in various aspects of the subject.<sup>43</sup> These experts

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<sup>42</sup> Stanislaus Campbell, F.S.C. *From Breviary to Liturgy of the Hours—The Structural Reform of the Roman Office, 1964-1971* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1995), back cover. Brother Stanislaus is a past provincial of the West Coast Province of the De La Salle Christian Brothers. In 1987 he earned a doctorate in liturgy from the University of Notre Dame, where he wrote a dissertation that is the basis of his book. His perspective is within 20 years of the Council.

<sup>43</sup> Campbell, 42-43, 51, 242, 247. The Consilium when it was established in 1964 was made up entirely of clergy, including 38 bishops, the Abbot Primate of the Benedictine order and three priests. During the course of its existence some 61 bishops would be members, most of whom were bishops of dioceses, that is, with pastoral responsibility, rather than curial representatives. The scholars, liturgists, and theologians to whom the Consilium delegated the details of the reform numbered 220 over the course of the process, of which only four were lay consultants and of those only one was female. Campbell relies heavily on the remembrances and opinions of two of the experts, Father, later Archbishop Annibale Bugnini, C.M., (d. 1982) the Secretary of the Consilium, and as such the chief organizer and recruiter of advisors and consultants for the various study groups, and Canon Aime Georges Martimort, professor of liturgy for the Faculty of Theology in Toulouse and at the Institut Superior de Liturgie of Paris, who served as Chair for the study group focused on the structure of the Divine Office, which group also functioned as the directive center for all the other groups working on the reform. It is noted that before the process of reform of the Liturgy of the Hours was completed, the Consilium, which derived its authority as a commission under the direct authority of the Bishop of Rome, was superseded and absorbed into the Special Commission for the Completion of the Liturgical Renewal, under the auspices of the

brought not only their expertise and experience to the process but also, in many cases, their own ideas and agendas for reform. How the liturgical consultants understood the directives of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, what biases and other strategies for reform they brought with them, and how they balanced competing priorities—liturgical, philosophical, and practical—are all informative to the end result, namely the post-Vatican II Liturgy of the Hours and the theological expressions it contains.

*Sacrosanctum Concilium*: Directives for Reform

*Sacrosanctum Concilium* contains 132 Articles distributed over seven chapters and an appendix, and includes a statement of purpose, several general principles incumbent on the process of liturgical reform, as well as a number of specific directives for the process of reform of the various components of the Divine Office. I will confine my focus to those articles of the Constitution which are directly applicable to the Liturgy of the Hours, specifically articles from the Introduction, Chapter 1 (General Principles for the Restoration and Progress of the Sacred Liturgy) and Chapter 4 (The Divine Office). It is these Articles that represent the starting point for these reforms.

In the Introduction to *Sacrosanctum Concilium* the bishops of the Council acknowledge their purpose in gathering: to impart spiritual energy and vibrancy into the lives of the Christian faithful; to adapt liturgical expressions and institutions more closely to the needs of the people of the current era; to promote unity among all Christians; and to facilitate the spread of the Good

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Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, the department of the Vatican Curia with ultimate authority on changes to Liturgy, in response to the difficulties of having two ecclesial bodies nominally responsible for the same process—a story of Vatican politics, interesting enough, but a tangential consideration and a digression from the argument of this thesis.

News of the Gospel to all humanity.<sup>44</sup> It was in the consideration of these responsibilities that the bishops recognized the reasonable need for liturgical promotion and reform.<sup>45</sup> They saw Liturgy as the most effective means to invigorate the Church, which in turn enhances the ability of the People of God to evangelize and move toward unity.<sup>46</sup> As the document unfolds a primary directive becomes clear: that reform occur so that the faithful would be inspired to a “full, conscious, and active part in liturgical celebrations,” as this ideal was stated, restated, and then articulated again at least five more times in various expressions through the first chapter of the document.<sup>47</sup>

In addition to this directive for “full, conscious, and active” participation, the bishops identified other general norms applicable to the reform of all of Liturgy. Liturgical rites should be invigorated to meet present-day needs and circumstances, in recognition that over time the rites may have suffered from the accretion of elements which were either not in harmony with the purpose of the rite or the expression of which is no longer clear.<sup>48</sup> The rites should “radiate a noble simplicity” and useless repetitions should be eliminated.<sup>49</sup> But at the same time, demonstrating deference to the historical consciousness of *Liturgia*, the rites should be revised “in the light of sound tradition” through careful investigation of the theological, historical, and pastoral aspects of a particular liturgical element, so that new forms have an “organic link” to the forms from which they derive.<sup>50</sup> Sacred Scripture is recognized as having the greatest

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<sup>44</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium (SC)* 1,2,4

<sup>45</sup> SC 1

<sup>46</sup> SC 1

<sup>47</sup> SC 14, 19, 21, 27, 30, 41

<sup>48</sup> SC 4, 21

<sup>49</sup> SC 34

<sup>50</sup> SC 4, 23. The priority for careful reform “in the light of sound tradition” was so important it was specifically indicated within the Introduction and then was mentioned subsequently in the section dealing with the general norms of reform,.

importance in Liturgy, and reforms should promote a “warm and lively” appreciation of Scripture, and a “more suitable selection of readings” from Scripture was to be restored.<sup>51</sup> The document also notes that liturgical celebrations are not private functions but rather a demonstration of unity of the whole People of God together with their bishops.<sup>52</sup> Liturgy, thus, has a dialogic quality where participation of the people is to be assured through acclamations, responses, hymns, psalms, antiphons, and reverent silence.<sup>53</sup>

Looking back with fifty years of hindsight, Article 36, which pertains to the use of vernacular language in Liturgy, seems anachronistic and obvious, and even timid in its phrasing in the Constitution: the use of the Latin language was to be preserved, but the wider use of the vernacular was encouraged since it “may frequently be of great advantage to the people.”<sup>54</sup> It is an understatement to suggest that the “full, conscious, and active” participation of the people in Liturgy demands the use of the everyday language to ensure comprehension and appreciation. How a reliance on the language of Caesar and Ovid would not be an impediment to the primary liturgical directive of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* is indeed unimaginable today, yet it is important to understand the magnitude of this essential reform within the context of the time.

Chapter Four of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* contains directives specifically applicable to the reform of the Liturgy of the Hours. It summarizes the Church’s understanding of the purpose of the Hours by appealing to the ancient tradition that it was devised so as to consecrate both day and night by a song of praise to God, a song which is the prayer of Christ himself, prayed together with his body the Church addressed to the Father.<sup>55</sup> Because the purpose of the Liturgy

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<sup>51</sup> SC 24, 35

<sup>52</sup> SC 26

<sup>53</sup> SC 30

<sup>54</sup> SC 36

<sup>55</sup> SC 84

of the Hours is to sanctify the day, the first directive suggests that the traditional sequence of prayer at the hours of daybreak, third hour, noon, ninth hour, sunset, and night be restored as much as possible.<sup>56</sup> The fact that this instruction is reiterated in a later article suggests not only a level of priority but also seems aimed at correcting a less than optimal popular practice, namely the (almost exclusively private) praying of the entirety of the daily Office at one sitting at whatever time was set aside to do so.<sup>57</sup> At the same time, the conditions of modern life must also be taken into account in choosing of the most appropriate times for prayer.<sup>58</sup> The tradition of praying Lauds as morning (sunrise) prayer and Vespers as evening (sunset) prayer especially should be restored, for these Hours are to be considered the most important hours and should be celebrated as such.<sup>59</sup> Special consideration should be given to the public celebration of Vespers especially on Sundays and major feasts.<sup>60</sup> The Hour of Compline should mark the end of day as the day's concluding prayer.<sup>61</sup> The Hour of Matins, which traditionally was prayed during the night, should retain "the character of nocturnal prayer" but should also be drawn up so that it could be celebrated at any hour of the day.<sup>62</sup> Matins was also to include fewer psalms and longer readings of Scripture.<sup>63</sup> The Hour of Prime was to be suppressed, and though *Sacrosanctum Concilium* contains no explanation for this change, it seems this would be consistent with the

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<sup>56</sup> SC 88. The directive that the canonical hour should be recited as closely as possible to the time of day for which it is intended is reiterated in article 94.

<sup>57</sup> Campbell 31-32.

Bernard A. Hausmann, S.J. *Learning the Breviary* (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1932), 93. In Chapter IX, "Recapitulation," Hausmann writes, "THE SPECIAL CONCLUSIONS, only used when the office is interrupted at the end of individual hours . . ." This implies that stopping at the end of an individual hour was considered an interruption to the normal flow or usual practice of saying the daily Office entirely at one sitting, and therefore required a "special conclusion."

<sup>58</sup> SC 88

<sup>59</sup> SC 89a

<sup>60</sup> SC 100

<sup>61</sup> SC 89b

<sup>62</sup> SC 89c

<sup>63</sup> SC 89c

directive that Lauds should be the prayer connected with the first hour of the day.<sup>64</sup> The Minor Hours of Terce, Sext, and None are to be retained but a scheme should be devised so that only one of the three might be said at whatever time was most suitable for prayer during the day.<sup>65</sup> In order to accomplish these directives, the bishops also indicate that the 150 psalms of the Psalter should be distributed over a period of time longer than the current one-week course, but they do not indicate a preference for what the new timeframe should be, leaving it up to the experts to decide.<sup>66</sup>

The Liturgy of the Hours is considered the public voice of the whole Church, and the laity is encouraged to celebrate the Hours with the clergy, or among themselves, or even individually—a call to reform the Hours while keeping the needs of the whole People of God in mind.<sup>67</sup> The intent of this last declaration serves to confirm at least part of my thesis: how the Hours are prayed, namely, by both clergy and laity and celebrated publicly in common when possible, informs what is believed, namely that the entire People of God are called to sanctify the day through this liturgical prayer, and that the laity are integral to this call. The understanding that *Liturgia*, including the Liturgy of the Hours, is properly with and of the whole People of God, is a theological expression suited for our time.

### The Work of the Study Groups for the Reform of the Divine Office

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<sup>64</sup> SC 89d

Pius Parsch, *The Breviary Explained* (St. Louis, Missouri: B. Herder Book Company, 1958), 30, 32-34. Parsch explains that in the pre-Vatican II Office Lauds and Prime were both prayers of early morning, the former associated with the first light of dawn and that symbolic connection to the Resurrection as an opportunity for praise, and the latter following subsequently as an opportunity to dedicate the work of the day. Of the two, Prime was considered the later addition to the cursus.

<sup>65</sup> SC 89e

<sup>66</sup> SC 91

<sup>67</sup> SC 99-100



Although the bishops of the Council put several specific instructions for reform on record as noted above, they delegated oversight of the process to the Consilium who then relied on scores of theologians with expertise in the historical and pastoral aspects of Liturgy. These experts were organized into study groups each responsible for a specific aspect of the Divine Office: Group 1 considered aspects related to the liturgical calendar; Group 2 considered the revision of the Psalter; Group 3 considered the distribution of the psalms across the Hours; Group 4 considered biblical readings; Group 5 considered patristic writings; Group 6 considered hagiographic material; Group 7 oversaw the use of hymns within the hours; Group 8 studied liturgical chants; and Group 9 considered the overall structure of the Hours and the integration of the work of the other groups into a unified whole. It fell to Father, later Archbishop, Annibale Bugnini, C.M., Secretary of the Consilium to find the necessary experts for the study groups and to assign them according to their competencies. Bugnini was assisted by Canon Aime Georges Martimort, professor of liturgy for the Faculty of Theology in Toulouse and at the Institut Supérieur de Liturgie of Paris, who became director of Group 9. Although the study groups were eventually to employ a cast of hundreds (including Paul VI in a contributory, non-authoritarian role), it was the skill of Annibale and Martimort who guided the process of reform over more than six years, from the spring of 1964 to completion of the project in 1970.<sup>68</sup>

What follows now is a review of some interesting points of discussion by the study groups as they considered various proposals for the reform of the Office, how they weighed different the priorities, as they understood them, of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* as well as what they perceived as desirable reforms based on their own experiences. I will limit the scope of this review to the three issues that I consider to be the most important and which I consider useful to

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<sup>68</sup> Campbell, 42, 47-49, 53, 243.

illustrate one of the aspects of my thesis: that there exist within the post-Vatican II Liturgy of the Hours certain theological tensions which arise from a clash of worthy, though competing, liturgical priorities, and which result more often than not from the desire to honor multiple priorities in a “both/and” rather than an “either/or” framework.<sup>69</sup> The issues are the following: 1) the treatment of the Psalter; 2) the honoring of the “truth of the hours;” and, 3) the Liturgy of the Hours as *Liturgia*, requiring the priority of “full, active, and conscious participation” of the entire People of God. While a review of the discussions associated with the reform of the Office and the theological priorities raised by these discussions is not the same as an identification of theological statements and tensions present in the Liturgy of the Hours subsequently promulgated, this review of the process is nevertheless instructive in terms of establishing a context for the subsequent theology. The discussions of the study groups often overlapped and influenced each other with respect to these issues, so that this review of those discussions will tend toward the same.

Article 91 of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* directed that the Psalter be distributed over a longer period of time than the traditional one week. It was understood by the study committees that the primary purpose for the extended distribution was to reduce the amount of psalmody assigned to each Hour for the benefit of “clergy with pastoral care.”<sup>70</sup> One of the priorities of the revision of the Office by Pius X (1911) was to reduce the amount of psalmody in each Hour, which it did, but there existed a consensus demonstrated by this directive that the previous revision did not go far enough to accomplish its purpose.<sup>71</sup> It was agreed that longer Psalms should be divided into *incisa*, logical sections of ten to twelve or so verses, so that the length of

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<sup>69</sup> A “Catholic” approach to theology can be described as “both/and” in the big picture sense of honoring Tradition and Scripture, faith and reason, magisterium and conscience.

<sup>70</sup> Campbell, 138

<sup>71</sup> Campbell, 17, 20

the psalmody, not just the number of Psalms, would be consistent across all Hours.<sup>72</sup> The discussions then moved to the question of how many Psalms or *incisa* would be optimal in each Hour for a busy cleric to gain sufficient spiritual benefit. The consensus suggested three as being sufficient for most Hours, but five should be retained for the more important hours of Lauds and Vespers, except when the laity was present, in which case two of the five would be omitted.<sup>73</sup> The inference was that there should be separate accommodations in the Office for clergy and for laity—the Office was the Prayer of the Church, but some were “more Church” than others.

Before the length of the cycle could be finalized, there arose a question of whether the entire Psalter should be retained in the *cursus*<sup>74</sup> of the Hours, or whether certain Psalms of an imprecatory nature could be retained as readings rather than used as psalmody or suppressed altogether. A number of bishops at the Council had asked for the elimination of certain Psalms because they represented a stage of revelation that was insufficiently appropriate for Christian prayer, especially when prayed in the vernacular languages.<sup>75</sup> The historically conscious counter argument was that the Office was the way the Church prayed the Psalter, and the integral Psalter had been prayed in the Office for centuries. Furthermore, if any Psalms were eliminated for any reason it would set a dangerous “rationalistic” precedent that would be seen as an arbitrary tampering with divine revelation.<sup>76</sup>

At the same time as these questions related to the deployment of the Psalter were under consideration, a proposal to introduce canticles from the New Testament in Vespers was being entertained. The argument in support of this proposal, similar to the proposal for suppression of

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<sup>72</sup> Campbell, 147-148

<sup>73</sup> Campbell, 144-145

<sup>74</sup> *Cursus* is the word used to describe the normal cycle both of the Office/Hours as a whole and for the structure of the individual Hours.

<sup>75</sup> Campbell, 151-152

<sup>76</sup> Campbell, 151-152

the imprecatory Psalms, emphasized the benefit of enhancing the Christian character of the Hours.<sup>77</sup> The counter argument suggested that this was too radical a change, despite the presence of the Lucan canticles of the Benedictus, the Magnificat, and the Nunc Dimitis in the Office for centuries, or that somehow a New Testament canticle would compete with the solemnity of the Magnificat.<sup>78</sup>

After more than three years the study groups reached consensus with respect to the deployment of the Psalter in the Liturgy of the Hours. The Psalter was to be distributed over four weeks.<sup>79</sup> The psalmody of each Hour was to have a ternary structure—three Psalms or Psalm *incisa*—with no distinction between celebrations by clergy alone or celebrations by clergy with laity.<sup>80</sup> Seven New Testament canticles would be added to the cursus and used as psalmody in Evening Prayer to enhance its Christian character.<sup>81</sup> Psalms of heavily imprecatory character as well as specific verses considered similarly offensive in other Psalms would be omitted.<sup>82</sup> Certain Psalms would appear more often in the cursus “by reason of their intrinsic worth.”<sup>83</sup> The specific theological implications suggested by these elements of consensus will be discussed subsequently in Chapter 4, but the general direction indicates recognition of not only the possibility but the likelihood of lay participation in this part of *Liturgia*, underscored by a priority for a more Christianized content in the psalmody of the Hours, especially of Evening Prayer.

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<sup>77</sup> Campbell, 169, 192-193

<sup>78</sup> Campbell, 188-189

<sup>79</sup> Campbell, 168-169

<sup>80</sup> Campbell, 161, 169

<sup>81</sup> Campbell, 169

<sup>82</sup> Campbell, 169

<sup>83</sup> Campbell, 154

Articles 88 and 94 of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* direct that the “truth of the Hours” (*veritas horarum*), that is, the traditional sequence of prayer at the hours of daybreak, third hour, noon, ninth hour, sunset, and night be restored as much as possible. Article 88 identifies the tensive ethic: “At the same time account must be taken of the conditions of modern life . . . “ In other words, for most of the People of God that means we need to sleep at night and be available for work during the day. Article 89 of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* indicates two specific solutions to the tensions of Article 88: the adaptation of Matins to the Office of Readings, which would be prayed at any hour of the day; and, retention of the Minor Hours of Terce, Sext, and None, but with the expectation that only the most convenient of the three would be observed. For the study groups the issue was not so much what kind of reform they should design, for the reforms in this case had already been indicated by the Council. Rather, the issue was how to implement these reforms most efficiently. With respect to the Office of Readings, simplification resulted directly from the decisions, described above, to employ a four week cycle for the Psalter, and ternary psalmody in each Hour.<sup>84</sup> With respect to the Minor Hours, there were two questions with which the study groups wrestled: if there were three daytime Hours and only one of them was observed on a regular basis how could they insure that certain Psalms would not be missed entirely; or, should they simply reduce the number of daytime Hours to only one.<sup>85</sup> Honoring tradition over expediency, the priority of praying the entire Psalter, as well as the specific instruction of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 89e, they accepted Canon Martimort’s clever solution of assigning ternary psalmody from the pattern of the four week cycle to the first daytime Hour observed, and

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<sup>84</sup> Campbell, 278.

<sup>85</sup> Campbell, 276. Interestingly enough, the proposal to eliminate two of the three daytime Hours had the support of Paul VI.

selections from the Gradual Psalms (Pss 120-128) for the other two Hours, at the discretion of the individual.<sup>86</sup>

The decision to expand the cycle of the Psalter to four weeks also provided an opportunity to reinforce the “truth of the hours” ideal by allowing within certain limits the selective use of Psalms appropriate to a particular hour or day.<sup>87</sup> I will review a specific example of this in Evening Prayer in Chapter Four.

Article 14 of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* sets the norm that all the faithful should be led to “full, conscious, and active” participation in *Liturgia*. Article 4 advises that the rites be revised “in light of sound tradition . . . to meet present-day circumstances and needs.” Toward these ends an early proposal was made by Fr. Juan Mateos, S.J., for a radical revision of the Office, namely a restoration of the tradition of the cathedral or “people’s” Office.<sup>88</sup> As described in the preceding chapter, the cathedral office was a practice stemming from the fourth to possibly as late as the tenth century in the West, whereby the bishop with the cathedral clergy and laity in attendance would pray Psalms and other prayers both in the morning and in the evening.<sup>89</sup> There were no other hours of prayer and the priority of praying the entire Psalter over a given period of time was not a part of this tradition.<sup>90</sup> The historical record is less than clear as to the specifics of the practice, but there is definite evidence of such practice, specifically the favoring of Psalm 141 for prayer in the evening and Psalms 63 and 148-150 for prayer in the morning in many places.<sup>91</sup> As part of this proposal, it was suggested that the number of psalms prayed at Morning

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<sup>86</sup> Campbell, 276-277.

<sup>87</sup> Campbell, 169

<sup>88</sup> Campbell, 78-80

<sup>89</sup> Robert Taft, S.J., *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West—The Origins of the Divine Office and Its Meaning for Today* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1993), 54-55

<sup>90</sup> Taft, 54-55

<sup>91</sup> Taft, 141-163

and Evening Prayer be reduced from the current five to only three, as this was considered more appropriate for celebration with the laity.<sup>92</sup> This proposed reform was offered as an appeal to reestablish a practice with roots in past historical practice, a practice that had in fact been preserved in the Byzantine Rite.<sup>93</sup> It was seen by its proposer primarily as a way to fulfill the directives of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* Articles 89a and 10 whereby the Hours of Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer were given priority, and also to make these Hours, especially Vespers, more conducive to active participation by the whole Church, especially the laity, the prime directive of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.

Apparently, the suggestion as applied to Lauds was rejected fairly quickly as it was doubtful that the laity would participate in Morning Prayer in any great number, so it was not worth the trouble to pursue.<sup>94</sup> The suggestion with respect to Evening Prayer was given slightly more consideration but it too was rejected. The consensus was that *Sacrosanctum Concilium* called for a reform of all of the Hours as an integrated whole (with the exception of Prime) and that the suggestion for creation of a separate Office for the laity went beyond the scope of the reform authorized by the Council.<sup>95</sup>

What is revealing in the discussions of the consulters of the study groups about this proposal is a certain focus on the Hours as the prayer of the ordained and professed and a lack of vision that the Hours could ever really be a prayer of the laity. But even so, a bifurcated Liturgy, one for clergy with laity and one for clergy alone, was also viewed as unacceptable and contrary to the spirit of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. For better or worse, the historical consciousness of the reformed Liturgy of the Hours would honor more of the monastic tradition, sanctifying the day

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<sup>92</sup> Campbell, 80

<sup>93</sup> Campbell, 80

<sup>94</sup> Campbell, 80

<sup>95</sup> Campbell, 80-84

with the prayers of the Psalter prayed at multiple hours during the day. Whether the inclusion of lay participation was of secondary consideration or not, the fact of multiple Hours means multiple opportunities for participation, together with the preference for the quality of prayer over quantity in the psalmody at each Hour offer, at least potentially, an experience of *Liturgia* more conducive to the contemporary lay life situation. In the next chapters, I will continue to pursue that hypothesis through a closer look at the structure and the content of the reformed Liturgy of the Hours.



### CHAPTER THREE: THEOLOGY OF STRUCTURE

In the preceding chapter, I identified the priorities and directives of the Second Vatican Council both with respect to liturgical reform in general and with respect to the reforms specific to the Divine Office. I reviewed three examples of how the liturgical theologians, who crafted the reform of the Office, balanced competing understandings of the directives of the Council, with their own ideas of reform, and with their understandings of the traditions and essential elements of the Office. The next stage of my project is to examine the fruits of these discussions, that is, to look at the resulting changes to both the structure and content of the Divine Office for the purpose of identifying and evaluating the theological implications of the reforms that produced the Liturgy of the Hours. While the notions of liturgical structure and content are intimately related—the characteristics of a structural element are suggested largely by the specifics of its content—nevertheless, I find it useful to consider both angles separately. First, I will examine the changes to the structure of the prayer—how different elements were moved, eliminated, or added; then, I will examine the changes to the contents of the prayer—how the details of the elements, particularly the psalmody, work together in their theological expression. In this chapter, I will examine the changes made to the structure of the Liturgy of the Hours and the theological significance of those changes. I will approach the examination from three perspectives, moving from the general to the more specific: the first will be an overview of important structural changes to the Liturgy of the Hours as a whole; the second will examine the revisions to the Psalter and the role of the Psalms as the essential elements of the Hours; the third will be a detailed study of the structural changes to Vespers that produced Evening Prayer. In the next chapter I will look at the contents of Evening Prayer, examining some of the changes to this Hour in more detail. In both of these chapters my purpose is to examine the reforms to the

“what” and the “how” of our praying in the Liturgy of the Hours, and the subsequent implications to the “what” of our believing.

### Changes to the Structure of the Divine Office that Formed the Liturgy of the Hours

As noted by *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the primary purpose of the Divine Office was to consecrate the whole course of the day and night by praise of God.<sup>96</sup> In theory, this consecration of the day and night was effected through liturgical prayer at specific times of the day: the names given to the Hours of Prime, Terce, Sext, and None suggest fairly definitely that they are prayers for the first hour after sunrise, the third hour (9am), the sixth hour (Noon), and the ninth hour (3pm) based on the approximate marking of time from the sunrise. Be this as it may, the number and length of prayers for each Hour of the Office made this ideal difficult to accomplish for anyone with responsibilities outside the walls of a monastery or cloister. A common practice, as previously noted above, was to pray the entire Office at one sitting, obscuring the basic characteristic of temporality of this element of *Liturgia*.<sup>97</sup>

“The General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours,” the official document of the Church of instructions for the praying of this part of *Liturgia*, is noteworthy by its very title. From the perspective of the root meaning of the words, the word “Liturgy” (εργον + λαος) can be considered the equivalent to the words “Divine Office” (*divinum officium*): both phrases speak to the characteristic of divine gift done for us. But the subsequent phrase, “of the Hours” emphasizes the idea of multiple connections at different times of the day. “The General Instruction” confirms the teaching of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* by describing the Hours as the offering of praise and thanksgiving, the commemoration of the mysteries of salvation, and a

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<sup>96</sup> SC 84

<sup>97</sup> Hausmann, 93

looking forward to heavenly glory whose distinguishing liturgical action is the sanctification of the whole cycle of day and night.<sup>98</sup> “The General Instruction” also emphasizes the connection of liturgical prayer to specific times of the day by employing different names for the traditional seven hours of prayer. While the changes to the names of the Daytime Hours—Terce becomes Mid-Morning Prayer; Sext becomes Mid-Day Prayer; None becomes Mid-Afternoon Prayer—is largely one of semantic equivalence, though arguably helpful to modern sensibilities, the changes to the names of the other Hours—Lauds and Prime together become Morning Prayer, Vespers becomes Evening Prayer, and Compline becomes Night Prayer—are significant semantic changes that enhance the understanding of connection of these Hours of prayer to specific times of the day. (Matins is the exception as it becomes something else entirely—The Office of Readings—a subsequent explanation of which will be provided below.)

“The General Instruction” also echoes another priority of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* by indicating that reforms to the structure of the Hours have been made taking into account the circumstances of life today.<sup>99</sup> Changing the names of the individual Hours to be more time-of-day specific better connects the Liturgy of the Hours to its purpose, at least in a nominal sense. It does not, however, eliminate the practical pressures that impede that ideal observance. In this regard, three changes to the structure of the Liturgy of the Hours are especially important: the elimination of the Hour of Prime, the designation of the Hours of Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer as major hours, and the reconstitution of the Hour of Matins as the Office of Readings. These structural changes not only connect the Hours to times of the day making the observance

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<sup>98</sup> SC 88, 94

“The General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours” contained in The Liturgy of the Hours According to the Roman Rite, Volume I (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Company, 1975), 2, 12

<sup>99</sup> SC 88

“The General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours” (GILH), 11

consistent with the theological ideal somewhat, though not entirely, more practical, they are also incremental steps in the direction of facilitating the “full, conscious, and active participation” of the People of God in this liturgical celebration.<sup>100</sup>

One of the structural reforms that made both theological and practical sense, honored the priority of simplicity, and was directly called for in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* was the elimination of the Hour of Prime.<sup>101</sup> While the origins of Prime are somewhat vague, its purpose evolved into the offering of prayers for the success of the tasks of the new day, in the hour after sunrise. But Prime, in fact, was a second morning prayer. The celebration of Lauds, which was the more ancient practice, was usually observed just prior to sunrise, in anticipation of the new light of dawn, in remembrance of the new life of Jesus’ Resurrection.<sup>102</sup> The net result of the reform was not so much an elimination of Prime, but a combination of the elements of Prime and Lauds into Morning Prayer, to be celebrated proximate to sunrise, so that the first stirrings of our minds might be consecrated to God and that we take nothing in hand until we have been gladdened by the thought of God, and most especially by the thought of the Resurrection of the Lord.<sup>103</sup> A single time for prayer in the early morning makes practical sense.

Another structural reform specified in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and confirmed in “The General Instruction” is the consideration of the Hours of Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer as the principal Hours and that they should be celebrated as such, namely, in public.<sup>104</sup>

*Sacrosanctum Concilium* elaborates on the point by instructing that Vespers be prayed in common in the church on Sundays and solemn feasts, with the laity celebrating this prayer with

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<sup>100</sup> SC 14, 19, 21, 27, 30, 41, 100

<sup>101</sup> SC 34, 89d

<sup>102</sup> Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West*, 192, 195-196  
Parsch, 20, 34

<sup>103</sup> GILH 38

<sup>104</sup> SC 89a, 100; GILH 40

the clergy, or among themselves, or even individually if celebration with the community is not possible.<sup>105</sup> It is reasonable to emphasize the Hours of Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer for communal participation at the hours of sunrise and sunset to which they correspond since, in ancient times but no less so in our own day, these hours were and are the most prominent moments of transition of the day, and therefore natural times of prayer.<sup>106</sup> Even in our “24 x 7” economy and the life patterns that result, for many people the transition from personal time to work time occurs proximate to sunrise, and the transition from work time to personal time occurs proximate to sunset.

A third structural reform of the Liturgy of the Hours that makes abundant practical sense in terms of encouraging presence, if not “full, conscious, and active participation” by the entire People of God, is the reworking of the traditional night Hour of Matins into the moveable Office of Readings. The reform illustrates the negotiation of multiple liturgical priorities: that of active participation and meeting the circumstances of modern times versus the connecting of each Hour to a specific time of the day, in this case to the hours of the traditional night watches. By providing that the Office of Readings may be joined to whichever other Hour is most convenient for the community or individual, “The General Instruction” gives precedence to the priority of the former.<sup>107</sup> Although “The General Instruction” does not discount the value of the Hours as private prayer, communal celebration is clearly recognized as the essence of liturgical prayer and the preferable practice.<sup>108</sup> This flexibility in the celebration of the Office of Readings facilitates participation, especially active, communal participation. It changes the opportunity for public celebration in common from virtually nil for most people (in the middle of the night) to at least

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<sup>105</sup> SC 100; *GILH* 38-40

<sup>106</sup> Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West*, 11

<sup>107</sup> *GILH* 57, 59

<sup>108</sup> *GILH* 20, 33

possible, especially if the Office of Readings is celebrated in conjunction with Morning or Evening Prayer. Besides the moveable nature of the Office of Readings, a second element of reform is also important. While the Office of Readings includes psalmody in similar number and length to that of the other Hours, its distinguishing characteristic is the presence of longer readings from Scripture, another priority of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.<sup>109</sup>

As described in Chapter One, the Book of Psalms contributes the building blocks, the most essential elements, to the edifice of the Liturgy of the Hours. To describe the Hours as the Church's way of praying the Psalms would be a reasonable thumbnail definition. As described in Chapter Two, the distribution of the Psalms through the Liturgy of the Hours has significant implications for the structure of each Hour, and to each Hour's theological sensibilities. The priority to reduce the amount of psalmody in each Hour, which resulted in a ternary structure for the psalmody, noted above, demanded that the distribution of the Psalms across the Hours be accomplished over a longer period of time than a single week.<sup>110</sup> The result was the Four-week Psalter. While the reduction of psalmody in each Hour is a significant structural development, one indicating a priority for the quality of prayer over the quantity, it also provided the opportunity for another important structural change, namely, the inclusion in the cursus of additional psalmody in the form of both Old and New Testament canticles, as well as the more frequent occurrence of traditionally more important Psalms.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> *SC* 24, 89c; *GILH* 55, 143-158

<sup>110</sup> *SC* 89, 91

<sup>111</sup> "The Four-Week Psalter" in *The Liturgy of the Hours According to the Roman Rite, Volume III (Ordinary Time Weeks 1-17)*, 675-1297. The Psalms that appear twice in the four week cycle for Ordinary Time include Pss 8, 16, 23, 24, 34, 44, 45, 57, 67, 76, 80, 86, 88, 90, 92, 100, 117, 118, 119-XIV, 119-XIX, 120-128, 130, 143, 145, 147, 150. Psalm 51 appears in Morning Prayer every Friday; Psalm 110 appears in Evening Prayer every Sunday; Psalm 95 appears every day as the Invitatory Psalm.

Changes to the Structure of Vespers that Created Evening Prayer

I now turn my attention to a comparison of the structure of pre-Vatican II Vespers with the corresponding post-Vatican II Hour of Evening Prayer. My purpose is to illustrate by specific example how the liturgical reforms initiated by Vatican II affected this element of *Liturgia*, and how these changes affected the theology of this liturgical prayer. An investigation of the Hour of Evening Prayer, which Hour is designated both by *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and by “The General Instruction” as one of the two most important Hours, is instructive because many of the changes made to this Hour were also applied analogously to the other Hours as well. The table below illustrates the details of pre-Vatican II (1911) Vespers in comparison with post-Vatican II (1971) Evening Prayer. The table is arranged by subdivisions representing the movements of prayer within the Hour: the Introduction, the Psalmody, the Reading and response, the Gospel Canticle, the Intercessory Prayers, and the Conclusion. The differences are highlighted.

Vespers (1911)	Evening Prayer (1971)
<b>Introduction</b>	
<p><i>Pater Noster, Ave Maria</i> V. Deus, in adiutorium meum intende. R. Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina. <i>Gloria Patri</i> R. Alleluia</p>	<p>V. God, come to my assistance. R. Lord, make haste to help me. Glory to the Father . . . R. Alleluia <b>Hymn</b></p>
<b>Psalmody</b>	
<p><b>5</b> psalms, each preceded by an antiphon, followed by the <i>Gloria Patri</i> and a repetition of the antiphon.</p>	<p><b>2</b> psalms or psalm-sections <b>1 NT canticle (from Paul or Rev)</b> Each preceded by an antiphon, followed by the Glory to the Father and a repetition of the antiphon.</p>
<b>Reading</b>	
<p><i>Capitulum</i> (short Scripture reading) <b>R. Deo gratias</b> <b>Hymn</b> Responsory: verse &amp; response</p>	<p>Scripture reading Responsory: versicle response</p>
<b>Gospel Canticle</b>	
<p><i>Magnificat</i>, preceded by an antiphon, followed by the <i>Gloria Patri</i> and a repetition of the antiphon.</p>	<p>The Canticle of Mary, preceded by an antiphon, followed by the Glory to the Father and a repetition of the antiphon.</p>
<b>Intercessory Prayer</b>	
<p><i>Preces feriales</i> <b>V. Dominus vobiscum</b> <b>R. Et cum spiritu tuo</b> Concluding Prayer <b>Suffragia</b></p>	<p>Intercessions <b>Our Father</b> Concluding Prayer</p>
<b>Conclusion</b>	
<p><b>V. Dominus vobiscum</b> <b>R. Et cum spiritu tuo</b> <b>V. Benedicamus Domino.</b> <b>R. Deo gratias.</b> <b>V. Fidelium animae per misericordiam Dei</b> <b>Requiescant in pace.</b> R. Amen.  <b><i>Pater Noster (if Compline doesn't follow immediately)</i></b></p>	<p><b>+May the Lord bless us, protect us from evil and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.</b></p>

Table 3: Structural Comparison of Vespers 1911 versus Evening Prayer 1971 (with elements of difference highlighted in red)<sup>112</sup>

The basic structure of Evening Prayer is essentially the same as that of the pre-Vatican II Vespers. It is within the subdivisions of the prayer that differences begin to appear. The

<sup>112</sup> “The Ordinary of the Liturgy of the Hours for Ordinary Time” from The Liturgy of the Hours According to the Roman Rite, Volume 3, 668-672; *GILH* 37-54, 137-138, 179-202 Hausmann, 81-85



Introduction contains the first change: an initial *Pater Noster* (Our Father) and *Ave Maria* (Hail Mary) have been removed. These traditional prayers were officially added to the beginning of each Hour in the 17th century by Clement X, although it is believed that Clement officially ratified a popular practice already in place.<sup>113</sup> Pius Parsch, a German liturgist known for his work in the liturgical renewal movement in Europe prior to Vatican II, suggests that the presence of these venerable prayers of the Catholic tradition provides a brief opportunity for the celebrant(s) to collect themselves prior to beginning the rest of the prayer.<sup>114</sup> Whatever the intended purpose, these prayers in this particular place apparently represented an unnecessary addition and were not of integral importance to the Hour and so they were removed: a demonstration of returning to a “noble simplicity” as called for by *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.<sup>115</sup> Evening Prayer begins with Psalm 70:2, the same versicle (diminutive of “verse”) used in Vespers, the purpose of which, according to Parsch, is to allow the prayer to begin easily and gradually.<sup>116</sup> Its connection to the beginning of this Hour is attributed to St. Benedict, who considered it a petition for grace.<sup>117</sup> In celebrations in common it is prayed as call and response, and the Sign of the Cross is the appropriate gesture of accompaniment.<sup>118</sup> In both forms the versicle is followed by the Glory to the Father prayer, the ancient Trinitarian doxology, which is followed by an “Alleluia,” the traditional word of praise to God. All of this suggests that whatever else this Hour is about, it is about praise of God. In Vespers this would conclude the

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<sup>113</sup> Campbell, 25

<sup>114</sup> Parsch, 113. Parsch also suggests the possibility that the presence of the Our Father at the beginning of the Hour can be ascribed to the informal rubric that a pause for silent reflection in liturgy should last about the same amount of time as it would take to pray the Our Father, and that eventually, the initial silence to collect oneself that lasted as long as an Our Father became the practice of reciting the prayer at that time (111).

<sup>115</sup> SC 34

<sup>116</sup> Parsch, 112-113

<sup>117</sup> Parsch, 114

<sup>118</sup> *GILH* 266

Introduction, but in Evening Prayer, especially in communal celebration, a suitable hymn is sung to set the tone for the time of day or to express a theme for the celebrated feast, to make an “easy and pleasant opening to the prayer.”<sup>119</sup> For example, the traditional Martin Rinkart (d.1649) hymn, “Now Thank Thee All Our God” featuring dual themes of thanksgiving and praise is recommended for Sunday Evening Prayer I in Week I of Ordinary Time.<sup>120</sup>

We can see from the movement of conversation within the Introduction of Evening Prayer, that a priority for “full, active, and conscious” participation is established. The elimination of unnecessary elements provides better focus and aids in the conscious aspect of participation. The versicle, because it is Psalm prayer, is of dialogic movement: words of Scripture given by God to us are used by us as our prayer to God. Because it is very brief, it functions as a kind of an initial greeting between God and us before the extended prayer conversation takes place. The doxology with alleluia, our prayers of praise, represents a movement of conversation from us to God. The hymn, another movement of conversation from us to God, provides an additional benefit of establishing community amongst the participants through song, also facilitating “full, active, and conscious” participation.

The second section and largest conversation movement of Evening Prayer is the psalmody. There are two differences between the psalmody of Vespers and Evening Prayer. The first is the reduction in the number of Psalms from five to three. This reduction likely contributes to a more conscious participation in that the content of five Psalms is a lot to absorb in one sitting, mentally and emotionally. And though it can be argued that three Psalms are also a lot to absorb, the reduction in number is recognition that in this case less is more, and three is

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<sup>119</sup> *GILH* 42, 173

<sup>120</sup> The Liturgy of the Hours According to the Roman Rite, Volume III (Ordinary Time Weeks 1-17), 677

optimal. The second difference is the deployment of a New Testament canticle in the psalmody. While the New Testament canticle functions as a psalm and so does not alter the structure of the Hour significantly, it does occupy the last (third) position in the psalmody in a manner analogous to that of the New Testament reading following that from the Old Testament in the Liturgy of the Word, reflecting the temporal relationship between the Testaments of Scripture. In this dialogic movement of prayer, the opportunity for “full, active, and conscious” participation is also enhanced through the use of antiphons, recited (or preferably sung by all) at the beginning and ending of each psalm, and optionally after each strophe of the psalm.<sup>121</sup> “The General Instruction” explains the purpose and benefits of such deployment as follows:

The antiphons help to bring out the literary genre of the psalm; they highlight some theme that may otherwise not attract the attention it deserves; they suggest an individual tone in a psalm, varying with different contexts: indeed, as long as farfetched accommodated senses are avoided, antiphons are of great value in helping toward an understanding of the typological meaning or the meaning appropriate to the feast; they can also add pleasure and variety to the recitation of the psalms. (*GILH* 113)

Lastly, each Psalm or *incisa* concludes with the Glory to the Father doxology, a traditional practice that allows the Old Testament prayer to finish on a note of praise and with a Christological and Trinitarian sense.<sup>122</sup>

The next section of Evening Prayer, the Reading, is defined by a short (2 to 4 verses) reading from the New Testament other than the Gospels, a movement of prayer from God to us. In this there is no change from Vespers.<sup>123</sup> “The General Instruction” suggests an option for a

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<sup>121</sup> *GILH* 114, 123

<sup>122</sup> *GILH* 123

<sup>123</sup> Parsch, 100-101. Parsch explains that the word *Capitulum*, the official designation for a short reading in the Divine Office, literally means “little chapter.” The reading was chosen to reflect one of the thoughts of the day or of the celebrated feast.

period of silence to follow the reading.<sup>124</sup> The part of the structure that does change is what follows, namely the prayer movement from us to God in response to God's Word. In Evening Prayer, the response to the reading consists of a pair of Scripture versicles arranged in a call and response pattern. In Vespers, the response included the traditional "*Deo gratias*" immediately following the reading, then a hymn, then a versicle response. While a hymn could certainly serve as an appropriate response to a reading from Scripture, because the reading at this Hour is short, a hymn as response might tend to overshadow the reading by virtue of comparative length. Furthermore, a hymn and Scripture versicles together would certainly overshadow the reading. The change to employ a response of more modest length to the Scripture Reading speaks to the priority for "noble simplicity."

The fourth section of Evening Prayer is the Gospel Canticle, the Magnificat (Lk 1:46-55), and as Scriptural prayer it is, like the psalmody, dialogic: the Word of God becomes our words to God. The rubrics described in "The General Instruction" emphasize the importance of this part of Evening Prayer. We stand as we do for the Gospel reading in the Liturgy of the Word.<sup>125</sup> The gesture of the Sign of the Cross coincides with the opening words of the canticle.<sup>126</sup> An incensation of the altar, the priest-presider, and the people may also occur.<sup>127</sup> In this section of Evening Prayer there are no structural differences when compared to that of Vespers.

The fifth section of Evening Prayer is Intercessory Prayer, and the initial structure of this section is similar to the corresponding section of Vespers, called *Preces Feriales*. "The General

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<sup>124</sup> *GILH* 44. The General Instruction does not indicate or recommend how this silence should be observed, either in mental reflection upon the reading to connect the reading to one's situation, or as opportunity for the movement of prayer already established to continue, that is to allow God to speak to one's heart in silence.

<sup>125</sup> *GILH* 263

<sup>126</sup> *GILH* 266

<sup>127</sup> *GILH* 261. The incensing of the altar demonstrates a connection between Evening Prayer and the Eucharistic Liturgy.

Instruction” advises that the Liturgy of the Hours is above all else the prayer of the whole Church, for the whole Church and indeed for the whole world.<sup>128</sup> As such, in the Intercessions of Evening Prayer universal petitions should take precedence over all others and should include prayers for the Church and its leaders; prayers for secular authorities; prayers for the poor, the sick, and the sorrowful; prayers for the world, especially for peace.<sup>129</sup> Local or personal petitions may be included but should be crafted so that the petition is addressed directly to God and linked with praise for God and acknowledgment of God’s glory or a reference to the history of salvation.<sup>130</sup> The last petition of the series is always for the dead.<sup>131</sup> The movement of prayer is from us to God.

It is at this point, following all of the other intercessions and prayers of petition, and emphasizing its dignity as the prayer of petition par excellence, that the Our Father appears in Evening Prayer.<sup>132</sup> As Scriptural prayer it represents a dialogic—God’s Word to us and our words to God—crescendo to the intercessory prayers. The Our Father is followed by a concluding prayer that seeks to summarize the character and content of what has gone before in this Hour of prayer.<sup>133</sup> In Vespers an additional set of petitionary prayers called the *Suffragia* followed the “concluding prayer.”<sup>134</sup> These prayers were similar to the *Preces Feriales* but invoked the intercession of a saint for whatever was the object of the petition.<sup>135</sup> Again we see the priority of “noble simplicity” demonstrated by the exclusion of these prayers from Evening Prayer.

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<sup>128</sup> *GILH* 187

<sup>129</sup> *GILH* 187

<sup>130</sup> *GILH* 185, 188, 191

<sup>131</sup> *GILH* 186

<sup>132</sup> *GILH* 194

<sup>133</sup> *GILH* 199

<sup>134</sup> Parsch, 110

<sup>135</sup> Parsch, 110

Evening Prayer concludes with a simple prayer for blessing, protection, and salvation and is accompanied in gesture by the Sign of the Cross. The concluding movement of prayer is from us to God. The conclusion to Vespers included a brief call and response prayer of praise, and included a petition for mercy for the faithful departed. It was at this point in Vespers, after the final good-byes were said, so to speak, that the Our Father was prayed (for the second time), but only if one did not immediately continue with Compline.<sup>136</sup> According to Parsch, the placement of the Our Father at the very end of the time of prayer was considered an indication of highest esteem, and was a practice supposedly attributed to St. Benedict.<sup>137</sup> The change in Evening Prayer of the placement of the Our Father proximate to the prayers of petition seems to make more sense from a perspective of genre, and if the last position within a group is the more esteemed position, then the position of the Our Father after all the other prayers of petition honors that traditional value. This seems to be a superior arrangement compared to that of Vespers. Placement of the Our Father outside the final “Amen” of Vespers, and then only if one was not immediately continuing with the next Hour of prayer seems, at least to my sensibilities, not the most respectful approach by virtue of the transitory nature of the placement. Furthermore, the transitory nature of the position of the Our Father in Vespers was the result of the less than optimal practice of praying elements of the Divine Office at whatever hour of the day was most convenient to do so.

I have analyzed the structure of the Hour of Evening Prayer in some detail. The changes to the Hour of Morning Prayer are virtually identical to those described above for Evening

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<sup>136</sup> Hausmann, 82

<sup>137</sup> Parsch, 105

Prayer as the structure of those two Hours is virtually identical. The structural changes to the other Hours are analogous.

### Some Conclusions

The changes to the structure of the Divine Office that produced the Liturgy of the Hours are modifications to the “what” and “how” of our praying, which informs the “what” and the “how” of our believing. Recalling the root meaning of our word, in Chapter One I noted that Liturgy is our remembrance of and being present to the free work/gift of Jesus’ Passion-Death-Resurrection-Ascension. I suggested the use of the word *Liturgia* in place of “Liturgy” to emphasize the understanding of Liturgy as encompassing the celebrations of Word, Eucharist, and Sacraments, as well as that celebration which seeks to sanctify the day through the praying of the Psalms, namely, the Liturgy of the Hours. In Chapter Two, I noted the belief of the Church as expressed in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* that *Liturgia* was the public prayer of the whole Church. The issue that confronted the Church at the Second Vatican Council was the need for liturgical reform because the “what” and “how” of our liturgical prayer had come dangerously close to suggesting that *Liturgia* was not in fact what we claimed it to be, that *Liturgia* was the work of the clergy done on behalf of the people and that the Divine Office especially belonged to the ordained and professed. The Church recognized a need to reform the “what” and “how” of our prayer to better articulate the belief that *Liturgia* was indeed the prayer of the whole People of God. The issue then is whether or not the structural reforms of the Liturgy of the Hours accomplished this, or at least pointed us in the right direction. Can we say, from a structural point of view, that the Liturgy of the Hours is the prayer of the whole People of God?

What can be said at this point is that the structural reforms to the Liturgy of Hours initiated by Vatican II have moved us closer to the goal. Does combining the two Hours of prayer traditionally associated with morning into a single event facilitate the Hours as the prayer of the whole People of God? Yes, incrementally so, both thematically and practically. Does raising the importance of Morning and Evening Prayer and encouraging their common public celebration facilitate the Hours as the prayer of the whole People of God? Possibly, in that it gives good specific direction for actual observance. Does creating the moveable Office of Readings from middle-of-the-night Matins facilitate the Hours as the prayer of the whole People of God? Yes, by removing a potential major practical impediment to its observation by all but a very few. Does reducing the amount of psalmody in each Hour facilitate the Hours as the prayer of the whole People of God? Yes, incrementally so, both from a practical aspect of available time, and from the emphasis on quality versus quantity of prayer. Does the suppression of imprecatory Psalms and verses facilitate the Hours as the prayer of the whole People of God? Yes, by removing a potential obstacle to prayer—recognizing that not all Psalm prayer is appropriate as Christian prayer. Does the eliminating of some and rearranging of other of the elements in the Hour of Evening Prayer (and the other Hours) facilitate the Hours as the prayer of the whole People of God? Yes, incrementally so, by simplifying the prayer. Does praying in the vernacular language facilitate the Hours as the prayer of the whole People of God? Yes, essentially so. The structural reforms that created the Liturgy of the Hours from the Divine Office have adjusted the *lex orandi* so that the *lex credendi* is more consistent with the ideal of *Liturgia* as God's work/gift of the Paschal Mystery which the entire People of God remember, celebrate, and continue.



In the next chapter I will look at some specific changes to the contents of the psalmody in the Hour of Evening Prayer to investigate the effects of those changes on the theology of Evening Prayer and whether or not these changes facilitate the Liturgy of the Hours as the prayer of the entire People of God.

#### CHAPTER FOUR: EVENING PRAYER THEOLOGY OF CONTENT

In the preceding chapter, I examined some significant changes to the structure of the Liturgy of the Hours as a result of the directives of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*: the reduction in the number of Hours with the merging of Lauds and Prime into Morning Prayer, the reconstitution of Matins as the Office of Readings, and the distribution of the Psalter over a four-week cycle. I noted that these changes significantly enhanced the opportunity for lay participation, fulfilling the priority at least theoretically of remaking the Liturgy of the Hours as the prayer of the entire Church which it has historically been held to be. I observed that these changes supported the theological priority of the Hours as the liturgical prayer of sanctification of the day. After looking at these macro changes to the Hours, I then looked in detail at the structural changes that transformed Vespers into Evening Prayer, noting the removal of extra elements that had complicated the Hour, and how the different movements of prayer were positioned within the Hour—those places where God speaks to us from Scripture, where we speak to God in intercessory prayer, and where the prayer conversation moves in both directions simultaneously in the psalmody and Gospel canticle.

In this chapter, I continue my focus on the Hour of Evening Prayer, and move from the consideration of the changes to its structure to a consideration of the changes to the contents of Evening Prayer, that is to the specific texts and expressions of prayer now contained in this Hour, with special consideration given to those changes resulting from the redistribution of the Psalter. My strategy is to confine my attention to the seven hours of Evening Prayer in Week I of Ordinary Time, providing a reasonable limit to the scope of investigation for this part of the project, while at the same time including sufficient material to observe theological patterns so that implications for the other three weeks of Evening Prayer might be drawn from those

patterns. Focusing on a complete week of Evening Prayer allows for a detailed look at all of the New Testament Canticles introduced into the post-Vatican II version of this Hour, and how these canticles now shape the theology of this Hour. Before I begin this investigation I will first make some general observations with respect to the content of the single-week cycle of pre-Vatican II (1911) Vespers as the basis of comparison for my subsequent observations of Evening Prayer.

### Pre-Vatican II Vespers

As noted in Table 2 in Chapter One, the single week cycle of 1911 Vespers employs Psalms 110 through 145 in sequence over the seven days beginning with Sunday, but with some exceptions: six Psalms—Psalms 117, 118, 119, and Psalms 134, 135, and 142—were assigned to other Hours. Looking at the exceptions gives an initial indication of a theological priority for Vespers. Psalms 117 and 118 appear in Lauds, on Monday and Sunday respectively, and are both Psalms of praise. Psalm 118, which contains the verse, “The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone” (Ps 118:22 RGP), has a strong connection to the theme of the Resurrection and hence connection to the prayers of the morning, Lauds especially, owing to its use in the Synoptic Gospel tradition.<sup>138</sup> Psalm 119, the longest Psalm of the Psalter, is essentially 22 smaller Psalms linked by the common theme of praise of God’s Law and those who follow it, and by its acrostic construction.<sup>139</sup> This Psalm was deployed across the daytime hours of Prime, Terce, Sext, and None of Sunday suggesting a closer connection between the theme of God’s Law with the daytime Hours rather than with Vespers. In similar manner, Psalm 134 (with a specific reference to night) was assigned to Sunday Compline, Psalm 135 (another

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<sup>138</sup> In the Parable of the Tenants (Mt 21:33-46; Lk 20:9-19), the Jesus of both the Matthew and Luke traditions, identifies himself with the vineyard owner’s son who is killed by the tenants, and quotes Ps 118:22 to prophetically foretell the ultimate Godly reversal of his Resurrection.

<sup>139</sup> NAB, 708; NRSV, 828.

Psalm of high praise) to Tuesday Lauds, and Psalm 143 (a lament and prayer for deliverance) to Friday Lauds because their themes seemed more appropriate other Hours, less so to Vespers.<sup>140</sup>

However, while identifying why a handful of Psalms, which are proximate in the Psalter to the Psalms of Vespers, were assigned to other Hours might suggest a line of theological reasoning for those other Hours, it does not explain the situation of the remaining Psalms of the sequence being assigned to Vespers. In this sequence of 30 Psalms, the images of sunset, evening, or nightfall appear in only three: Psalms 136, 139 and 141.

Using Boadt's classifications by genre, we can observe that of the 30 psalms assigned to 1911 Vespers four (Pss 111, 113, 114, 145) were hymns of praise, four (Pss 116, 124, 136, 138) were Psalms of thanksgiving, five (Pss 120, 130, 139, 141, 142) were individual laments, four were community laments (Pss 123, 126, 129, 137), one (Ps 115) was a liturgical Psalm, three (Pss 112, 127, 128) were wisdom Psalms, three (Ps 121, 125, 131) were Psalms of trust, three (Pss 110, 132, 144) were royal Psalms, one (Ps 122) was a Zion hymn, leaving two unclassified (Pss 133, 140).<sup>141</sup> Using Brueggemann's classifications of orientation, disorientation, and new orientation (Chapter One), the Psalm sequence as it was deployed in Vespers changes direction 19 times within the 30 Psalms.<sup>142</sup> In other words, the sequence of the Psalms deployed in 1911 Vespers offers no discernible pattern, other than that of the Book of Psalms as a whole, whose sequence reflects the fairly random pattern of life itself. Therefore, we could conclude that the priority for 1911 Vespers was to honor the tradition of *lectio continua*<sup>143</sup> and facilitate the praying of the entire Psalter in a week's time, no more, no less. Pius Parsch also observes that

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<sup>140</sup> Parsch, 47 (133 LXX), 216 (142 LXX)

<sup>141</sup> Boadt, 282

<sup>142</sup> Brueggemann, 28, 45, 47-48, 74, 104, 131, 139-140, 161.

<sup>143</sup> *Lectio continua* is the practice of reading Scripture, some each day, and continuing on subsequent days from where one left off the previous day. The practice of 1911 Vespers was a *lectio continua* of Psalms 110 to 144.

the assignment of the Psalms employed in 1911 Vespers, unlike Lauds and Compline where the Psalms are specifically assigned, follows no particular pattern other than that of numerical sequence. He suggests that this leaves ample room for the Holy Spirit to “inspire the faithful with fitting thoughts and sentiments.”<sup>144</sup>

### Post-Vatican II Evening Prayer

The process of liturgical reform initiated with *Sacrosanctum Concilium* produced important changes to the Hour now known as Evening Prayer, as indicated in the previous chapter with respect to the structure of the Hour. In addition, the changes to the content of the Hour are highly significant. With the introduction of the Four-week Psalter, all Hours of the Liturgy of the Hours were assigned fewer and different Psalms. The assignment of the majority of the Psalter to only two Hours, Matins and Vespers, in the single-week cycle was replaced by a distribution of most of the Psalter through three Hours—the Office of Readings, Morning Prayer, and Evening Prayer—over four weeks. Psalms are assigned to these three Hours roughly in sequential order beginning with the Office of Readings, then Morning Prayer, then Evening Prayer, and progressing from Sunday to Saturday through the four weeks.<sup>145</sup> Generally speaking, Psalms 1 through 36 appear in Week I, Psalms 37 through 67 appear in Week II, Psalms 67 through 116 appear in Week III, Psalm 119 and Psalms 120 to 128 hold a special place in the Daytime Hours across all weeks, and Psalms 129 through 150 appear in Week IV, but there are numerous exceptions.<sup>146</sup> In addition to deviations from the normal sequence of 1 to 150, certain Psalms appear more than once in the cycle. (See Chapter Three.) Both the deviations from

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<sup>144</sup> Parsch, 210-211.

<sup>145</sup> “The Four-Week Psalter” in *The Liturgy of the Hours According to the Roman Rite, Volume III (Ordinary Time Weeks 1-17)* (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Company, 1975), 675-1288

<sup>146</sup> Ibid

See Table 5 (Appendix) for a visual display of the deployment of the Psalms through the Four-Week Psalter.

sequence and duplicate appearances are theologically significant: in the case of a deviation from sequence, that a particular Psalm is better suited to a particular Hour, or, in the case of multiple deployments, that the theme of a particular Psalm is of greater importance.

The distribution of 150 Psalms over more Hours, even with multiple appearances of certain Psalms, provides the opportunity to employ additional Canticles from the Old Testament as well as Canticles from the New Testament, in the psalmody of Morning and Evening Prayer respectively. This affects the theological content of those Hours, especially Evening Prayer since the New Testament Canticles belong solely to that Hour. Table 4 below shows the distribution of Psalms and Canticles to the Hours of Week I of the Four-Week Psalter.<sup>147</sup>

Week I	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>Invitatory</b>	95	95	95	95	95	95	95
<b>Office of Readings</b>	1, 2, 3	6, 9	10, 12	18:2-30	18:31-51	35:1-2,3c, 9-19, 22-23	105
<b>Morning Prayer</b>	63:2-9 OT canticle 149	5:2-10, 12-13 OT canticle 29	24 OT canticle 33	36 OT canticle 47	57 OT canticle 48	51 OT canticle 100	119: 145-152 OT canticle 117
<b>Daytime Prayers:</b> ----- <b>(used if more than 1 Daytime Hour is prayed):</b>	118  ----- 120-122 or 123-125 or 126-128	19B 7:2-18  ----- 120-122 or 123-125 or 126-128	119:1-8 13 14  ----- 120-122 or 123-125 or 126-128	119:9-16 17  ----- 120-122 or 123-125 or 126-128	119:17-24 25  ----- 120-122 or 123-125 or 126-128	119:25-32 26 28:1-3,6-9  ----- 120-122 or 123-125 or 126-128	119:33-40 34:2-23  ----- 120-122 or 123-125 or 126-128
<b>Evening Prayer</b>	110:1-5,7 114 NT canticle	11 15 NT canticle	20 21:2-8,14 NT canticle	27  NT canticle	30 32 NT canticle	41 46 NT canticle	141:1-9 142 NT canticle
<b>Night Prayer</b>	91	86	143:1-11	31:2-6 130	16	88	4 134

<sup>147</sup> For the Liturgy of the Hours, the celebration of Sunday, the day of the Lord's Resurrection, as well as the celebrations of certain other major feasts, is considered to begin on the prior Saturday evening, leveraging the Jewish understanding of the day beginning at sundown, and emphasizing the liturgical priority of Sunday. Evening Prayer on Saturday is referred to as Sunday Evening Prayer I; Evening Prayer on Sunday is referred to as Sunday Evening Prayer II. (See "The Four-Week Psalter".)

Table 4: Psalm distribution in post-Vatican II (1971) Evening Prayer Week I (Hebrew numbering)<sup>148</sup>  
NT canticles—Sunday I (Saturday) = Phil 2:6-11; Sunday II = Rev 19:1-7; Monday = Eph 1:3-10;  
Tuesday = Rev 4:11, 5:9,10,12; Wednesday = Col 1:12-20; Thursday = Rev 11:17-18, 12:10b-12a;  
Friday = Rev 15:3-4<sup>149</sup>

What follows is an analysis of each of the seven days of Week I Evening Prayer, tracing the theological characteristics of the Psalms, Canticles, and Readings of the Hour for each day. While an exhaustive exegesis of each Psalm is beyond the scope of this project, the examination of the psalmody will ask the following questions: As conversation from us to God, what are we saying to God? As Scripture, that is, as conversation from God to us, what is God telling us? Do the themes of the prayer conversation, or any other aspect of the prayer, connect this element of psalmody to the particular day or to the time of day? My purpose is to examine the theological statements of the psalmody, and to suggest reasons why the particular elements are used in Evening Prayer. My assumption in this process is two-fold: that because (mostly) different Psalms are assigned to Evening Prayer than were assigned to Vespers, the changes were made with a purpose; and, if a Psalm appears out of sequence from the regular pattern of 1 to 150, that interruption of sequence must be intentional and therefore significant.

I will ask similar questions about each day's short reading from Scripture, recognizing that the single movement of this part of the Hour is from God to us. Parsch, referring to the Divine Office, asserts that the purpose of the short reading is "to express in terse, scriptural phrases one of the main thoughts of the day."<sup>150</sup> The additional questions I will ask of each reading in Evening Prayer are: Is Parsch's assertion operative here, and, if so, how?

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<sup>148</sup> The Liturgy of the Hours According to the Roman Rite—Volume III, Weeks 1-17 (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Company, 1975), 677-820

<sup>149</sup> Ibid

<sup>150</sup> Parsch 101

The objective of this analysis is to validate the part of my thesis that asserts that the current version of the Liturgy of the Hours is a superior theological expression for the current era compared with the pre-Vatican II Divine Office. While not an exhaustive inquiry, the analysis that follows is a representative sample sufficient to demonstrate my hypothesis.

Week I, Sunday Evening Prayer I (Ps 141:1-9; Ps 142; Phil 2:6-11; Rom 11:33-36)<sup>151</sup>

Psalm 141:1-9 is the first Psalm in the Four-Week Psalter. Week I begins with Sunday, with the Evening Prayer of Saturday evening considered the first Hour of Sunday.<sup>152</sup> In effect, Saturday has no celebration of Evening Prayer, whereas Sunday has two: Evening Prayer I on Saturday and Evening Prayer II on Sunday. The selection of Psalm 141 is significant because it is not anywhere near the beginning of the ordered sequence of Psalms starting with Psalm 1. This placement should be considered a nod to an ancient tradition. As mentioned in Chapter One, some of the oldest written documentation of the tradition of Christian evening prayer, as well as subsequent sources from later centuries, indicate that Psalm 141 was part of that tradition called the cathedral or “people’s” Office. The use of Psalm 141 is interesting in another way in that it is an example of a suppression of an imprecatory verse, the last verse of the Psalm, which reads: “Let the wicked together fall into their traps, while I pursue my way unharmed” (Ps 141:10 Revised Grail Psalter).

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<sup>151</sup> “The Four-Week Psalter” in The Liturgy of the Hours According to the Roman Rite, Volume III (Ordinary Time Weeks 1-17), 678-681

<sup>152</sup> “The Four-Week Psalter” in The Liturgy of the Hours According to the Roman Rite, Volume III (Ordinary Time Weeks 1-17), 677



This Psalm is connected to the time of day by the specific references in the second verse to incense and the evening oblation, as incense was the prescribed offering to attend Israelite evening prayer (Ex 30:7-8).<sup>153</sup>

Let my prayer be accepted as incense before you,  
the raising of my hands like an evening oblation. (Ps 141:2 RGP)

The Psalm is an individual lament where we, in effect, pray: “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” As Word of God, the message to us is that God is the One to whom we should turn for guidance, protection, and deliverance.

The second part of the psalmody of this Hour is Psalm 142. While there is no specific connection to the time of evening expressed by the psalmist, this individual lament does continue the themes of the prayer conversation begun in Psalm 141:1-9, and likely follows the preceding Psalm for that reason. We cry out to the Lord when things seem hopeless, and we know that God already knows our circumstance. As Word of God, the message to us is that God is the One to whom we should turn, and when we do so, goodness will be the result.

The final part of the psalmody for this Hour is the Pauline Canticle from the Letter to the Philippians (Phil 2:6-11). While there is no obvious connection to evening, its poetic references to the Incarnation and the Pascal Mystery are an especially good connection to Sunday, the day of the Lord’s Resurrection. Its reference to Jesus’ Passion, Jesus’ offering of himself as our sin offering, is thematically complementary with the psalmists’ laments that precede it. God speaks to us of the most essential event of salvation history: the Lord Jesus Christ. Our prayer to God is best described by the last verse of the passage: “JESUS CHRIST IS LORD!” (Phil 2:11).<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Konrad Schaefer, *Psalms* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2001), 330

<sup>154</sup> “The Four-Week Psalter” in *The Liturgy of the Hours According to the Roman Rite, Volume III (Ordinary Time, Weeks 1-17)*, 681. The capitalization is part of this Psalter’s presentation.

The Scripture reading for this Hour is Romans 11:33-36. In these few verses it seems that Paul responds to both the psalmists' complaints and to the mystery of Jesus' suffering, death, and subsequent glorification. Romans 11:34 answers these questions with a question, a paraphrase from Isaiah: "For 'who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?'"

Week I, Sunday Evening Prayer II (Ps 110:1-5,7; Ps 114; Rev 19:1-7; 2 Cor 1:3-4)<sup>155</sup>

The selection of Psalm 110 for Sunday Evening Prayer is significant for several reasons. It, too, is taken from latter part of the traditional numbering sequence of the Psalms. Its placement in this Hour should be considered a nod to traditional observance. From the time of St. Benedict and continuing through the 20th century, Psalm 110 has been part of the Vespers of the Divine Office.<sup>156</sup> The use of Psalm 110 in Evening Prayer II of Sunday is interesting in that it is already a second example of a suppression of an imprecatory verse—verse six of the Psalm—which, referring to God's anointed one, reads: "He brings judgment among the nations, and heaps the bodies high; he shatters heads throughout the wide earth" (Ps 110:6 RGP). Psalm 110 is also an example of a Psalm that appears in the Four-Week Psalter more than once, four times exactly, in Sunday Evening Prayer in each of the four weeks.<sup>157</sup> Through poetic representation the psalmist's lord is described as both prince and priest (Ps 110:1-4) and ultimately, too, as judge (Ps 110:5). In the Synoptic Gospel tradition, Jesus refers to this Psalm (Mk 12:35-37, Mt 22:41-46, Lk 20:41-44) to address the issue of his identity as Messiah. So while the Psalm has no specific connection to the time of day through any internal reference, it

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<sup>155</sup> "The Four-Week Psalter" in The Liturgy of the Hours According to the Roman Rite, Volume III (Ordinary Time Weeks 1-17), 697-700

<sup>156</sup> See Tables 2 and 4, above

<sup>157</sup> "The Four-Week Psalter" in The Liturgy of the Hours According to the Roman Rite, Volume III (Ordinary Time Weeks 1-17), 697, 842, 992, 1138

can readily be connected to the day of the week, Sunday, the Lord's Day, when it is interpreted through the lens of the Gospel tradition, as its historical observance suggests. As Word of God, this Psalm instructs us that the Messiah is ruler, priest, and judge. As prayer of the Church, this Psalm is a prayer of praise for who Christ is—Messiah—and what Christ does—rule, offer sacrifice, and judge.

The appearance of Psalm 114 as the second Psalm in the psalmody of Sunday Evening Prayer II is interesting in that it is not the next Psalm in numerical sequence after Psalm 110, indicating a priority for its content.<sup>158</sup> Psalm 114 poetically describes the liberation of the Israelites from bondage in Egypt and their entrance into the Promised Land as examples of God's power and presence. As Word of God, this Psalm instructs us that God was and is present with God's people. Our prayer then, is the praise of remembrance of what the God has done for God's people in history and the realization of God's power in the present.

The New Testament Canticle for this Hour is Revelation 19:1-7. The scene is part of the vision of John the Seer in which he sees the throne room of God and hears the victory song of the "great multitude in heaven" (Rev 19:1), at the wedding of the Lamb (Rev 19:7b). The scene of the wedding of the Lamb is a powerful connection to the Paschal Mystery, the Passion-Death-Resurrection-Ascension of the Lamb of God. As Word of God, the vision is a promise of God's ultimate victory over evil. As our prayer, it is the song of praise for that victory which is both already and yet to come.

The Scripture reading for this Hour (2 Cor 1:3-4) connects the themes of the role of the Messiah, God's saving actions in history, and God's ultimate victory yet to come. Paul confirms

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<sup>158</sup> Interestingly enough, the intervening Psalms, Pss 111-113, appear in the Four-Week Psalter in Sunday Evening Prayer II of Week III, Sunday Evening Prayer II of Week IV, and Sunday Evening Prayer I, Week III, respectively. See "The Four-Week Psalter," 993, 1139, 974. The privileging of Psalm 114 in the sequence is an example of *lectio selecta*.

to us that our God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, provides us mercy and consolation, and strength for us to do likewise. The coherence of themes from the psalmody through the Scripture reading is quite strong.

Week I, Monday Evening Prayer (Ps 11; Ps 15; Eph 1:3-10; Col 1:9b-11)<sup>159</sup>

In Monday Evening Prayer of this first week, we encounter two Psalms, 11 and 15, from the first part of the Book of Psalms, though not of consecutive number. These Psalms contain the common theme of the Lord as a God of justice. Although there is no specific connection in either Psalm to sunset or end of day, these Psalms are appropriate for a time of reflection on past behaviors and activities, to which the end of the day naturally lends itself. As the Word of God, these Psalms remind us that justice is a priority for God. As our prayers to God, they are prayers of praise that this is so.

The New Testament Canticle for this Hour is Ephesians 1:3-10. While the preceding Psalms speak of God's justice, this Canticle speaks of God's mercy: God has forgiven our sins through the blamelessness and blood of Christ, a generosity of immeasurable proportions. The image of the blood of Christ, then, is a connection to the overarching theme of *Liturgia*, the remembrance, celebration, and being present to the Paschal Mystery. As the Word of God, this passage poetically and gracefully informs us that Jesus is our savior from sin. As our prayer to God this Canticle is a prayer of praise that this is so and will be so, in the fullness of time.

In the Scripture reading for this Hour (Col 1:9b-11) the Word of God written by the Apostle express a hope that we will learn God's will, which we understood from the Psalms includes a priority for justice, and that we will live accordingly. It is also a promise of the

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<sup>159</sup> "The Four-Week Psalter" in The Liturgy of the Hours According to the Roman Rite, Volume III (Ordinary Time, Weeks 1-17), 716-720

strength of endurance for whatever may come. In conformance with Parsch's theory previously mentioned, this reading from Scripture suggests the themes of pursuing God's will (for justice), and the promise of strength to do so, through God's glory (of which Jesus is the ultimate example).

Week I, Tuesday Evening Prayer (Ps 20; Ps 21:2-8,14; Rev 4:11, 5:9,10,12; 1 Jn 3:1a,2)<sup>160</sup>

In Tuesday Evening Prayer of this first week, we find two Psalms, 20 and 21, related by the common subject of the king. Psalm 20 is a prayer for the king's victory; Psalm 21 is an account of how the Lord answered the psalmist's prayer for the king. Psalm 21 is the third example of suppression of imprecatory verses. In this case, five verses, more than a third of the Psalm, have been excluded from the Psalter. There is no specific connection in either Psalm to sunset or end of day. As the Word of God, these Psalms remind us to rely on the Lord in time of trial, and that the Lord is faithful since the Lord has answered prayers in times past. As our prayers to God, Psalm 20 presents a prayer of petition for blessing, and Psalm 21 presents a prayer of thanksgiving for prayers answered.

The New Testament Canticle for this Hour is constructed from several verses from Chapters 4 and 5 of the Book of Revelation, and continues the use of kingly images of the preceding psalmody. In these chapters of Revelation, the scene is God's heavenly throne room, where the Lamb is present, the Lamb who has purchased with his blood persons of every race and tongue, of every people and nation, and made of them into a kingdom (Rev 5:9-10). The blood of the Lamb and the glory of the heavenly liturgy are connections to the overarching theme of *Liturgia*—the remembrance, celebration, and presence to the Paschal Mystery. As the Word

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid, 739-742

of God, this passage poetically and gracefully reminds us that we have been purchased at a price.

As our prayer to God this Canticle is a prayer of praise acknowledging our redemption.

In the Scripture Reading for this Hour (1 Jn 3:1a,2) God tells us that because of God's love we can be called children of God. As God's children we are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of God's own."<sup>161</sup> Therefore, the psalmists' prayers lifted to God on behalf of the king, can, indeed, be our prayers, too. Parsch's theory that the Scripture Reading should demonstrate a coherence of theme with the psalmody is supported in this Hour.

Week I, Wednesday Evening Prayer (Ps 27; Col 1:12-20; Jas 1:22,25)<sup>162</sup>

In Wednesday Evening Prayer of the first week, we encounter a single, longer Psalm, Psalm 27, which is divided into two sections. As mentioned in Chapter Two, a goal of the study groups was to arrange each Hour so that the length of the psalmody, not just the number of Psalms, would be consistent across all Hours. I can best describe the appropriateness of the connection of Psalm 27 to the Hour of Evening Prayer with a personal anecdote. When my children were young, our ritual at bedtime included a prayer and either a story or a song. At one bedtime, four-year old Anne-Marie suggested, "Daddy, sing the song about not being afraid of the dark." "Which song is that, sweetheart?" I asked, not remembering any specific song that might fit that requirement. "Daddy, you know, the song you sang in church this morning." Earlier that day (Sunday) we had sung this antiphon for the Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 27 that day): "The Lord is my light and my salvation; of whom should I be afraid, of whom should I be afraid." For my four-year old, the application of this Psalm of light and reassurance to the

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<sup>161</sup> 1 Pt 2:9

<sup>162</sup> "The Four-Week Psalter" in The Liturgy of the Hours According to the Roman Rite, Volume III (Ordinary Time, Weeks 1-17), 759-763

uncertainty inherent in the arrival of the darkness of evening time was understood. The Psalm is a one of orientation, of description of right relationship between God and us. In the first verse, the psalmist describes the Lord as light, help, and stronghold. In the final verse, we are urged to “wait for the Lord, be strong and stouthearted” (Ps 27:14 RGP). As our conversation to God, this Psalm is our prayer of praise and expression of confidence in God’s faithfulness to us. As conversation from God to us, God speaks the ultimate analogy for our confident dependence: though father and mother forsake me, God is there.

The final part of the Wednesday psalmody is the third great Pauline Canticle of Evening Prayer, taken from the first chapter of the Letter to the Colossians. Just as we praise the Lord as light in Psalm 27, so then in this Canticle we give thanks to the Father who has rescued us through his Son from the power of darkness. As God’s Word to us, this hymn speaks of Jesus as the “image of the invisible God” (Col 1:15), with primacy in creation and redemption, and “all things” (Col 1:18). A connection to the Paschal Mystery is made specific in the final verse with “the blood of his cross” (Col 1:20).

The Scripture Reading for Wednesday is taken from the Letter of James (Jas 1:22,25). It is a demonstration of brevity: the intervening verses (Jas 1:23-24)—which compare the hearer of the word, who is not a doer, to a man who forgets the image of himself he saw in a mirror—are not included, but neither are they essential to the lesson, memorable as the image they suggest might be. We are left with the essential elements, the call to be doers of the Word and not hearers only; and, to be practitioners of freedom’s ideal law. In the context of the psalmody of the Hour the Scripture Reading is a call to “do” hope in the Lord, to “do” the ideal of God’s law of freedom; in the context of the hour of the day, it is a call to “do” light and not darkness.

Although the wisdom of these verses from James is of universal application, their deployment in proximity to the psalmody of this Hour facilitates a coherence of theme.

Week I, Thursday Evening Prayer (Ps 30; Ps 32; Rev 11:17-18, 12:10b-12a; 1 Pet 1:6-9)<sup>163</sup>

In Psalm 30, the psalmist praises God in thanksgiving for deliverance from a life-threatening though unspecified situation.<sup>164</sup> The theme of the Psalm and the essential message of our prayer to God is contained in the opening and closing verses: “I will extol you, Lord, for you have raised me up. O Lord, my God, I will thank you forever” (Ps 30:2a,13b). The middle verses are illustrative of a not untypical pattern of the human relationship with God: our pride and satisfaction at the success we deem to be the results of our own creation (30:7), followed by our realization of rupture in our relationship with God (30:8b). As Word of God to us, the message of this Psalm is that there is a time for thanksgiving and praise, because when we appeal to God for mercy (30:9,11), God will indeed turn our disappointment into joy (30:12). While there is no specific mention of the end of the day in this Psalm, as a prayer of reflection on past actions, of appeal to and reconnection with God, it is a most appropriate prayer for the Hour.

In Psalm 32, the psalmist rejoices in God because his sin has been forgiven. It is a continuation of the movement of new orientation contained in Psalm 30. In the middle of the Psalm, the point of view of the speaker changes, as the psalmist becomes prophet and speaks God’s words of wisdom:

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid 780-784.

The selection of Psalms 30 and 32 for this Hour is another example of the priority of the study groups to arrange each Hour so that the length of the psalmody, not just the number of Psalms, would be consistent across all Hours. This priority responds to the directive of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 4 that the liturgical rites should “meet present-day circumstances and needs,” and takes precedence over the traditional value of *lectio continua*. Psalm 31 is lengthy, and is assigned to the Office of Readings early in Week II, where it is divided into three incisa and becomes the entire ternary psalmody for that Hour.

<sup>164</sup> Brueggemann, 126-127. Brueggemann classifies Psalm 30 as one of new orientation.



I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go;  
I will fix my eyes upon you.  
Be not like the horse and mule, unintelligent,  
needing bridle and bit, or else they will not approach you.  
Many sorrows has the wicked,  
but loving mercy surrounds one who trusts in the Lord. (Ps 32:8-10 RGP)

As God's Word to us, we are reminded of the wisdom and trustworthiness of God's way. As our prayer to God, we acknowledge God as forgiver of sins and rejoice in that dynamic.

The third element of the psalmody for this Hour is a Canticle constructed from verses of Revelation 11 and 12. In his vision, John the Seer of Revelation witnesses the final victory of God over evil. John hears the praise of the voices of the twenty-four elders who prostrate themselves before the throne of God, and hears "a loud voice" declare the victory (Rev 12:10a). The Canticle adds an eschatological and universal dimension to the psalmists' personal prayers of praise and thanksgiving. As God's Word to us, we are assured of God's ultimate victory. As our prayer to God, we rejoice that this is true.

The Scripture Reading from this Hour is taken from the First Letter of Peter, and at four verses is one of the lengthier short readings in Evening Prayer. As in the psalmody, this Scripture passage continues the theme of rejoicing in God, and emphasizes our reason for rejoicing: while times of difficulty in the present are acknowledged, our ultimate focus is on the victory of Jesus Christ, the Paschal Mystery.

Week I, Friday Evening Prayer (Ps 41; Ps 46; Rev 15:3-4; Rom 15:1-3)<sup>165</sup>

Psalm 41 dramatically demonstrates the dialogic quality of psalm-prayer. Ostensibly, the psalm is characterized as a lament and prayer of petition, combining the cry of the sinner for

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<sup>165</sup> "The Four-Week Psalter" in The Liturgy of the Hours According to the Roman Rite, Volume III (Ordinary Time, Weeks 1-17), 802-805

mercy on his soul (41:5) with that of the seriously ill or injured for mercy and healing for his body (41:11). The psalmist speaks from a situation of severe disorientation. Our prayer to God, following the lead of the psalmist, is a prayer for deliverance; it is a prayer voiced with confidence, because we make our prayer in the presence of God (41:13). What makes this Psalm interesting is that in the introductory verses (41:2-4), before he voices his own prayer of petition, the psalmist first speaks as prophet, delivering God's own directive. In this Psalm the Word of God to us is a message of wisdom phrased in the form of beatitude, an echo in style and content of Psalm 1, the introduction to the Book of Psalms. Blessed is the one who has concern for the poor, for in time of trouble it is that person whom the Lord will guard, give life to, bless, preserve from foes, and restore to health. Although there is no specific connection to the hour of evening, the tribulations voiced by the psalmist could certainly evoke images of the setting sun of one's life. The confidence subsequently expressed looks forward to a new dawn.

The themes of confidence and God's presence are continued in Psalm 46. Three times the psalmist employs the couplet: "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold" (46:4b,8,12). As our prayer to God, we acknowledge that our powerful God is present now and is our protection, just as God has been in the past. The Word of God to us is especially clear toward the end of the Psalm as the point of view of the speaker shifts, and the psalmist becomes prophet speaking for God: "Be still and know that I am God, exalted over nations, exalted over earth" (46:11). God is in charge.

The New Testament Canticle for Friday of Week I is taken from Revelation 15. The theme of prayer in God's presence appears here as well, this time from a scene in heaven where "those who had won the victory over the beast and its image and the number that signified its name" sing the song of the Lamb (Rev 15:2). Our prayer to God is one of confident praise for

God's victory over evil. God's Word to us is that God is the holy one to whom all will give praise.

The Reading is taken from Romans 15:1-3. While God's words through the psalmist counseled concern for the poor, God's Word to us through the Apostle counsels us to "put up with the failings of the weak," following Christ's own example (15:1,3 NAB). Through his passion and death, Christ took on the reproaches rightfully intended for us all—an appropriate reflection for a Friday. And since our prayer is a remembrance of and presence to the Paschal Mystery, the victory that is the subject of the confident praise of the preceding Canticle is not far from our consciousness.

#### Some More Conclusions

The changes to the contents of Week I Evening Prayer suggest some interesting conclusions. With the reduction not just of the number of Psalms in each Hour but also the amount of the psalmody, a priority of quality of prayer over quantity is suggested. The suppression of imprecatory verses indicates a clear priority to honor the theology of the Gospel ethic of "love your enemy" over the traditional priority of praying the integral Psalter, even at the risk of setting a precedent of a "Canon within the Canon" for liturgical prayer. The inclusion of New Testament canticles emphasizes the essence of *Liturgia*, as remembrance of and presence to the Paschal Mystery, in Evening Prayer. The specific choice of Psalms demonstrates the priority to connect the prayer of the Hour to the time of the day. The integration of the themes of the psalmody through the Scripture Reading, as suggested by Parsch, is maintained. The Evening Prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours demonstrates a superior *lex orandi* and, hence, a superior *lex credendi* in comparison with Vespers of the Divine Office.

In the next chapter I will examine an important piece of evidence that represents a consideration in tension with my thesis statement. I pursue this avenue of investigation in preparation for the conclusions I will suggest in my final chapter.

## CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMATION

### All I've Said So Far Is True, However . . . .

In *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the bishops of the Second Vatican Council articulated several objectives, including that the liturgical rites might be revised to better meet present-day circumstances and needs.<sup>166</sup> In the preceding chapters, I have constructed arguments, based on analyses of the changes to both structure elements of the Liturgy of the Hours as a whole, and of the changes to the specific content of the Hour of Evening Prayer to support my thesis. I have argued that in this element of *Liturgia*, the “what” and the “how” of our praying, the *lex orandi*, now provides clearer and better expressions of the “what” and “how” of our believing, its *lex credendi*, for the Church in the contemporary era. In Chapter Three, I identified structural changes, some large and some small, that helped to reshape the Liturgy of the Hours to be a better statement of sanctification of the day by connecting its prayers more closely to specific times of the day. Other structural changes have made the participation of the People of God more likely. Still others have brought more Scripture into the prayer of the people. In Chapter Four, I identified seven examples where changes to the content of the Hour of Evening Prayer, through the redistribution of the Psalter and the inclusion of New Testament Canticles, have better connected this prayer with the specific time of the day. These changes in content have also better connected this Hour with the overall purpose of *Liturgia*, that is, the remembrance of, celebration of, and presence to the Paschal Mystery.

My approach thus far has been an academic one, based on the liturgical texts and the writings of academic scholarship. However, the phrasing of the maxim, *lex orandi, lex credendi*, employs participles, verb forms, as the grammatical elements. This suggests that an analysis of

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<sup>166</sup> SC 1, 4

the liturgical texts and the academic scholarship is necessary, but not sufficient, to render a verdict of evaluation as to whether the reforms to the structure and content of the Liturgy of the Hours initiated by Vatican Council II have produced an adequate prayer of theological expression for the People of God in the current era. The proof must be in the doing.

To analyze “the doing” I offer the experience of the local Church, which for me is the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, the largest Catholic diocese in the United States. The Archdiocese contains 302 parishes located within the three-county area of Los Angeles, Ventura, and Santa Barbara counties.<sup>167</sup> Both Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer are celebrated on a regularly scheduled basis in exactly two parishes; and in each of these parishes, the celebration of Morning Prayer is done in combination with morning Mass.<sup>168</sup> Five other parishes celebrate only Morning Prayer on a regular basis, also in combination with morning Mass.<sup>169</sup> Three parishes celebrate only Evening Prayer on a regular basis.<sup>170</sup> These figures indicate that only 3% of all parishes in the Los Angeles Archdiocese celebrate even one Hour of the Liturgy of the Hours in community on a regular basis.

The record suggests that fifty years after Vatican Council II, the prime directive of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* for “full, active, and conscious” participation in the liturgical rites of the Church essentially remains unfulfilled with respect to the Liturgy of the Hours. The objective for the reform of the Liturgy of the Hours so that these liturgical rites would better meet present-day circumstances and needs, seems to have been accomplished on paper, and I suggest that the academic analysis of this thesis supports that the objective has been achieved

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<sup>167</sup> 2014 Official Catholic Directory of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles (Los Angeles: The Tidings, 2014), 55, 68-110.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid 68-110

<sup>169</sup> Ibid 68-110

<sup>170</sup> Ibid 68-110

theoretically. But in fact, current local practice, at least in the Los Angeles Archdiocese, suggests otherwise. Does this suggest, then, that the liturgical reforms of Vatican II with respect to the Liturgy of the Hours have not met the primary objective? It is now fifty years after the opening of Vatican Council II and the promulgation of “The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*), and more than forty years after the promulgation of “The General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours” implementing the reforms initiated by the Council. Even so, these reforms have not yet been seriously implemented on any kind of a scale where a conclusive evaluation is possible.

If we acknowledge that the Liturgy of the Hours as *Liturgia*, as the public prayer of the Church, has not really been tried, the next logical question is, “Should it be?” One could argue that the Liturgy of the Hours seems to be in good hands, as the Divine Office was, as the private prayer of the clergy and the professed. So without the ready availability of public celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours is the Church truly lacking liturgically?

Examining the devotional practices of parishes of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, it is clear from the number and frequency of regularly scheduled non-liturgical devotions, that there is a need and desire for communal public prayer in addition to that of the Mass. Thirty-five percent (105) of parishes offer some form of Eucharistic adoration or devotion outside of the regular Mass schedule.<sup>171</sup> Another eight percent (24) of parishes offer some form of Marian devotion.<sup>172</sup> Another twenty-eight percent (86) parishes offer both Eucharistic and Marian devotional opportunities.<sup>173</sup> One percent (3) offer some form of devotion that is something else,

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid 68-110

<sup>172</sup> Ibid 68-110

<sup>173</sup> Ibid 68-110

such as a special devotional to a saint.<sup>174</sup> That would be 218 of 302 parishes that offer some form of public devotional practice outside the celebration of the Mass on an official, regularly scheduled basis. For many people the desire for additional opportunities for public communal worship is a real need to be met. Furthermore, the personal piety represented by these devotional practices is to be commended, as *Sacrosanctum Concilium* specifically states.<sup>175</sup> But *Sacrosanctum Concilium* also states that *Liturgia*, which includes the Liturgy of the Hours, “by its very nature far surpasses any of them.”<sup>176</sup>

The Second Vatican Council also sought “to encourage whatever can promote the union of all who believe in Christ.”<sup>177</sup> Another truth, albeit an uncomfortable truth, is that the Body of the Christ is fractured. The Church is broken and unfortunately one of the fault lines is the Eucharist itself. The rules associated with the reception of the Eucharist are rules that exclude many. The Liturgy of the Hours provides an opportunity for inclusion of those who are not welcome at the table for whatever reason, an opportunity to celebrate *Liturgia*, the work/gift of Christ for us. The stone of this opportunity should not to be left unturned.

The biggest hurdle standing between Catholics and the public celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, besides lack of opportunity, is lack of knowledge. As the old saying goes, you cannot know what you do not know—how can you know what you are missing if you do not know it exists? For centuries, the Divine Office was the province of the ordained and the professed, and despite the direction of the Council in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the Liturgy of the Hours remains primarily their private prayer. As a cradle Catholic who came of age during the years of Vatican II and those following, I can testify to the trauma associated with the

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid 68-110

<sup>175</sup> SC 13

<sup>176</sup> SC 13

<sup>177</sup> SC 1



implementation of various liturgical reforms. I almost sympathize with the desire to minimize the changes to minimize the confusion. Almost. In today's world, the availability of liturgical prayer that is inclusive of separated Catholics and Christians of other traditions should not be dismissed or ignored.

### Recommendations

To even begin to implement the liturgical reforms of Vatican II with respect to the Liturgy of the Hours, I make three recommendations: catechesis for the faithful, teaching by example by the bishops, and a continued exploration of *Liturgia* by theologians.

The first step is catechesis of the faithful. And while a detailed pastoral plan for introducing the Liturgy of the Hours to the Catholic faithful of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles is beyond the scope of this project, I readily admit that the first step of implementation must occur with the People of God. A catechetical approach involves several dimensions. The first is some basic theological instruction: *Liturgia* is the work/gift of Christ, and the Liturgy of the Hours is *Liturgia*. The next step is to experience the Hours. Available opportunities to pray the Hours publicly and in common must be afforded in the parish. The model of regular parish devotional practices already exists. In addition, opportunities should be sought to introduce the theology and the prayers to the parish community. Every parish committee meeting begins with a prayer, or should. That prayer can be taken from the Liturgy of the Hours and a short catechetical explanation provided. An opportunity to discuss the experience of the prayer and the understanding of the theology that flows from it would complete the catechetical approach.

Beyond the education of the faithful, an additional practice must also occur so that the Church might begin to experience the fruits of this liturgical gift. The bishop of the local Church

must set the example. What would it say if the bishop presided at Evening Prayer in the cathedral church on a regular basis? It would teach by example that the Liturgy of the Hours is *Liturgia*, a public liturgical celebration of the Church, informing both laity and clergy that this is a practice worth emulating.

Finally, as much as theologians have studied and written on the subject of the Church's *Liturgia*, continued and additional investigation and discussion is warranted, particularly on the relationship between the Hours and the Eucharist, and the roles that each of these respective celebrations should play in the lives of the People of God.

APPENDIX: SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

Psalm	Week, Day, Hour	Psalm	Week, Day, Hour	Psalm	Week, Day, Hour
Ps 1	W1 Sun OR	Ps 16	W2 Sun EP1 & Thursday NP	Ps 29	W1 Mon MP
Ps 2	W1 Sun OR	Ps 17	W1 Wed DP	Ps 30	W1 Thu EP
Ps 3	W1 Sun OR	Ps 18:2-30	W1 Wed OR	Ps 31:1-6	Wednesday NP
Ps 4	Saturday NP	Ps 18:31-51	W1 Thu OR	Ps 31:1-17, 20-25	W2 Mon OR
Ps 5:2-10,12-13	W1 Mon MP	Ps 19A	W2 Mon MP	Ps 32	W1 Thu EP
Ps 6	W1 Mon OR	Ps 19B	W1 Mon DP	Ps 33	W1 Tue MP
Ps 7	W1 Mon DP	Ps 20	W1 Tue EP	Ps 34	W1 Sat DP & W3 Sat DP
Ps 8	W2 Sat MP & W4 Sat MP	Ps 21:2-8,14	W1 Tue EP	Ps 35:1-2,3c, 9-19,22-23, 27-28	W1 Fri OR
Ps 9A	W1 Mon OR	Ps 22	W3 Fri DP	Ps 36	W1 Wed MP
Ps 10	W1 Tue OR	Ps 23	W2 Sun DP & W4 Sun DP	Ps 37	W2 Tue OR
Ps 11	W1 Mon EP	Ps 24	W1 Tue MP & W4 Sun OR Invitatory Ps alternate	Ps 38	W2 Fri OR
Ps 12	W1 Tue OR	Ps 25	W1 Thu DP	Ps 39	W2 Wed OR
Ps 13	W1 Tue DP	Ps 26	W1 Fri DP	Ps 40:2-14, 17-18	W2 Mon DP
Ps 14	W1 Tue DP	Ps 27	W1 Wed EP	Ps 41	W1 Fri EP
Ps 15	W1 Mon EP	Ps 28:1-3,6-9	W1 Fri DP		

Table 5a: Psalms 1-41 (Book I) distribution in the Liturgy of the Hours (1971)<sup>178</sup>

- DP = Daytime (Mid-morning, Midday, Mid-afternoon) Prayer
- EP = Evening Prayer
- EP1 = Sunday Evening Prayer I (i.e. Saturday)
- EP2 = Sunday Evening Prayer II
- MP = Morning Prayer
- NP = Night Prayer (a single week cycle)
- OR = Office of Readings
- W# = week number (1-4)

<sup>178</sup> Felix Just, S.J. "Index of Psalms and Canticles Used in the Four-Week Psalter" from <http://catholic-resources.org/LoH/Psalter-Index.html>. Note that the Psalms of Book I appear in Week I for the most part.

Psalm	Week, Day, Hour	Psalm	Week, Day, Hour	Psalm	Week, Day, Hour
Ps 42	W2 Mon MP	Ps 53	W2 Tue DP	Ps 63:2-9	W1 Sun MP
Ps 43	W2 Tue MP	Ps 54:1-6,8-9	W2 Tue DP	Ps 64	W2 Sat DP
Ps 44	W2 Thu OR & W4 Thu OR	Ps 55:2-15, 17-24	W2 Wed DP	Ps 65	W2 Tue MP
Ps 45	W2 Mon EP & W4 Sat DP	Ps 56:2-7b,9-14	W2 Thu DP	Ps 66	W4 Sun OR
Ps 46	W1 Fri EP	Ps 57	W1 Thu MP & W2 Thu DP	Ps 67	W2 Wed EP & W3 Tue MP Invitatory Ps alt
Ps 47	W1 Wed MP	Ps 58	<b>OMITTED</b>	Ps 68	W3 Tue OR
Ps 48	W1 Thu MP	Ps 59:2-5,10-11, 17-18	W2 Fri DP	Ps 69:2-22, 30-37	W3 Fri OR
Ps 49	W2 Tue EP	Ps 60	W2 Fri DP	Ps 70	W3 Wed DP
Ps 50	W3 Mon OR	Ps 61	W2 Sat DP	Ps 71	W3 Mon DP
Ps 51	W1,2,3,4 Fri MP	Ps 62	W2 Wed EP	Ps 72	W2 Thu EP
Ps 52	W2 Wed OR				

Table 5b: Psalms 42-72 (Book II) distribution in the Liturgy of the Hours (1971)<sup>179</sup>

DP = Daytime Prayer  
 EP = Evening Prayer  
 EP1 = Sunday Evening Prayer I (i.e. Saturday)  
 EP2 = Sunday Evening Prayer II  
 MP = Morning Prayer  
 NP = Night Prayer  
 OR = Office of Readings  
 W# = week number (1-4)

Psalm	Week, Day, Hour	Psalm	Week, Day, Hour	Psalm	Week, Day, Hour
Ps 73	W4 Mon OR	Ps 79:1-5, 8-11, 13	W3 Thu DP	Ps 85	W3 Tue MP
Ps 74	W3 Tue DP	Ps 80	W2 Thu MP & W3 Thu DP	Ps 86	W3 Wed MP & Monday NP
Ps 75	W3 Wed DP	Ps 81	W2 Thu MP	Ps 87	W3 Thu MP
Ps 76	W2 Sun DP & W4 Sun DP	Ps 82	W4 Mon DP	Ps 88	W4 Tue DP & Friday NP
Ps 77	W2 Wed MP	Ps 83	<b>OMITTED</b>	Ps 89:2-38	W3 Wed OR
Ps 78:1-39	W4 Fri OR	Ps 84	W3 Mon MP	Ps 89:39-53	W3 Thu OR
Ps 78:40-72	W4 Sat OR				

Table 5c: Psalms 73-89 (Book III) distribution in the Liturgy of the Hours (1971)<sup>180</sup>

<sup>179</sup> Ibid. Note that the Psalms of Book II appear in Week II for the most part.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid. Note that the Psalms of Book III appear in Week III for the most part.

Psalm	Week, Day, Hour	Psalm	Week, Day, Hour	Psalm	Week, Day, Hour
Ps 90	W3 Thu OR & W4 Mon MP	Ps 96	W3 Mon MP	Ps 101	W4 Tue MP
Ps 91	Sunday NP	Ps 97	W2 Wed MP	Ps 102	W4 Tue OR
Ps 92	W2 Sat MP & W4 Sat MP	Ps 98	W3 Wed MP	Ps 103	W4 Wed OR
Ps 93	W3 Sun MP	Ps 99	W3 Thu MP	Ps 104	W2 Sun OR
Ps 94	W4 Wed DP	Ps 100	W1 Fri MP & W3 Fri MP Invitatory Ps alternate	Ps 105	W1 Sat OR
Ps 95	Invitatory Psalm				

Table 5d: Psalms 90-105 (Book IV) distribution in the Liturgy of the Hours (1971)<sup>181</sup>

DP = Daytime Prayer

EP = Evening Prayer

EP1 = Sunday Evening Prayer I (i.e. Saturday)

EP2 = Sunday Evening Prayer II

MP = Morning Prayer

NP = Night Prayer

OR = Office of Readings

CP = Complementary Psalmody (Pss 120-128) used at 2 of the 3 Daytime Hours every day

W# = week number (1-4)

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<sup>181</sup> Ibid. Note that the Psalms of Book IV appear in Weeks III & IV for the most part.

Psalm	Week, Day, Hour	Psalm	Week, Day, Hour	Psalm	Week, Day, Hour
Ps 106	W2 Sat OR	Ps 119:81-88	W2 Sat DP	Ps 131	W3 Tue EP
Ps 107	W3 Sat OR	Ps 119:89-96	W3 Mon DP	Ps 132	W3 Thu EP
Ps 108	W4 Wed MP	Ps 119:97-104	W3 Tue DP	Ps 133	W4 Fri DP
Ps 109	<b>OMITTED</b>	Ps 119:105-112	W2 Sun EP1 & W3 Wed DP	Ps 134	Saturday NP
Ps 110:1-5,7	W1,2,3,4 Sun EP2	Ps 119:113-120	W3 Thu DP	Ps 135	W3 Fri EP
Ps 111	W3 Sun EP2	Ps 119:121-128	W3 Sat DP	Ps 135:1-12	W4 Mon MP
Ps 112	W4 Sun EP2	Ps 119:129-136	W4 Mon DP	Ps 136	W4 Mon EP
Ps 113	W3 Sun EP1	Ps 119:137-144	W4 Tue DP	Ps 137:1-6	W4 Tue EP
Ps 114	W1 Sun EP2	Ps 119:145-152	W1 Sat MP & W3 Sat MP & W4 Wed DP	Ps 138	W4 Tue EP
Ps 115	W2 Sun EP2	Ps 119:153-160	W4 Thu DP	Ps 139:1-18, 23-24	W4 Wed EP
Ps 116:1-9	W2 Fri EP	Ps 119:161-168	W4 Fri DP	Ps 140:1-9, 13-14	W4 Fri DP
Ps 116:10-19	W3 Sun EP1	Ps 119:169-176	W4 Sat DP	Ps 141:1-9	W1 Sun EP1
Ps 117	W1 Sat MP & W3 Sat MP	Ps 120	W4 Mon DP & Midmorning CP	Ps 142	W1 Sun EP1
Ps 118	W1 Sun DP & W2 Sun MP & W3 Sun DP & W4 Sun MP	Ps 121	W2 Fri EP & Midmorning CP	Ps 143:1-11	W4 Thu MP & Tuesday NP
Ps 119:1-8	W1 Tue DP	Ps 122	W4 Sun EP1 & Midmorning CP	Ps 144	W4 Thu EP
Ps 119:9-16	W1 Wed DP	Ps 123	W3 Mon EP & Midday CP	Ps 144:1-10	W4 Tue MP
Ps 119:17-24	W1 Thu DP	Ps 124	W3 Mon EP & Midday CP	Ps 145	W3 Sun OR & W4 Fri EP
Ps 119:25-32	W1 Fri DP	Ps 125	W3 Tue EP & Midday CP	Ps 146	W4 Wed MP
Ps 119:33-40	W1 Sat DP	Ps 126	W3 Wed EP & Midafternoon CP	Ps 147:1-11	W4 Thu MP
Ps 119:41-48	W2 Mon DP	Ps 127	W3 Wed EP & Midafternoon CP	Ps 147:12-20	W2 Fri MP & W4 Fri MP
Ps 119:49-56	W2 Tue DP	Ps 128	W4 Thu DP & Midafternoon CP	Ps 148	W3 Sun MP
Ps 119:57-64	W2 Wed DP	Ps 129	W4 Thu DP	Ps 149	W1 Sun MP
Ps 119:65-72	W2 Thu DP	Ps 130	W4 Sun EP1 & Wednesday NP	Ps 150	W2 Sun MP & W4 Sun MP
Ps 119:73-80	W2 Fri DP				

Table 5e: Psalms 106-150 (Book V) distribution in the Liturgy of the Hours (1971)<sup>182</sup>

<sup>182</sup> Ibid. Note that the sections of Psalm 119 are distributed through the first of the 3 daytime Hours in each of the four weeks; Psalms 120-128 are used as Complementary Psalmody every day for 2 of the 3 daytime Hours; the rest of the Psalms of Book V appear mostly in Week IV.

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