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CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP

Prot. n. 1814/84

DECREE

The Liturgy of the Hours was renewed in 1971 by decree of the most holy Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican. As the prayer of the Church, by which all the hours of the day as well as all human endeavors are sanctified through praise, thanksgiving, and entreaties (*General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours*, nos. 2 and 11), it requires that the spiritual riches proper to it may be more profoundly grasped through a deeper understanding of the texts traditionally used in the communal prayer of the Church of the Roman Rite.

To achieve this end more readily, a second *editio typica* of the Liturgy of the Hours, which has appeared after fourteen years, presents as proper to itself the text of the New Vulgate edition of the Holy Bible (*Nova Vulgata*). In accord with the norm of the Apostolic Constitution *Scripturarum thesaurus* of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II, issued on April 25, 1979, this edition replaces the version of the Vulgate formerly in use.

Furthermore, the individual changes that are peculiar to this present edition are summarized in what follows.

1) The New Vulgate version has been adopted for the biblical readings of the Office of Readings and Vigils, for the Short Readings at Lauds, Vespers, Terce, Sext, None, and Compline, as well as for all the Canticles of the Old and New Testament.

2) Some biblical texts appearing in the prior edition are not in the New Vulgate version or have acquired meanings that make them less apt to the end for which they were chosen. They are no longer found here; other texts judged more apt are offered in their place.

- 3) The text of the Psalms, revised further in the edition of the New Vulgate, is adopted in this edition of the Liturgy of the Hours.
- 4) The Responsories of the Office of Readings have been revised according to the text of the New Vulgate, unless perhaps a particular reason either of composition, or of tradition, or of musical melody, or of liturgical character excluded a change of the text.
- 5) New antiphons for the Benedictus and the Magnificat, modified for the most part according to the Gospel from which they are taken, have been introduced on Sundays and Solemnities.
- 6) The revision of the Hymns has been refined with diligent care.
- 7) In longer biblical readings, in the Psalms, and in the Canticles from both the Old and the New Testament, each verse is given its proper number, as is common in editions of the Bible.
- 8) In the present edition each Psalm is numbered twice. The first number follows the Greek version called the Septuagint, thence transferred to the Vulgate. It was the numbering used by the Fathers and constantly handed on by the Liturgy. The second number, in parentheses, is that of the Hebrew text, which today is often used in publications and dissertations.
- 9) Other texts have been added to the appendix, namely, the formulas of the Solemn Blessing and the Penitential Act taken from the Roman Missal.

The foregoing, as well as other changes of lesser importance, aim at further fostering the sweet and fruitful understanding of the close connection existing between the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours and that of the Eucharist, and also between these and the liturgical year, which “possesses a distinct sacramental force and efficacy because Christ himself in his mysteries and the commemorations of his Saints, especially of his Mother, continues his mission of infinite mercy. Therefore, the Christian faithful not only recall and contemplate the mysteries of redemption but also attain them, enter into communion with them, and live by them” (*Ceremonial of Bishops*, no. 231).

CHAPTER I

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS, OR DIVINE OFFICE, IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

1. The public and communal prayer of the People of God is rightly considered to be among the primary duties of the Church. From the very beginning, those who were baptized “devoted themselves to the Apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42). Moreover, the Acts of the Apostles frequently testifies that the Christian community prayed with one accord.¹

The testimony of the early Church teaches that even individual members of the faithful devoted themselves to prayer at fixed hours. Then, in various regions, the custom soon grew of assigning special times to communal prayer, for example, the last hour of the day, when evening draws on and the lamp is lit, or the first hour, when night draws to a close with the rising of the daystar.

In the course of time, moreover, other hours as well were sanctified by communal prayer, hours which the Fathers saw foreshadowed in the Acts of the Apostles. For there the disciples are presented as gathered together at the third hour.² The Prince of the Apostles “went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour” (10:9); “Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour” (3:1); “about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God” (16:25).

1 Cf. Acts 1:14; 4:24; 12:5, 12; cf. Eph 5:19-21.

2 Cf. Acts 2:1-15.

2. These prayers in common gradually took shape in the form of a defined sequence of Hours. This Liturgy of the Hours or Divine Office, enriched by readings as well, is foremost a prayer of praise and petition, and, indeed, the prayer of the Church with Christ and to Christ.

I. THE PRAYER OF CHRIST

Christ, the Intercessor with the Father

3. When he came to give men and women a share in God's life, the Word who proceeds from the Father as the splendor of his glory, "Christ Jesus, High Priest of the new and eternal covenant, taking human nature, introduced into this earthly exile that hymn which is sung throughout all ages in the halls of heaven."³ From then on in the heart of Christ the praise of God resounds in human words of adoration, expiation, and intercession, all of which the head of the new humanity, the Mediator between God and humanity, presents to the Father in the name of all and for the good of all.

4. Moreover, the Son of God himself, who is one with his Father (cf. Jn 10:30), and who, on entering the world, said: "Behold, I have come to do your will" (Heb 10:9; cf. Jn 6:38), even chose to leave us an account of his own prayer. For very frequently the Gospels show us Christ praying: when his mission is revealed by the Father,⁴ before he calls the Apostles,⁵ when he blesses God at the multiplication of the loaves,⁶ when he is transfigured on the mountain,⁷ when he heals the deaf mute,⁸ when he raises Lazarus,⁹

3 Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 83; *Acta Apostolicæ Sedis* 56 (1964), p. 121.

4 Lk 3:21-22.

5 Lk 6:12.

6 Mt 14:19; 15:36; Mk 6:41; 8:7; Lk 9:16; Jn 6:11.

7 Lk 9:28-29.

8 Mk 7:34.

9 Jn 11:41 ff.

before he calls for Peter's confession of faith,¹⁰ when he teaches the disciples to pray,¹¹ when the disciples return from their mission,¹² when he blesses the little children,¹³ and when he prays for Peter.¹⁴

His daily activity was closely bound up with prayer, indeed as if it flowed out from prayer, as when he would retire into the desert or into the hills to pray,¹⁵ rising very early¹⁶ or spending the whole night up to the fourth watch¹⁷ in prayer to God.¹⁸

He himself, as is rightly believed, also took part in prayers, whether those which took place publicly both in the synagogues, which he entered on the Sabbath "as his custom was,"¹⁹ and in the temple, which he called a house of prayer,²⁰ or those which were customarily recited every day privately by devout Israelites. He used the traditional blessings of God at meals, as is expressly narrated in the multiplication of the loaves,²¹ at the Last Supper,²² and at the evening meal at Emmaus;²³ he likewise sang a hymn of praise with the disciples.²⁴

Even at the very end of his life, as his Passion was approaching,²⁵ at the Last Supper,²⁶ in the agony in the garden,²⁷ and on the Cross,²⁸ the divine Teacher

10 Lk 9:18.

11 Lk 11:1.

12 Mt 11:25ff; Lk 10:21ff.

13 Mt 19:13.

14 Lk 22:32.

15 Mk 1:35; 6:46; Lk 5:16; cf. Mt 4:1 and parallels; Mt 14:23.

16 Mk 1:35.

17 Mt 14:23, 25; Mk 6:46, 48.

18 Lk 6:12.

19 Lk 4:16.

20 Mt 21:13 and parallels.

21 Mt 14:19 and parallels; Mt 15:36 and parallels.

22 Mt 26:26 and parallels.

23 Lk 24:30.

24 Mt 26:30 and parallels.

25 Jn 12:27ff.

26 Jn 17:1-26.

27 Mt 26:36-44 and parallels.

28 Lk 23:34, 46; Mt 27:46; Mk 15:34.

showed that prayer was what animated his messianic ministry and paschal death. “In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard for his godly fear” (Heb 5:7), and by his single offering on the altar of the Cross, “he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified” (Heb 10:14). Now raised from the dead, he lives for ever and intercedes for us.²⁹

II. THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

The Command to Pray

5. What Jesus himself did, he has also commanded us to do. “Pray,” he often said, “ask,” “seek,”³⁰ “in my name.”³¹ He even gave us a formula of prayer in what is known as the Lord’s Prayer.³² He taught that prayer is necessary,³³ and should be humble,³⁴ vigilant,³⁵ persevering, confident in the Father’s goodness,³⁶ pure in intention, and in conformity with God’s nature.³⁷

Indeed, the Apostles hand down to us many prayers throughout their letters, especially of praise and thanksgiving. They themselves advise us regarding prayer—in the Holy Spirit,³⁸ through Christ,³⁹ offered to God⁴⁰—to be constant and persevering;⁴¹ they tell

29 Cf. Heb 7:25.

30 Mt 5:44; 7:7; 26:41; Mk 13:33; 14:38; Lk 6:28; 10:2; 11:9; 22:40, 46.

31 Jn 14:13ff; 15:16; 16:23ff, 26.

32 Mt 6:9-13; Lk 11:2-4.

33 Lk 18:1.

34 Lk 18:9-14.

35 Lk 21:36; Mk 13:33.

36 Lk 11:5-13; 18:1-8; Jn 14:13; 16:23.

37 Mt 6:5-8; 23:14; Lk 20:47; Jn 4:23.

38 Rom 8:15; 26; 1 Cor 12:3; Gal 4:6; Jude 20.

39 2 Cor 1:20; Col 3:17.

40 Heb 13:15.

41 Rom 12:12; 1 Cor 7:5; Eph 6:18; Col 4:2; 1 Thes 5:17; 1 Tm 5:5; 1 Pt 4:7.

of its efficacious power to sanctify,⁴² and they also recommend the prayer of praise,⁴³ of thanksgiving,⁴⁴ of petition,⁴⁵ and of intercession on behalf of all.⁴⁶

The Church Continues the Prayer of Christ

6. Since men and women depend totally on God, they must recognize and express this dominion of their Creator, as holy people of every age have in fact done by means of prayer.

Indeed, prayer, which is directed to God, must be linked with Christ, the Lord of all people, the one Mediator⁴⁷ through whom alone we have access to God.⁴⁸ For he so unites to himself the whole human community⁴⁹ that an intimate bond develops between the prayer of Christ and the prayer of the whole human race. For in Christ and in him alone human religion attains its redemptive value and its purpose.

7. Moreover, there exists a particular and very close bond between Christ and those whom he adopts as members of his Body, which is the Church, through the Sacrament of rebirth. For this is how all the riches that belong to the Son flow from the Head into the whole Body: namely, fellowship of the Spirit, truth, life, and participation in his divine sonship, which was manifested in all his prayer when he dwelt among us.

The whole Body of the Church has a share also in the priesthood of Christ, so that the baptized, through rebirth and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are

42 1 Tm 4:5; Jas 5:15ff; 1 Jn 3:22; 5:14ff.

43 Eph 5:19ff; Heb 13:15; Rv 19:5.

44 Col 3:17; Phil 4:6; 1 Thes 5:17; 1 Tm 2:1.

45 Rom 8:26; Phil 4:6.

46 Rom 15:30; 1 Tm 2:1ff; Eph 6:18; 1 Thes 5:25; Jas 5:14, 16.

47 1 Tm 2:5; Heb 8:6; 9:15; 12:24.

48 Rom 5:2; Eph 2:18; 3:12.

49 Cf. Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 83; *Acta Apostolicæ Sedis* 56 (1964), p. 121.

from any other. If, however, by way of exception, it should be necessary to join the two, then immediately after the Second Reading with its Responsory from the Office, the rest is omitted, and Mass begins with the Hymn *Gloria in excelsis*, if it is to be said; otherwise, Mass begins with the Collect.

99. If the Office of Readings is said immediately before another Hour of the Office, then the appropriate Hymn for that Hour may be sung at the beginning of the Office of Readings. At the end of the Office of Readings the oration and conclusion are omitted, and in the Hour following, the introductory verse with *Glory be to the Father* is omitted.

CHAPTER III

THE VARIOUS ELEMENTS IN THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS

I. THE PSALMS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRISTIAN PRAYER

100. In the Liturgy of the Hours the Church prays in large measure with those magnificent songs composed under the inspiration of the Divine Spirit by the sacred authors of the Old Testament. For from their origin they had great power to raise the minds of people to God, to inspire in them pious and holy thoughts, to give them marvelous help in giving thanks in favorable times, and to bring consolation and strength of spirit in times of trial.

101. The Psalms are, however, only a foreshadowing of the fullness of time that appeared in Christ the Lord, and from which the prayer of the Church derives its power. Hence, while all the Christian faithful agree in having the highest regard for the Psalms, nevertheless, they can sometimes experience difficulty in making these songs their own in prayer.

102. Yet the Holy Spirit, under whose inspiration the Psalms were written, is always present by his grace to those believers who sing these songs with good will. In addition, it is necessary that they “take steps to improve their understanding of the Bible, especially of the Psalms,”¹ according to each one’s capacity, and thus they may understand how, and by what method, they may recite and pray them properly.

1 Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 90; *Acta Apostolicæ Sedis* 56 (1964), p. 122.

Responsories accompanied with simpler and easier melodies, than with those that have been drawn from liturgical sources.

283. The readings, whether longer or shorter, are not of themselves designed for chanting. When they are proclaimed, great care should be taken that they are read worthily, clearly, and distinctly, so as to be properly heard and correctly understood by all. Therefore, the only acceptable melody is one that enables the words to be heard more easily and the meaning to be better understood.

284. Texts that are said only by the one presiding, such as the orations, can be chanted gracefully and appropriately, especially in Latin. Nevertheless, this will be more difficult in some vernacular languages, unless the words of the text may be heard, through singing, more clearly by all.

TABLE OF LITURGICAL DAYS

ACCORDING TO THEIR ORDER OF PRECEDENCE

from the *Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the Calendar*, nos. 59–61

Precedence among liturgical days, as regards their celebration, is governed solely by the following Table.

I

1. The Paschal Triduum of the Passion and Resurrection of the Lord.
2. The Nativity of the Lord, the Epiphany, the Ascension, and Pentecost.
Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter.
Ash Wednesday.
Weekdays of Holy Week from Monday up to and including Thursday.
Days within the Octave of Easter.
3. Solemnities inscribed in the General Calendar, whether of the Lord, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or of Saints.
The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed.
4. Proper Solemnities, namely:
 - a) The Solemnity of the principal Patron of the place, city, or state.
 - b) The Solemnity of the dedication and of the anniversary of the dedication of one's own church.
 - c) The Solemnity of the Title of one's own church.
 - d) The Solemnity either of the Title or of the Founder or of the principal Patron of an Order or Congregation.

II

- 5. Feasts of the Lord inscribed in the General Calendar.
- 6. Sundays of Christmas Time and the Sundays in Ordinary Time.
- 7. Feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of the Saints in the General Calendar.
- 8. Proper Feasts, namely:
 - a) The Feast of the principal Patron of the diocese.
 - b) The Feast of the anniversary of the dedication of the cathedral church.
 - c) The Feast of the principal Patron of a region or province, or a country, or of a wider territory.
 - d) The Feast of the Title, Founder, or principal Patron of an Order or Congregation and of a religious province, without prejudice to the prescriptions given under no. 4.
 - e) Other Feasts proper to an individual church.
 - f) Other Feasts inscribed in the Calendar of each diocese or Order or Congregation.
- 9. Weekdays of Advent from December 17 up to and including December 24.
Days within the Octave of Christmas.
Weekdays of Lent.

III

10. Obligatory Memorials in the General Calendar.

11. Proper Obligatory Memorials, namely:

- a) The Memorial of a secondary Patron of the place, diocese, region, or religious province.
- b) Other Obligatory Memorials inscribed in the Calendar of each diocese, or Order or Congregation.

12. Optional Memorials, which, however, may be celebrated, in the special manner described in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal and of the Liturgy of the Hours, even on the days listed in no. 9.

In the same manner Obligatory Memorials may be celebrated as Optional Memorials if they happen to fall on Lenten weekdays.

13. Weekdays of Advent up to and including December 16.

Weekdays of Christmas Time from January 2 until the Saturday after the Epiphany.

Weekdays of the Easter Time from Monday after the Octave of Easter up to and including the Saturday before Pentecost.

Weekdays in Ordinary Time.

**CELEBRATIONS ON THE SAME DAY
OR ON CONSECUTIVE DAYS**

If several celebrations fall on the same day, the one that holds the highest rank according to the Table of Liturgical Days is observed. However, a Solemnity impeded by a liturgical day that takes precedence over it should be transferred to the closest day not listed under nos. 1–8 in the Table of Precedence, provided that what is laid down in no. 5 [in the Norms] is observed. As to the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, whenever it falls on any day of Holy Week, it shall always be transferred to the Monday after the Second Sunday of Easter.

Other celebrations are omitted in that year.

Should on the other hand, Vespers (Evening Prayer) of the current day’s Office and First Vespers (Evening Prayer I) of the following day be assigned for celebration on the same day, then Vespers (Evening Prayer) of the celebration with the higher rank in the Table of Liturgical Days takes precedence; in cases of equal rank, Vespers (Evening Prayer) of the current day takes precedence.

TABLE OF DATES OF MOVABLE CELEBRATIONS

Year	Dominical Letter	Sunday Cycle	Ash Wednesday	Easter	Ascension [Thursday]
2025	e	C – A	March 5	April 20	May 29
2026	d	A – B	February 18	April 5	May 14
2027	c	B – C	February 10	March 28	May 6
2028	b A	C – A	March 1	April 16	May 25
2029	g	A – B	February 14	April 1	May 10
2030	f	B – C	March 6	April 21	May 30
2031	e	C – A	February 26	April 13	May 22
2032	d c	A – B	February 11	March 28	May 6
2033	b	B – C	March 2	April 17	May 26
2034	A	C – A	February 22	April 9	May 18
2035	g	A – B	February 7	March 25	May 3
2036	f e	B – C	February 27	April 13	May 22
2037	d	C – A	February 18	April 5	May 14
2038	c	A – B	March 10	April 25	June 3
2039	b	B – C	February 23	April 10	May 19
2040	A g	C – A	February 15	April 1	May 10
2041	f	A – B	March 6	April 21	May 30
2042	e	B – C	February 19	April 6	May 15
2043	d	C – A	February 11	March 29	May 7
2044	c b	A – B	March 2	April 17	May 26
2045	A	B – C	February 22	April 9	May 18
2046	g	C – A	February 7	March 25	May 3
2047	f	A – B	February 27	April 14	May 23
2048	e d	B – C	February 19	April 5	May 14
2049	c	C – A	March 3	April 18	May 27
2050	b	A – B	February 23	April 10	May 19

Pentecost	Ordinary Time				First Sunday of Advent
	Before Lent		After Easter Time		
	Up Until	Weeks	From	From Week	
June 8	March 4	8	June 9	10	November 30
May 24	February 17	6	May 25	8	November 29
May 16	February 9	5	May 17	7	November 28
June 4	February 29	8	June 5	9	December 3
May 20	February 13	6	May 21	7	December 2
June 9	March 5	8	June 10	10	December 1
June 1	February 25	7	June 2	9	November 30
May 16	February 10	5	May 17	7	November 28
June 5	March 1	8	June 6	10	November 27
May 28	February 21	7	May 29	8	December 3
May 13	February 6	5	May 14	6	December 2
June 1	February 26	7	June 2	9	November 30
May 24	February 17	6	May 25	8	November 29
June 13	March 9	9	June 14	11	November 28
May 29	February 22	7	May 30	9	November 27
May 20	February 14	6	May 21	7	December 2
June 9	March 5	8	June 10	10	December 1
May 25	February 18	6	May 26	8	November 30
May 17	February 10	5	May 18	7	November 29
June 5	March 1	8	June 6	10	November 27
May 28	February 21	7	May 29	8	December 3
May 13	February 6	5	May 14	6	December 2
June 2	February 26	7	June 3	9	December 1
May 24	February 18	6	May 25	8	November 29
June 6	March 2	8	June 7	10	November 28
May 29	February 22	7	May 30	9	November 27

THE DOMINICAL LETTER

To each day of the year there is assigned one of the following letters: **A, b, c, d, e, f, g**, which correspond to the seven days of the week (cf. General Roman Calendar, p. 92, first column). One of these letters, called the “dominical letter,” indicates the Lord’s Day (Sunday) throughout the whole year.

For example, in the year 2030 the dominical letter is **f** (cf. Table of Dates, p. 89, second column); all days in the General Roman Calendar that are designated by this letter are Sundays; January 6, 13, 20, 27, etc.

Leap years, however, are assigned two dominical letters, the first of which indicates Sundays from the beginning of the year until February 24, the second of which indicates Sundays from February 25 until the end of the year: twice it is said **the sixth day before the Calends of March**, that is, on February 24 and 25, and the letter **f** is repeated, serving for both February 24 and 25.¹

For example, the year 2032 is assigned two dominical letters: **d** and **c**. The letter **d** indicates the Sundays up to February 24: January 4, 11, 18... February 22. Then the letter **d** is changed to the other letter **c**, which indicates the Sundays from February 24: February 29, March 7, 14, etc.

THE LETTER OF THE SUNDAY CYCLE

In the Table of Dates of Movable Celebrations (cf. third column), the letter of the cycle of biblical readings for Sundays and feast days is given also to indicate the antiphon which is used for the Benedictus and the Magnificat.

The first letter refers to the civil year (e.g., in 2030, Year B); the second letter refers to the liturgical year that begins on the First Sunday of Advent (e.g., December 1, 2030, Year C).

¹ This is in reference to the system of the old Roman calendar; see, for example, the beginning of the entries on these two dates in the Roman Martyrology, with February 25 as read during leap years.

GENERAL ROMAN CALENDAR

[including the Proper Calendar for the Dioceses of the United States of America]

JANUARY

A	Cal.	1	The Octave Day of the Nativity of the Lord: SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD	Solemnity
b	IV	2	Sts. Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen, Bishops and Doctors of the Church	Memorial
c	III	3	<i>The Most Holy Name of Jesus*</i>	
d	Eve	4	[USA] St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Religious	Memorial
e	Nones	5	[USA] St. John Neumann, Bishop	Memorial
f	VIII	6	[USA] <i>St. André Bessette, Religious</i>	
g	VII	7	<i>St. Raymond of Penyafort, Priest</i>	
A	VI	8		
b	V	9		
c	IV	10		
d	III	11		
e	Eve	12		
f	Ides	13	<i>St. Hilary, Bishop and Doctor of the Church</i>	
g	XIX	14		
A	XVIII	15		
b	XVII	16		
c	XVI	17	St. Anthony, Abbot	Memorial
d	XV	18		
e	XIV	19		
f	XIII	20	<i>St. Fabian, Pope and Martyr St. Sebastian, Martyr</i>	

