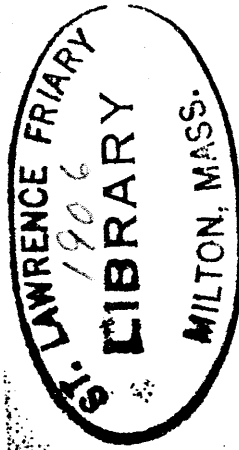


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LEARNING THE
NEW BREVIARY

by

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NEW YORK, BOSTON, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO, SAN FRANCISCO

BENZIGER BROTHERS

PRINTERS TO THE HOLY APOSTOLIC SEE
AND THE SACRED CONGREGATION OF RITES

IMPRIMI POTES

J. R. CONNERY, S. J.
Proepositus Provincialis
Provinciae Chicagensis, S. J.
die 8 novembris, 1960.

NIHIL OBSTAT

J. J. BRENNAN, M.A.
Censor Deputatus

IMPRIMATUR

✠ FRANCIS CARDINAL SPELLMAN
Archbishop of New York
April 18, 1961

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Library of Congress Catalogue Card Number 61-15032

PART I

**THE DIVINE OFFICE:
ITS NATURE AND PARTS**

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I. THE NEW TERMINOLOGY

1. The Divine Office is an essential part of the liturgical day. The term *liturgical day* is defined in the rubrics as a day sanctified by liturgical actions, particularly by the Eucharistic Sacrifice and the public prayer of the Church, which is the Divine Office. Liturgical days are divided into four classes, which, in descending order of rank, are designated simply as days of the first (I), second (II), third (III), and fourth (IV) class. As you might suspect, a liturgical day of the first class is a day on which both Mass and Office are of a feast of the first class, or of a Sunday of the first class, or of a vigil or ferial of the first class. The same is true in due proportion of the other classes.

2. The Sundays of the year fall into only two classes. The Sundays of the first class are all the Sundays of Advent, the Sundays of Lent, Easter Sunday, Low Sunday, and Pentecost Sunday. All other Sundays are of the second class. The rank of a Sunday does not determine the nature of the Office recited, but the rank of the feast which can displace the Sunday Office. In general, no feast can displace a Sunday of the first class. Even a

feast of the second class, unless it be a feast of Our Lord, cannot displace a Sunday of the second class. A feast of the first class, however, always displaces a Sunday of the second class.

3. The feasts of the ecclesiastical year are divided into three classes and are designated as feasts of the first (I) class, of the second (II) class, and of the third (III) class. The class of a feast determines the nature of the Office said in its celebration.

4. Three feasts, Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost, have octaves. An octave is defined as the celebration of a greater feast for eight continuous days. Octaves are of two kinds: octaves of the first (I) class; namely, those of Easter and Pentecost; and octaves of the second (II) class; namely, the octave of Christmas. All days within octaves of the first class are liturgical days of the first class. Days within an octave of the second class are liturgical days of the second class; the octave day, however, is of the first class.

5. A Vigil is defined as a liturgical day which precedes a feast and serves as a preparation for it. Vigils are of three classes. Vigils of the I class are those of Christmas and Pentecost. Those of the II class are the vigils of the Ascension of Our Lord, of the Assumption of the B.V.M., of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, and of the feast of Saints Peter and Paul Apostles. There is only one vigil of the III class; it is the vigil of St. Laurence.

6. The days of the week, all except Sunday, are called ferial days. Thus, Monday is feria II (there is no feria I), Tuesday is feria III, etc. However, Saturday is never referred to as feria VII but always by its He-

brew name Sabbatum. There are four classes of ferial days. Those of the I class are Ash Wednesday and the ferial days of Holy Week. Those of the II class are the weekdays of Advent from the 17th to the 23rd of December; also the Ember Days of Advent, Lent, and September. Those of the III class are the days of Lent not yet mentioned and all the days of Advent to December 16th inclusively. All the other ferial days belong to the IV class.

II. THE ROMAN BREVIARY

7. The Roman Breviary is a liturgical book containing the Divine Office. If published in one volume, it is called a *totum*. More usually it is published in two volumes. They are officially designated as *Tomus Prior* and *Tomus Alter*. Whether published in one or two volumes, each volume contains the following essential parts: the *Ordinarium*, the *Psalterium*, the *Proprium de Tempore*, the *Proprium Sanctorum*, and the *Commune Sanctorum*. The *Ordinarium* contains an outline of the various hours of the Divine Office and those prayers which never vary from day to day. It corresponds, therefore, to the *Ordo Missæ* of the missal. The *Psalterium* contains the psalms for the various Hours for each day of the week. The *Proprium de Tempore* contains the variable parts for the Sunday Office and in addition three lessons for each day of the week. These lessons are taken from various books of the Bible and are called Scripture Occurring lessons. In the second volume of the breviary the lessons from a

Homily on the Gospel are not found with the other lessons for the Sunday, but in a section by itself at the end of the *Proprium de Tempore*. The *Proprium Sanctorum* contains those parts of the Office for the saints in the calendar of the universal Church which are proper to each saint. The *Commune Sanctorum* has almost complete Offices for the various classes of saints; namely, Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, etc.

8. Besides these essential parts, other minor parts may also be found in each volume of the breviary. Among these are the *Officia propria diœceseos, nationis, vel ordinis* and many useful prayers and blessings. The section *Officia propria diœceseos*, as its name indicates, is nothing else than a supplement to the *Proprium Sanctorum* and contains Offices which are not common to the universal Church, but are celebrated in a particular diocese.

NOTE. To acquire familiarity with the content and divisions of the breviary, it is suggested that the student page through one of the volumes of the breviary. An hour or two thus spent will prove a profitable investment.

III. THE DIVINE OFFICE

9. The Divine Office consists of seven Canonical Hours, namely: Matins and Lauds (counted as one Hour), Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Compline. All who are bound to the recitation of the Divine Office must daily recite (vocally) these seven hours.

10. There are five classes of Offices. They are:

a) The *Officium dominicale*, or Sunday Office. This

is the Office which is said on Sundays. In the breviary it has a section practically to itself; namely, the *Proprium de Tempore*.

b) The *Officium festivum*, or festal Office. This is the Office which is said on feasts of the I class. Many of the parts of such Offices are proper to each feast and are printed in full in the *Proprium Sanctorum*. If not all are printed, references will be given there as to where the missing parts can be found.

c) The *Officium semifestivum*, or the semifestal Office. This is the Office for all feasts of the II class. Fewer parts of such Offices are proper to the Office. The proper parts are again found in the *Proprium Sanctorum*.

d) The *Officium ordinarium*, or ordinary Office. This is the Office for all feasts of the III class. The name probably derives from the fact that this Office is said more frequently than any other. The proper parts of this Office are again found in the *Proprium Sanctorum*.

e) The *Officium feriale*, or ferial Office. It is said on days when no feast of a saint occurs or when the feast of a saint may not be celebrated; for example, on Ash Wednesday. It is also said on vigils of the II and III class.

11. The rubrics with regard to the ceremonies of the Divine Office, when to make the sign of the cross, when to stand, genuflect, when to sit, are of obligation only when the Divine Office is said in choir or in common. The rubric, however, goes on to say that it is fitting for one saying the Office alone to keep the rubrics with regard to the sign of the cross.

12. The rules governing the sign of the cross in the recitation of the Divine Office are as follows: Make the large sign of the cross from forehead to breast, from left shoulder to right

- a) At the beginning of each hour at the verse *Deus, in adiutorium.*
- b) After the *lectio brevis* of Prime and Compline when reciting the verse *Adiutorium nostrum.*
- c) When beginning the absolution *Indulgentiam* after the *Confiteor* in the Hour of Compline.
- d) At the beginning of each of the three canticles *Benedictus, Magnificat, and Nunc dimittis.*
- e) At the benediction at the end of Prime and of Compline.
- f) At the verse *Divinum auxilium* at the end of the Office.

Make a sign of the cross on the lips at the beginning of Matins at the words. *Domine, labia mea aperies.*

Make a sign of the cross on the breast in Compline at the words *Converte nos*, which occur shortly after the *Confiteor.*

13. The Proper Time for the Recitation of the Canonical Hours.—The new rubrics give as a purpose of the Canonical Hours the sanctification of the hours of the day. They point out that this purpose will be better achieved and the Canonical Hours recited with greater spiritual profit if they are recited at the times for which they were composed. Matins was intended for the night hours; Lauds for the very early morning; Prime, Terce, Sext, and None, as their names indicate, for the first, third, sixth, and ninth hours of the day; Vespers for the

early evening; and Compline as the final prayer of the day.

However, the new rubrics still permit the anticipation of Matins. For any good reason it may be said, even in choir or in common, at any time after two o'clock in the afternoon of the preceding day. Lauds may no longer be anticipated.

The rubrics also state explicitly that anyone bound to the recitation of the Canonical Hours satisfies his obligation if he recites them at any time between midnight and midnight.

14. Indulgences Attached to the Divine Office.—

- 1) Clerics in Holy Orders, who devoutly recite the entire Divine Office, even when separated into parts, before the Blessed Sacrament whether exposed for public adoration or reserved in the tabernacle, are granted: A plenary indulgence, if they make their confession, receive Holy Communion and pray for the intentions of the Holy Father.

Those, however, who recite only a part of the Divine Office before the Blessed Sacrament, as above, are granted: An indulgence of 500 days for each Canonical Hour.

- 2) The indulgence formerly attached to the recitation of the prayer *Sacrosanctæ*, namely, the remission of all faults committed through human frailty in the recitation of the Divine Office, is now attached to the recitation of the *Antiphona finalis B.M.V.*, with which the Divine Office concludes.

IV. PLAN OF THE SUCCEEDING PAGES

15. We shall now study the individual Hours one by one in the succeeding seven chapters. Our general method of procedure will be to give: (*a*) the structure and content of the various Hours; (*b*) where the various parts are to be found in the breviary; (*c*) how they are to be said; and (*d*) special notes.

Chapter IX is a recapitulation of the preceding seven chapters, a graphic comparative study of the various classes of Offices emphasizing their similarities and differences. It is followed by chapters on the Office of the Dead, on the variations introduced into the Office at special seasons, and on reading the Ordo.

In Part II complete Offices are outlined by way of illustration. These may profitably be consulted after each individual Hour has been studied. References to this section, therefore, will be found in each chapter.

Thus, we shall study the Office first analytically part by part (Chapters II to VIII), then comparatively and as a whole (Chapter IX), and, finally, practically in illustrative Offices (Chapters XIII to XV). The merit of such a method is, we believe, that doubts and difficulties which occur—and each will have his own, different from those of anyone else—will gradually solve themselves as the matter is presented in various ways.

CHAPTER II

MATINS OF THREE NOCTURNS

16. Matins and Lauds together theoretically form the first of the Canonical Hours of the Divine Office. Practically, however, they are two separate Hours, and this justifies us in considering each by itself.

There are two kinds of Matins; namely, Matins of Three Nocturns, and Matins of One Nocturn. We shall consider only the former in the present chapter.

17. When said.—Matins of Three Nocturns is said in the *Officium festivum* and also in the *Officium semifestivum*; therefore on all feasts of the I and II class.

I. THE CONTENT OF A MATINS OF THREE NOCTURNS

In Matins of Three Nocturns, as in all other Hours, three parts may be distinguished: namely, an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.

18. The Plan of a Matins of Three Nocturns.—

THE INTRODUCTION

The introduction comprises

- 1) Two introductory verses and responses, namely:
 - V. *Dómine, lábia mea apéries.*
 - R. *Et os meum annuntiábit laudem tuam.*