

October 2012



Presenter Sister Anita Louise Lowe explains the history of the Liturgy of the Hours at the September Oblate meeting.

Liturgy of the Hours: Why, History, Development

By Sister Anita Louise Lowe



The Liturgy of the Hours is a prayer that is intimately tied to time and seasons. The Liturgy of the Hours is a daily prayer, prayed in the morning, at midday, at evening, before bed, and in some places, in the middle of the night. We find this rhythm of time and seasons expressed in the psalms used for prayer.

Time today is complicated. We have technology that allows us to have light when it's dark and to make it dark when it is light outside. The Liturgy of the Hours takes us out of "clock" time and invites us to enter into the eternal time of God. Through prayer, we mark that all time is holy, all time is of God.

How have Christians prayed throughout the centuries? Let's embark on some time travel and see what daily prayer looked like for Christians throughout the centuries.

Our first stop is in the first century. Jewish prayer was centered in the temple, the synagogue, and the home. Until the time of the Temple's destruction in the year 70, morning and evening sacrifices are conducted there. In the synagogue there are four public services on at least three days of the week—the Sabbath and the market days of Monday and Thursday. In Jewish homes we find that there is prayer at the beginning and the end of each day and some private moments of prayer three times during the day.

While we don't know exactly what Christian prayer looked like during this time period, we can assume some Jewish influence, especially in praying at fixed times, such as morning and evening. The Gospels recount various times when Jesus

“We believe that the divine presence is everywhere and “that in every place the eyes of God are watching the good and the wicked (Prov. 15:3).” Beyond the least doubt we should believe this to be especially true when we celebrate the divine office (liturgy of the hours). Let us consider, then, how we ought to sing the psalms in such a way that our minds are in harmony with our voices.”

—Rule of St. Benedict
Chapter 19



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prayed — in the morning, in the evening, and even keeping vigil throughout the night. In the Acts of the Apostles, we hear of the apostles gathering at the Temple as a separate group from the Jews but at the hours of Jewish prayer and we hear of prayer at the third, sixth, and ninth hours of the day. We also learn of what this prayer was composed: psalms, hymns, readings, and prayer of joy and thanksgiving. In a document dating from around the years AD 50-70, “The Didache,” we find an admonition for the Christian to pray the Our Father with a doxology three times a day.

In the third century, we find set times of prayer on rising, at the 3rd, 6th, and 9th hours of the day, before going to bed, and during the night itself. The Christians here were urged to pray facing the East as a symbol of awaiting the second coming. In this century, we begin to see some standardization of rubrics regarding standing or kneeling, and we have mention of psalms being a common prayer of Christians. Themes begin to emerge for the various prayer times: Christ is seen as the true sun and the true day, and the day hours are interpreted according to the passion account found in Mark’s gospel.

We next stop at the fourth century. This was the most important era for the development of Christian prayer because of the Peace of Constantine and the end of Christian persecutions. Christianity becomes the official religion of the empire. All Christians were urged to pray without ceasing, and the Liturgy of the Hours evolved in two different fashions: one way for the secular church and another for the monastics who went out into the desert.

Christians gathered publicly in large groups to pray in “cathedrals” with the bishop presiding. This type of daily prayer became known as the cathedral office. It is a prayer of praise and intercession. Psalms are selected which are appropriate to the particular hour or service. Within the prayer we find much use of symbol and ceremony as well as the use of hymns, chants, and various ministries. The two privileged hours were morning and evening with both having light as a primary symbol.

At the same time, men and women fled to the desert to lead a monastic life. The “desert monastic” style of prayer,

unlike that of the “cathedral” style, was less a liturgical service than it was a meditation in common. Many of the desert monastics prayed 12 psalms in course — that is, in numerical order — followed by two Scripture readings and then another set of 12 psalms. It didn’t matter if the psalm spoke of evening when it was actually morning. The purpose

was to meditate on the psalms not to see the psalms as prayers in and of themselves.

In descriptions of groups of monks gathered for common prayer we discover that one monk recited the psalm while the rest sat and meditated. Many of them listened while doing basic work such as weaving or basket making. For these monks “ora et labora” meant continual prayer and incessant labor; all of life was a prayer. At the end of the psalm, all arose with hands lifted and prayed in silence. A hybrid-type of prayer began to develop in urban areas where monks and the secular churches came in contact with one another.

In the Western church of the fifth and sixth centuries we see that the hybrid style of prayer continues to develop. Morning and evening

are still the main times of prayer for the general population. The symbolism of the rising sun as the light of Christ is echoed in the lamplighting ceremony at evening. Psalms are chosen to fit the time of day. There are some occasional vigils celebrated, such as, at Easter or before a funeral, but this prayer at night was most often a private prayer said in one’s home.

In monastic circles, the length of the office grows. “To pray without ceasing” seems to imply to have more and longer periods of formal prayer. Benedict, for his part, is an innovator and will redistribute the psalmody, eliminating repetitions of psalms, and introducing hymns. Benedict’s office is one of moderation and pastoral “good sense.”

Little changes in the next few centuries. The clergy living in both cathedrals and country chapels celebrated the Liturgy of the Hours in common with the people of the parish. Only when the burden of pastoral and liturgical care fell to one presbyter did the public celebration of the Hours begin to suffer. By the 13th century, the full monastic course of psalms had been made obligatory for all clergy. They didn’t have



time to do all of these prayers publicly, so they recited them privately as they were able. It was during this time that orders like the Franciscans and Dominicans emerged. They had “to do the office” wherever they were. Whereas common prayer had once been the only way, now it is becoming simply a better way. And the obligation to pray that used to be sensed as an obligation of all Christians becomes more and more the personal obligation of the clergy.

Another development that affected praying the Hours was the development of the printing press. What had been the prayer of the church was now a book: the Breviary. This shortened version of the daily prayer was designed for priests to use wherever they might be. Another factor at work in the 15th century was the growth of a spirituality called “*devotio moderna*.” The personal piety that emerged saw common prayer as a distraction to the “true” inner, private prayer.

By the 16th century, prayer in the monastic life was reaching a point of “liturgical exhaustion.” The church reformed the Office, simplifying the prayer and making the breviary better suited to private use.

Leaping ahead to the 19th century, we find that daily prayer is seen as the duty of the clergy and religious. Pius X in 1911 attempted a modern reform of the liturgy. He limited the number of saints’ feastdays in order to re-emphasize the daily character of the Office. He also redistributed the psalms and limited the number of psalms said at a given hour.

Moving forward to the 1960s, we arrive at the Second Vatican Council. In the document on the liturgy, the Council expressed the desire that the principal hours of the Divine Office — Morning and Evening Prayer — once again become the prayer of all the people of God. The Council decreed that the sequence of hours was to be restored and that the prayer itself was to be revised. Some of the revisions included spreading the 150 psalms over a longer period of time, keeping each hour at the time of day for which it was intended, and allowing the use of the vernacular language rather than Latin. The Council also asked that pastors ensure “that the principal hours — especially Vespers — be celebrated in common in church on Sundays and on solemn feasts. The laity, too, are encouraged to recite the divine office...”



So, why do we pray the Liturgy of the Hours? We can find some answers by looking at the statement of purpose in the front of the monastery’s morning and evening prayer books.

First, we have the basic human need to pray, to pray daily, and to pray with others. Paul Bradshaw, a liturgy scholar, stated that there is no such thing as private prayer. There is personal prayer and prayer done communally, but whenever a Christian prays he or she does so as a member of the Body of Christ.

Second, praying with the psalms gives us words for our dialogue with God. The psalms speak of every human emotion.

Third, we pray the Liturgy of the Hours as intercessors for our community, the Church, and the world. The General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours states that “the whole body of the Church shares in the priesthood of Christ.” By praying the Liturgy of the Hours we fulfill our baptismal call to pray and to intercede for each other, for all of humanity, and for all of creation.

Robert Taft, considered by many to be “the” expert on the Liturgy of the Hours, has reflected that this prayer is considered to be the church’s daily prayer par excellence because it is biblical, objective, and traditional. He continues by saying that it is traditional because it has stood the test of time throughout

the history of Christianity. It is biblical because the same elements that made up the prayer for the early church continues in the Liturgy of the Hours: remembering God’s deeds, praying for God’s will, committing oneself in covenant with God in Christ, and praying for the fulfillment of the end of the ages.

The Liturgy of the Hours is objective in that it has as its aim to encounter God through Jesus in the Spirit. God speaks to us and we respond to God. This prayer can bring a balance to other forms of prayer. It can pull us out of concern only for ourselves and those near to us. It draws us into spiritual values and connects us to all of the Church and all of the world. The Liturgy of the Hours is a true meditation that provides us with a framework that molds us as Christians, that feeds us, and that opens us to be sent by God to be Christ for the world.

Belcourt Oblates — Alive and Well

By Sister Mary Victor Kercher



Mary Eileen Fritz were attentive guests.

The going to Belcourt was just a bit like the Walk to Emmaus. The Rosary, three times a day, was the presence of Jesus and Mary during the 1000 mile trek through Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and North Dakota to the Turtle Mountain Reservation and Belcourt. The Queen of Peace Inn welcomed some very tired travelers. The breaking of the Bread at Emmaus included participating in Sunday Mass with the parishioners of St. Ann's Church followed by a special meal arranged by the Belcourt Oblates and served in the dining area of the inn. This hospitality facility was formerly the property of the sisters. An important part of the hospitality is a beautiful chapel with large windows, providing wonderful views of the landscape. The meeting took place in a conference room, also in the Queen of Peace Inn.

With all the good news in mind, the return home to share with you the successes and hopes for the future of our Belcourt Oblate friends is now a happy memory. Oblate Mary Taber and Oblate Mary Eileen Fritz can fill you in on their experience.

Oblates Gail Trottier and Kathy Dixon served as leaders of the Queen of Peace Oblate Chapter in Belcourt, North Dakota, for eight years. Sister Wilma Davis, Oblate Director of Queen of Peace Monastery, prepared and put into place very competent and committed women to plan, lead, and encourage the Oblate Community in Belcourt. Since the closing of the monastery in Belcourt in 2004, at the recommendation of Sister Wilma and the Belcourt Oblates, the Oblates are now affiliated with the Ferdinand Benedictine monastery.

Oblates Mary Taber and Mary Eileen Fritz accompanied Sister Mary Victor for the bi-yearly visit to the Oblate Chapter "Queen of Peace" in North Dakota. This experience gives the opportunity for getting to know one another, share experiences and exchange information about the life and Oblate activities.

Continuing Oblate Leadership in Belcourt was the particular concern during the September 2012 visit. Prior to the visit, Oblates Gail and Kathy had suggested a possible change for leading the group. Sister Mary Victor had been invited to lead a day of retreat with some emphasis on commitment and leadership service in the Oblate community. The result of reflection and prayer brought forward

a very open discussion for selecting leaders for a period of 3 years and a determination of responsibilities for the persons selected. Oblate Phyllis Jollie and Jeanie Jollie accepted the roles as Oblate leaders, with responsibility of planning meetings and other activities. Oblate Joanne Desjarlais will be giving reminder calls each month. Oblate Josef Marion will be reporter and photographer. We can look for more news of our Oblate friends in North Dakota. Our Ferdinand Oblate representatives added the suggestion for the possibility of having Oblate Partners. The idea of getting to know and keep in touch with another Oblate was well received. You can expect more information on that in the months ahead. Belcourt Oblates in attendance were Gail Trottier, Derrick and Kathy Dixon, Phyllis Jollie, Jeanie Jollie, Josef Marion, Shirley Azure, Joanne Desjarlais, Madeline Keplin, Susan Rousin, Verna Jeanotte, Ron and Patty Allery. Mary Taber and

Special Meeting Held October 21

The Oblate community actively participated in a discussion about the future of the Ferdinand Oblates at the October meeting. Kathy Kleindorfer, a professional facilitator and friend of the Ferdinand religious community, assisted as Oblates dreamed and then developed action plans to move the Oblate community forward.

Discussion centered on three questions: What might we as Oblates do to contribute to an enhanced experience for all Oblates? What might we as Oblates do to attract new Oblates? How might we assume a greater leadership role for the program in the future? Oblates developed action plans, and there will much follow-up in the months ahead.

Oblation Day Sunday, October 21, 2012

Ruth Goepfrich, Earl Menchhofer, Pamela Smith, and Dolores Webber made their Oblation, becoming professed Oblates of St. Benedict, during the Rite of Oblation held during the sisters' Morning Prayer on Sunday, October 21. Sister Kristine Anne Harpenau, prioress, officiated at the rite in the monastery church.

All of these new Oblates completed their year of study and reflection on the Rule of St. Benedict with their sister companions. Sister Karen Joseph companioned Ruth, Sister Mary Ann Verkamp companioned Pamela and Earl, and Sister Jolinda Naas companioned Dolores.



Ruth Goepfrich is from Ferdinand, Indiana; Pamela Smith and Earl Menchhofer are from Hoyleton, Illinois; and Dolores Webber is from Paducah, Kentucky.

Sister Kristine Anne Harpenau (far left), prioress, officiates at the recent Rite of Oblation. Facing her are (standing, from left to right), Sister Jolinda Naas, and the four Oblates making Oblation, Dolores Webber, Pamela Smith, Earl Menchhofer, and Ruth Goepfrich.

Renewal of Oblation

Members of the Oblate community who were present for Morning Prayer and the Rite of Oblation on October 21 also renewed their own Oblation. Oblates who could not be present may choose to use the following prayer privately to renew their Oblation.

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. I renew my Oblation and offer myself to Almighty God, to our Holy Father Benedict, to St. Scholastica, and to all the saints, as an Oblate of Monastery Immaculate Conception, Ferdinand, Indiana. I promise again to dedicate myself to the service of God and humankind according to the Rule of St. Benedict, as far as my state in life permits.

Four New Oblate Candidates

Judy Powers, Joann Rubeck, Jean Siebelts, and Lynn Steiden began their year of Oblate Candidacy on Sunday, September 23, 2012. Sister Kristine Anne Harpenau, prioress of Monastery Immaculate Conception, presided at the Rite of Reception held during the Oblate meeting at the monastery.

During their year of study of the Rule of St. Benedict and Benedictine spirituality, Candidate Judy Powers and Candidate Jean Siebelts will be accompanied by Sister Mary Claude Croteau; Candidate Joann Rubeck will be accompanied by Sister Agnes Marie Dauby; Candidate Lynn Steiden will be accompanied by Sister Kathryn Marie Huber.

Candidates Judy Powers and Jean Siebelts are from St. Louis, Missouri; Candidates Joann Rubeck and Lynn Steiden are from Metropolis, Illinois.



The new Oblate Candidates are Lynn Steiden (Sister Kathryn Huber), Judy Powers, Jean Siebelts, Joann Rubeck.

Seventeen years of service

Oblate Candidate Judy Powers recently received special recognition for her “Unconditional commitment” as pastoral associate in St. Joseph Parish, Cottleville, Missouri. Msgr. James Callahan, pastor of St. Joseph, offered many comments of special recognition as he recalled her seventeen years of service in her unassuming matter-of-fact way, going about her parish duties, not only in the parish office, but also within and well beyond the parish boundaries. Her pastoral ministry extended to coordinating Parish Helping Hands Program, Extraordinary Ministers of Communion, sending Cards of Cheer to sick and elderly, videotaping Sunday Masses for residents in local retirement homes. The list is long. The closing comment made by the pastor, “What a blessing it is to have Judy Powers, a woman of unconditional commitment on our parish staff!” Congratulations, Oblate Candidate Judy Powers!



Pray for the deceased relatives of Sisters and Oblates:

Helen Kuntz, *mother of Sister Romaine Kuntz*

Charmaine Verkamp, *sister-in-law of Sister Mary Ann Verkamp*

Gene James, *brother of Sister Mary Harold James (deceased)*

John Martin, *brother-in-law of Sister Mary Esther Steckler*

Lee Steiden, *brother of Oblate Candidate Lynn Steiden*

Blanche Parisien, *sister of Oblate Rita Langer*

Pat, *sister of Father Gerry McCarthy*

Cassandra, *granddaughter of JoAnn Desjarlais*

Wilfred Weinzapfel, *brother of Sister Agnes Weinzapfel*

Oblates is published four times a year by the Oblate Leadership Team: Sisters Kathy Bilskie, Mary Victor Kercher, and Barbara Ann Offerman.

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Oblate Birthdays

November

3 — Peg Albertson,
 4 — Gloria Patnaude and Ellen Stanton,
 6 — Phyllis Schmits,
 8 — Marie Roberge,
 10 — Bob Cadwallader,
 18 — Denise Marcellais and Mel Schroeder,
 22 — Lawrie Hamilton,
 23 — Janet Ziliak,
 27 — Ruth Ihrig,
 29 — Patricia Hopf



December

4 — Shirley L'Esperance,
 13 — Lillian Keplin,
 14 — Dolores Gourneau,
 27 — Sharon Champagne,
 28 — Jeanie Jollie

January

2 — Kathleen (Murphy) McTiernan,
 6 — David Richards,
 13 — Lynn Belli,
 16 — John Kohl and Jackie Richards,
 25 — Susan Roussin,
 26 — Joann Rubeck,
 30 — Kathy Knust and Pamela Smith



You are invited to be in touch with the Sisters of St. Benedict in prayer. Use the following link:

<mms://smtp.thedome.org/churchcam>

Monastery Moments and Oblate Offerings

November 16

Solemnity of St. Gertrude This Benedictine saint is the patron of the Federation of St. Gertrude to which the monastery belongs. Sister Joella Kidwell is president of the Federation.

November 17-18

Christkindlmarkt Sister singers will perform during the Sunday concert. To assist at the 3 p.m. concert, contact Sister Anita Louise at 812-367-1411, ext. 2640. Assistance is needed to sell CDs and distribute programs to the public.

December 8

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception The sisters will be celebrating this special feast of the Blessed Virgin. Oblates will be remembered in prayer.

Christmas Eve

Eucharistic Liturgy Music will begin at 9:30 p.m. with Mass at 10 p.m. Refreshments are offered after Mass.

Join the sisters as ministers of hospitality before Mass or Eucharistic ministers during Mass. Many volunteers are needed. Contact the liturgy office, Sister Anita Louise, at 812-367-1411, ext. 2640.

January 1

Announcement of Jubilees On this special feast day, the religious community honors all sisters who will be celebrating a jubilee during 2013. Observance on this day is for religious community members only. The sisters who will be celebrating during the year: 80 years — Sisters Assunta Highbaugh and Dolorosa Hasenour; 75 years — Sisters Adele Weyer and Mary Esther Steckler; 70 years — Sister Marilyn Market; 60 years — Sisters Mary Karen Hill and Geneva Stumler; 50 years — Sisters Dorothy Graf, Mary Judith Fleig, Elnora Shidler, Mary Ann Verkamp, Anna Marie Brosmer, and Mary Philip Berger.

January 20

Oblate Meeting Sisters Michelle Mohr and Anita Louise Lowe compare the Monastic Liturgy of the Hours and the Roman Liturgy of the Hours. Learn about the differences and similarities. The presentation begins at 1 p.m. (ET) Morning prayer is at 10 a.m. with Mass at 10:30. Dinner immediately follows Mass. Reservations required for dinner and the afternoon meeting. Email oblates@thedome.org or contact one of the Oblate coordinators: Sister Mary Victor, Sister Barbara Ann, or Sister Kathy Bilskie.



Sister Anita Louise



Sister Michelle



Sister Assunta



Sister Dolorosa



Sister Adele



Sister Mary Esther



Sister Marilyn



Sister Mary Karen



Sister Geneva



Sister Dorothy



Sister Mary Judith



Sister Elnora



Sister Mary Ann



Sister Anna Marie



Sister Mary Philip



Oblate Mary Eileen Fritz often volunteers to help cover important tasks when the sisters are involved with community meetings. Mary Eileen is shown at the front desk working the switchboard and greeting guests. Mary Eileen also volunteers extensively in her parish of St. Ferdinand's and in the town of Ferdinand. In November she will receive the diocesan Simon Brute award in recognition of her service.



After the September Oblate meeting, sisters and Oblates enjoyed spending time talking with one another. Here, Sister Kristine Anne Harpenau talks with Oblates Mel and Patti Schroeder.

SISTERS OF ST. BENEDICT FERDINAND, INDIANA

Seek. Pray. Share.

Oblates

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

The Oblate community enjoyed the annual August gathering for food and fun.

