

# A Brief Guide to the Use of *Christian Prayer: The Liturgy of the Hours*

An abbreviated form of the **General Instructions of the Liturgy of the Hours** (GILH) can be found at the beginning of *Christian Prayer*. The complete instructions may be found online at [tinyurl.com/giloth](http://tinyurl.com/giloth).

Available for purchase each year from Catholic Book Publishing Company is the **Saint Joseph Guide for the Liturgy of the Hours**, which identifies ribbon placement for each day of the calendar year.

## *Seven Hours Each Day*

1. Office of Readings
2. Morning Prayer (required for Deacon)
3. Midmorning Prayer
4. Midday Prayer
5. Midafternoon Prayer
6. Evening Prayer (required for Deacons)
7. Night Prayer (recommended for Deacons)

The Invitatory is optionally prayed prior to Morning Prayer.

The Liturgy of the Hours is also referred to as the Divine Office, Breviary, and LOTH.

## *Sections of the Liturgy of the Hours* (in the order they appear in *Christian Prayer*)

**The Proper of Seasons** (beginning on page 39) contains prayers specific to the liturgical seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, Triduum, Easter, Ordinary Time, and Solemnities for Our Lord. These are arranged chronologically. Prayers within the Proper of Seasons take precedence over the other sections. The week number for the Four-Week Psalter can be found on Sundays in the header.

**The Ordinary** (beginning on page 687) is the master plan or rubrics for praying the LOTH. Those prayers repeated every day are contained here.

**The Four-Week Psalter** (beginning on page 699) contains antiphons, psalms, and canticles that are used primarily on days in Ordinary Time. They are arranged by day of the week and repeated every four weeks.

**Night Prayer** (beginning on page 1034) contains the prayers used for each day of the week. Sunday's prayers may be used for each day, which facilitates memorizing Night Prayer so you do not need your book.

**The Proper of Saints** (beginning on page 1059) contains prayers for the feast days of the saints in chronological order. Feast days are ranked as Solemnities, Feasts, and Memorials, which is noted in the header of the feast day. Optional Memorials have no ranking in the header of the feast day.

**The Commons** (beginning on page 1368) contain antiphons, psalms, prayers, etc. for the various classification of saints—Blessed Virgin, Apostle, Martyr, Pastor, Doctor of the Church, Holy Men and Women, Virgin, Teacher, and those who worked for the Underprivileged.

## *Ordinary Time*

Ordinary time is part of the liturgical year that falls outside the two great seasons of Christmastide and Eastertide or their respective preparatory seasons of Advent and Lent. Ordinary Time includes the days between Christmastide and Lent, and between Eastertide and Advent. The last Sunday of Ordinary Time is the Solemnity of Christ the King.

The last Saturday is nominally the 34th Saturday as the second part of the Ordinary Time is counted backward from the 34th week.

Depending on where the 34th Saturday falls between November 26 to December 2, Ordinary Time will have 33 or 34 weeks.

If the XXXIV Saturday falls on 26/27/28/29 November, the Ordinary Time will have 33 weeks. If the XXXIV Saturday falls on 30 November or 1/2 December, the Ordinary Time will have 34 weeks. [

Another way to determine the number of weeks of Ordinary Time is if the following liturgical year starts in November, the previous liturgical year's Ordinary Time will have 33 weeks. If the following liturgical year starts in December, the previous liturgical year's Ordinary Time will have 34 weeks.

### ***Determining the Prayers to Use on any Given Day***

The weekdays that follow the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord are reckoned as belonging to the first week of Ordinary Time which continues until the Tuesday that immediately precedes Ash Wednesday.

After Eastertide the Ordinary Time resumes on the Monday after the Solemnity of Pentecost.

The day's rank determines where you will find the antiphons, psalms, readings, etc. If there is no specific instruction in the Proper of Seasons or the Proper of Saints, you will use the prayers in the Four-Week Psalter.

Solemnities and Feasts almost always have proper psalms, prayers, etc., or refer to the Commons; never use the Four-Week Psalter.

Memorials may choose to use the psalms, prayers, etc., from the Psalter of the day, or from the respective Common, unless otherwise indicated.

For Optional Memorials, you may treat them like a Memorial or ignore them.

Begin with the Ordinary to remind yourself of those prayers that repeat every day along with the sequence of the prayers within the hour. After a little experience, you will rely less on the Ordinary.

1. Find the day of the week for the current week in the Four-Week Psalter. Most days are ordinary days without special seasons or feast days, and you will use these prayers to form the prayers for the day.
2. Move to the Proper of Saints to determine if a feast day is being celebrated. If so, these special prayers replace the prayers in the Four-Week Psalter. Plus, there may be other instructions for the day. Every feast day will have at least a Concluding Prayer for the saint. Instead of using the Four-Week Psalter as the main guide for the rest of the prayers you may instead use the prayers etc. laid out in the Common of Saints. Generally, however, you are not required to do this, except on Solemnities and Feasts.
3. Then go to the Proper of Seasons to determine the same thing. Sundays will include several prayers for the particular Sunday.
4. Sundays and solemnities have two Evening Prayers. Evening Prayer I is prayed the evening of the vigil and Evening Prayer II is prayed the evening of the day.
5. There is a Sunday Night Prayer I, which is prayed on Saturday night, and a Sunday Night Prayer II, which is prayed on Sunday night.

For the seasons outside of Ordinary Time, more of the prayers will be found in the Proper of Seasons.

### ***Praying the Liturgy of the Hours – Morning Prayer***

If you are praying as a community, the Psalmody is prayed as if “in choir.” The praying of each strophe of the psalm or canticle is alternated between the left and right sides of the “choir.” The structure below represents the parts prayed by a leader, reader, and community (people). When praying by yourself, ignore the leader, reader, and community directives.

When praying the doxology, make a profound bow while praying, “Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.”

Once you have determined the selection of parts for today's office, and you have selected the hymn, stand and make the Sign of the Cross in the normal manner while saying:

Leader: God come to my assistance,  
People: —Lord make haste to help me.

Leader: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,  
People: —as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen. Alleluia.

*Do not say the Alleluia during Lent.*

Sing the Hymn. *If you are not sure of the hymn's tune, recite the hymn instead. Do not skip it.*

Begin the Psalmody with Antiphon 1. *If you are praying as a community, the antiphon is said by the leader.*

Pray the first Psalm. *If you are praying as a community, the first line of the first strophe is prayed by the leader to set the pace. Succeeding lines of the first strophe are prayed by either the left or right side. The remaining strophes are alternated between the right and left sides.*

Once the Psalm is completed, everyone prays the Doxology followed by the leader praying the Psalm Prayer. Then, everyone repeats Antiphon 1.

Pray the Canticle and second Psalm in the same manner as the first Psalm, except there is no Psalm Prayer for the Canticle.

Without an introduction or conclusion, the reader proclaims the Reading. A short reflection may be given but is not required.

After a moment of silence, the Responsory is prayed.

Everyone stands for the Canticle of Zechariah, and the leader prays the Antiphon. Everyone prays the Canticle together as they make the Sign of the Cross. Once the Canticle is completed, the Doxology is prayed, and the Antiphon is repeated.

There are two options for praying the Intercessions. Depending on which option the leader chooses determines how the Intercessions are prayed:

1. The leader introduces the Intercessions and says the response that the community will use as a response to each intercession. Then the reader prays the first Intercession, and everyone prays the response. The remaining Intercessions are prayed in a similar manner.  
*The response is typically shown in italics.*
2. The leader introduces the Intercessions but does not say the response. Then the leader prays the first Intercession's first phrase, and everyone responds by praying the second phrase, which begins with an endash. The remaining Intercessions are prayed in a similar manner.

After the Intercessions, everyone prays the Our Father, and then a blessing is given.

If the blessing is given by a priest or deacon:

Priest or Deacon: The Lord be with you.

Everyone: And with your spirit.

Priest or Deacon: May Almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.

Everyone: Amen.

Priest or Deacon: Go in peace.

Everyone: Thanks be to God.

If the blessing is not given by a priest or deacon, make the Sign of the Cross as the leader says, "May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life." Everyone responds, "Amen."

### ***Praying the Liturgy of the Hours – Evening Prayer***

Praying Evening Prayer is similar to Morning Prayer except for two differences:

- The Psalmody consists of Psalm, Psalm, Canticle instead of Psalm, Canticle, Psalm.
- The Canticle of Mary is prayed instead of the Canticle of Zechariah.

## Guide for Determining Morning Prayers

<i>Ordinary Time</i>						
	SOL. OF LORD	SOLEMNITY	FEAST DAY	MEMORIAL	SUNDAY	WEEKDAY
Introduction	Ordinary					
Hymn	Liturgical Guide for Hymns					
Ant. 1, 2, & 3	Prop. of Seas.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Sts.	Commons	4-Week Ps.	4-Week Ps.
Psalms & Cant.	Prop. of Seas.	Sun. Wk. I	Sun. Wk. I	4-Week Ps.	4-Week Ps.	4-Week Ps.
Reading	Prop. of Seas.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Sts.	Commons	4-Week Ps.	4-Week Ps.
Responsory	Prop. of Seas.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Sts.	Commons	4-Week Ps.	4-Week Ps.
Canticle Ant.	Prop. of Seas.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Seas.	4-Week Ps.
Canticle	Ordinary					
Intercessions	Prop. of Seas.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Sts.	Commons	Prop. of Seas.	4-Week Ps.
Lord's Prayer	Ordinary					
Concl. Prayer	Prop. of Seas.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Seas.	4-Week Ps.
<i>Seasons other than Ordinary Time</i>						
		SOLEMNITY	FEAST DAY	MEMORIAL	SUNDAY	WEEKDAY
Introduction		Ordinary				
Introduction		Liturgical Guide for Hymns				
Hymn		Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Sts.	4-Week Ps.	Prop. of Seas.	4-Week Ps.
Ant. 1, 2, & 3		Sun. Wk. I	Sun. Wk. I	4-Week Ps.	Prop. of Seas.	4-Week Ps.
Psalms & Cant.		Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Seas.	Prop. of Seas.	4-Week Ps.
Reading		Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Seas.	Prop. of Seas.	4-Week Ps.
Responsory		Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Seas.	Prop. of Seas.	4-Week Ps.
Canticle Ant.		Ordinary				
Canticle		Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Seas.	Prop. of Seas.	4-Week Ps.
Intercessions		Ordinary				
Lord's Prayer		Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Seas.	Prop. of Seas.	4-Week Ps.
Concl. Prayer		Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Seas.	Prop. of Seas.	4-Week Ps.

## Guide for Determining Evening Prayers

<i>Ordinary Time</i>						
	SOL. OF LORD	SOLEMNITY	FEAST DAY	MEMORIAL	SUNDAY	WEEKDAY
Introduction	Ordinary					
Hymn	Liturgical Guide for Hymns					
Ant. 1, 2, & 3	Prop. of Seas.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Sts.	Commons	4-Week Ps.	4-Week Ps.
Psalms & Cant.	Prop. of Seas.	Sun. Wk. I	Sun. Wk. I	4-Week Ps.	4-Week Ps.	4-Week Ps.
Reading	Prop. of Seas.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Sts.	Commons	4-Week Ps.	4-Week Ps.
Responsory	Prop. of Seas.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Sts.	Commons	4-Week Ps.	4-Week Ps.
Canticle Ant.	Prop. of Seas.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Seas.	4-Week Ps.
Canticle	Ordinary					
Intercessions	Prop. of Seas.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Sts.	Commons	Prop. of Seas.	4-Week Ps.
Lord's Prayer	Ordinary					
Concl. Prayer	Prop. of Seas.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Seas.	4-Week Ps.
<i>Seasons other than Ordinary Time</i>						
		SOLEMNITY	FEAST DAY	MEMORIAL	SUNDAY	WEEKDAY
Introduction		Ordinary				
Introduction		Liturgical Guide for Hymns				
Hymn		Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Sts.	4-Week Ps.	Prop. of Seas.	4-Week Ps.
Ant. 1, 2, & 3		Sun. Wk. I	Sun. Wk. I	4-Week Ps.	Prop. of Seas.	4-Week Ps.
Psalms & Cant.		Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Seas.	Sun. Wk. I	4-Week Ps.
Reading		Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Seas.	Prop. of Seas.	4-Week Ps.
Responsory		Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Seas.	Prop. of Seas.	4-Week Ps.
Canticle Ant.		Ordinary				
Canticle		Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Seas.	Prop. of Seas.	4-Week Ps.
Intercessions		Ordinary				
Lord's Prayer		Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Seas.	Prop. of Seas.	4-Week Ps.
Concl. Prayer		Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Sts.	Prop. of Seas.	Prop. of Seas.	4-Week Ps.