



NewsLetter

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Preparing the *Liturgy of the Hours*, Second Edition

Two significant events favor the present revision of the English translation of the *Liturgy of the Hours*. The first occurred in 1985, when the Holy See promulgated the Latin text of the *Liturgia Horarum, editio typica altera*. This second edition made a number of adjustments to the Latin text to bring it into closer conformity with the Neovulgate translation of Scripture.

One of the most noticeable revisions, however, is the addition of new antiphons for the Gospel Canticles at Morning and Evening Prayer on Sundays and solemnities. Instead of offering a single antiphon for each canticle as in the present English translation (the *Magnificat* antiphon for Evening Prayer I is usually from Year A, the *Benedictus* antiphon at Morning Prayer is from Year B, and the *Magnificat* antiphon for Evening Prayer II is from Year C), the revised Latin text provides three antiphons for each Gospel Canticle, a designated proper antiphon for Lectionary years A, B, and C. Each of the antiphons echoes a theme or passage from the particular Gospel reading for that year. The users of some vernacular translations, including Spanish and Portuguese, are already familiar with and accustomed to these additional antiphons on Sundays and solemnities. However, the present English translation of the *Liturgy of the Hours* dates from the early 1970s. Since the 1985 revision to the Latin text has up to now never been translated into English, the choice of three antiphons may appear novel to those praying in English.

The second event encouraging a revision of the Divine Office was the implementation of the *Roman Missal, Third Edition* in 2011. With new translations of the Collect prayers, the close link between the celebration of the Mass and the *Liturgy of the Hours* on Sundays, feast days, and during certain liturgical times of the year was weakened. Whereas prior to 2011 the concluding prayer for the various hours was generally identical to the Collect for the Mass that day, now the celebration of the Mass and the praying of the Liturgy of the Hours employ two often very diverse translations of the same Latin prayers. In addition, the other Latin texts for the *Liturgy of the Hours* need to be revised in accordance with *Liturgiam authenticam*, the 2001 instruction from the Holy See which guided the revision of the *Roman Missal*.

The revision of the *Liturgy of the Hours* was initially envisioned as a relatively simple project, where only a few texts would have to be retranslated. The appropriate Collects could be imported from the *Roman Missal*, and the Psalmody and other scriptural components simply supplied from their latest approved translations. However, as work began on the project, it quickly became clear that the various liturgical elements were so intertwined, that to alter the translation of one entailed reviewing others as well for consistency of style and vocabulary. Therefore a more

thorough revision of the texts was called for, and that revision would involve a much more complex and time-consuming process. Elements of the Divine Office are either Scriptural in nature, or non-Scriptural; the USCCB is responsible for Scriptural elements, and the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) provides translations of the non-Scriptural portions for the approval of the English-speaking Conferences of Bishops.

Revised Grail Psalms

The source of the Psalmody in the present English translation of the *Liturgy of the Hours* is the Grail Psalms, a Psalter long noted for its poetic qualities and for its consistently metrical translations, which greatly facilitate both singing and common recitation. In November 2008, the Bishops of the USCCB approved a revised version of these Psalms, called the Revised Grail Psalms (RGP), as the official Psalter for use in future liturgical texts, including the *Liturgy of the Hours*. The RGP, with some corrections, was confirmed by the Holy See in 2010. Additional corrections and adjustments were proposed and approved by the USCCB in November 2014, and are being prepared for submission to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments for the requisite confirmation.

Old Testament, New Testament, and Gospel Canticles

In addition to the Psalms, three Hours – Morning, Evening, and Night Prayer – include canticles derived from other Scriptural sources. These three Hours also include the important and well-known Gospel Canticles of Zechariah (*Benedictus*), Mary (*Magnificat*), and Simeon (*Nunc Dimittis*) from the Gospel of St. Luke. The monks of Conception Abbey prepared translations of these canticles in a poetic and rhythmic style similar to the RGP. Having undergone a preliminary review, the body of Bishops will vote on the amended versions at the June 2015 USCCB plenary meeting. If approved by the Bishops, the texts will be submitted to the Congregation for *recognitio*.

The Old Testament and other New Testament canticles in the present English translation are taken from the 1970 edition of the New American Bible. Although every effort was made at the time to present them in sense lines and in a manner conducive to singing or community recitation, some of the canticles in the breviary present difficulties for communities. One notable example comes from Ephesians 1:3-10, which occurs in the Psalter every Monday at Evening Prayer: “God chose us in him / before the world began / to be holy / and blameless in his sight.” With its uneven lines and random accented syllables, few communities make it through this strophe without stumbling. The proposed Conception Abbey canticles remedy the awkwardness found in some of the Old and New Testament Canticles without compromising accuracy of translation.

Scriptural Readings

Every liturgical Hour includes other passages of Scripture, either in the form of brief passages (*lectiones breves*) in most of the Hours, or in more extensive passages found in the Office of Readings. The revised *Liturgy of the Hours* will draw from the New American Bible, Revised Edition (NABRE). A revision of the Old Testament was completed in 2010 but still requires approval by the Holy See for liturgical use; the revision of the New Testament is well underway. It is hoped that a final liturgical text of the NABRE will be completed and approved in time for inclusion in the revised breviary. In addition, the Committee on Divine Worship has recommended the inclusion of two cycles of biblical readings for the Office of Readings, following the schema found in the Holy See’s liturgical journal, *Notitia*. A final decision on that issue will take place at a future date.

Hymns, Antiphons, Intercessions, and Other Non-Scriptural Elements

While the USCCB prepares new Scripture translations for the *Liturgy of the Hours, Second Edition*, the work of ICEL focuses on other liturgical elements, including the hymn texts, antiphons for the *Benedictus* and *Magnificat*, intercessions, and concluding prayers not drawn from the *Roman Missal*. In the current timeline of work, ICEL plans to submit drafts to the Conferences of Bishops in five fascicles divided as follows:

- 1) Advent and Christmas Time – Hymns, Antiphons, and Intercessions
- 2) Lent, Triduum, and Easter Time – Hymns, Antiphons, and Intercessions
- 3) Ordinary Time – Hymns, Antiphons, and Intercessions
- 4) *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours* (GILH), Ordinary, Psalter, Proper of Saints (Part 1)
- 5) Proper of Saints (Part 2), Commons, Office of the Dead, Appendices

One noteworthy inclusion on which ICEL has expended great effort in their proposed revisions is the careful translation of the 291 proper hymns present in the Latin breviary. Largely neglected in the current English editions in favor of hymn texts from other sources, the Latin hymns are being faithfully and methodically translated with an eye toward maintaining the same rhythmic meters as the original Latin hymns. This would give future assemblies the option of singing the hymns either using the original chant melody, or, as is the case in the present edition, using a more familiar hymn tune which corresponds to the meter of the translated hymn text. Likewise, appropriate materials from other hymnals may also be sung (see GILH, no. 178). In addition, the Latin hymns undergoing translation should be of a high quality to promote recitation, when singing is not possible or advantageous.

Because of their great diversity and the different challenges that retranslating the second readings in the Office of Readings – from patristic or hagiographical sources – would entail, the current scope of work agreed upon by the body of Bishops in November 2012 does not include revision of those readings; they are to be left as they are. The Committee on Divine Worship is also presently examining the options for the inclusion of a second cycle of patristic and hagiographical readings.

To update the Proper of Saints, ICEL also proposed English translations for the elements needed for the celebrations of saints inscribed in the General Roman Calendar since 1984. Following the usual process of review and amendment, those texts were approved at the November 2014 plenary meeting and submitted to the Holy See for the required *recognitio*. The revised breviary will also include texts for saints inscribed on the Proper Calendar for the Dioceses of the United States.

The first draft (“Green Book”) of Fascicle 1 was received by the USCCB in May 2014. The Green Book has already undergone review by the Bishops, and their recommendations were forwarded to ICEL last December. ICEL anticipates completing the final draft (“Gray Book”) in November 2015. After review and amendment by the Bishops, they may vote on the first installment in November 2016. The following table helps to illustrate the current schedule for the completion of the Green and Gray Books, along with a possible time for the USCCB’s canonical votes:

	Green Book	Gray Book	Projected USCCB Vote
Fascicle One	May 2014	November 2015	November 2016
Fascicle Two	November 2015	November 2016	November 2017
Fascicle Three	Nov. 2015 or Mar. 2016	Nov. 2016 or Mar. 2017	November 2017
Fascicle Four	March 2016	March 2017	November 2017
Fascicle Five	March 2017	March 2018	November 2018

The Conference may either send each completed segment to the Holy See as it is approved, or wait until all five fascicles are approved and transmit the full text of the *Liturgy of the Hours, Second Edition* for confirmation.

Although the *Liturgy of the Hours, Second Edition* is not likely to be implemented before 2020 at the earliest, the Committee on Divine Worship and body of Bishops as a whole are dedicated toward completing a translation for the benefit of the Church in the United States that is both textually faithful to the Latin and musically poetic in English.

Administrative Committee Approves Shrine of St. Martin de Porres as National Shrine

The USCCB Administrative Committee voted on March 10, 2015 to grant the designation of National Shrine to the Shrine of Saint Martin de Porres in Memphis, Tennessee. Responding to the request of Memphis Bishop J. Terry Steib, S.V.D., the Committee on Divine Worship examined the Shrine’s application, conducted a site visit, and ultimately recommended approval of the designation at their November 2014 meeting.

Founded in 1935 by the Southern Dominican Province, the shrine was originally located in South Carolina. The shrine was relocated several times in the course of its history, moving finally in 2001 to Memphis. A chapel on the grounds of St. Peter’s Church was erected as the Shrine of St. Martin de Porres, and a relic of St. Martin was transferred there. The St. Martin de Porres Shrine and Institute sponsors a variety of cultural, historical, service, and justice-oriented programming in addition to its ministry as a place of pilgrimage.

Sacrament Series Invites Greater Reflection on the Sacraments of the Church



A deeper understanding of the sacraments of the Church means a deeper spiritual life. USCCB Communications has recently published a series of booklets on each sacrament to promote greater love for the Church's sacramental life. Written from a pastoral perspective by Jorge Cardinal Medina Estévez, former Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (1998-2002), each volume provides the reader with a jumping-off point for reflection and prayerful study.

The *Sacrament Series* is aimed toward families and those interested in increasing their knowledge of the faith. The entire seven-booklet series – or each individual booklet – is available from USCCB Communications at store.USCCB.org/product-p/7-505.htm.

Over the course of the year, the Secretariat of Divine Worship will highlight each booklet with a brief reflection and appropriate excerpts, beginning with the Sacrament of Penance as a reminder of the penitential aspect of Lent.

In his booklet from the Sacrament Series entitled *Penance*, Cardinal Medina provides both instruction and reflection for anyone who is about to receive the sacrament. Whether the recipient is a regular penitent, or someone who has not been to Confession in many years, the Cardinal's words offer expert but easily comprehended advice on preparing for Confession. In clarifying the purpose of Confession, the Cardinal reminds the penitent that the priest is sitting *in persona Christi*, but is nonetheless an imperfect human being serving as God's instrument:

Keep in mind that the priest is not always a wise man or a prophet. Not all priests have the same qualities, the same talent, the same education, the same virtues. They are not infallible in advising you, and they can make mistakes, especially when the penitent does not give them enough objective criteria for judgment. (pg. 6)

Cardinal Medina reminds the penitent, then, that the purpose of Confession is not self-justification or even to impress the priest, but its true aim is one of conversion:

When we confess we are seeking above all, with the help of God's grace, to change our lives in conformity with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to obtain God's forgiveness through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the grace of the Holy Spirit... All of this can be expressed with the word "conversion." Conversion is a rejection of sin and a return to the love of God... In reality, the Church is a community of converts, or at least a community of people who are seeking to convert. (pgs. 6-7)

The Cardinal also reminds us that we do not sin in isolation, that sin is rarely a private matter between the penitent and God alone. Instead, he points out, in ways big and small, the effects of our faults and transgressions ripple throughout the community in ways we do not always realize: "Even the most hidden and personal sins, the ones known only to God and to our conscience, have hampered our Christian dynamism; they have made us less active in charity, less pure in the motives that guide our actions, and less generous in apostolate. All this jeopardizes the Church" (pg. 8).

Part Two of the booklet presents a practical and realistic "how to" guide for those actually preparing for Confession. The extensive examination of conscience, as well as the reminder of what happens in the actual Rite of Penance, will render this small work a welcome tool not only for instruction, but also for prayerful meditation before experiencing God's healing mercy through this sacrament.

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