



NewsLetter

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DDWDS Promulgates Supplement to the Liturgy of the Hours

Arthur Cardinal Roche, Prefect of the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, announced in a Circular Letter to the presidents of all Episcopal Conferences on January 6, 2025 (Prot. n. 335/24) that Pope Francis approved the promulgation of the *Supplementum* to the *Liturgia Horarum*. This project, undertaken in fits and starts from the post-Vatican II period to 2024, formally completes the reform of the Divine Office as mandated by the Second Vatican Council.

The Supplement consists of three major elements: a biennial cycle of Scripture and ecclesiastical/patristic (i.e. Second) readings for the Office of Readings; an optional lectionary of substitute Second Readings tailored to the Gospel readings at Sunday Mass along with readings on a wide variety of themes; and a series of psalm-prayers and canticle-prayers for the Invitatory, Four-Week Psalter, and Night Prayer.

Everything found in the current and future four volumes of the *Liturgy of the Hours* remains normative; the material in the Supplement is strictly optional in all cases. Given the vast number of options available, the Supplement would seem more easily used by individuals or fixed groups, allowing those praying to follow the schema provided and/or choose alternate Second Readings. Parishes and other communities that celebrate the Extended Vigil of the Office of Readings now or in the future (cf. *Liturgy of the Hours*, Appendix I) may benefit from a wider range of readings to choose from, especially those relating to the Sunday Gospels. The Supplement could also be rich spiritual reading for individuals, small groups, and those in retreat settings.

Although unofficially termed “Volume V,” it is unknown at this time whether the corpus of readings and prayers will be published as one or more volumes. The International Commission on English in the Liturgy will undertake the translation work in the coming years, followed by thorough review of its contents by the Committee on Divine Worship, modification and approval by the USCCB, and confirmation by the Holy See.

History of the Supplement

In following the mandate of the Second Vatican Council (cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, ch. IV), various *cætus* of the *Consilium* for the Implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy were responsible for the reform of the Divine Office. Among other decisions, the liturgical experts and consultants wished to include psalm-prayers, a two-year cycle for the Office of Readings, and additional spiritual reading material. Time and budgetary constraints, however, led to the final approval of the *Liturgia Horarum* as it is known today: an annual cycle of Scripture and Second Readings,

no additional options for readings, and no psalm-prayers. (The presence of the optional psalm-prayers in the current U.S. *Liturgy of the Hours* is due to the translation of an earlier draft; there will be no psalm-prayers in the forthcoming second edition, leaving them for the new Supplement.) Provisions to add all this material at a future date, however, were included in the *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours* (GILH; cf. no. 112 for the psalm-prayers, nos. 145-146 for the two-year cycle, and nos. 161-162 for an optional lectionary of readings).

Before the implementation of the current *Liturgy of the Hours*, a first draft of a biennial cycle of readings to accompany the American Interim Breviary, *Prayer of Christians*, was available for optional use in the United States in the early 1970s. The Holy See's work on the Supplement began later in 1976. Their definitive draft of the biennial cycle of Scripture readings was printed in the official journal of the now-Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (cf. *Notitiae* 12 [1976], pgs. 238-248, 324-333, and 378-388). This schema was adopted by a number of religious institutes and Conferences of Bishops, a notable example being the Mexican *Liturgia de las Horas* commonly used by Spanish-speaking Catholics in the United States. Permission was also granted for countries and religious institutes to fashion their own optional lectionary, which some did. After many years of halting efforts, the Supplement project resumed in earnest in 2015, leading to the final assembly of hundreds of new options for a deeper praying of the *Liturgy of the Hours*.

Contents of the Supplement

Psalm-Prayers and Cantic-Prayers – Psalm-prayers can be used “as an aid to understanding [the psalms] in a predominantly Christian way” (GILH, no. 112). The Dicastery has prepared new texts of the psalm-prayers and expanded their work to include prayers after each Old and New Testament cantic in the Four-Week Psalter. Those who choose to pray the psalm-prayers in the current breviary are aware of its customary use: between the “Glory to the Father” of the psalm and its antiphon, without saying “Let us pray,” a brief text is prayed which gives a Christological summary of the psalm and helps to gather “the thoughts and aspirations of those praying the psalms” (GILH, no. 112). The *Ceremonial of Bishops*, no. 198, offers an alternative method.

Biennial Cycle (BC) – From the Holy See's original work in drafting a biennial Scripture cycle, parts of it were compressed and included in the annual cycle of the *Liturgia Horarum, editio typica*; these are marked with an asterisk in the list below. A full complement of First and Second Readings for the whole year, in two cycles, has now been completed. As in the annual cycle, the texts for the Second Readings have been chosen from among Fathers and Doctors of the Church, and other ecclesiastical writers from East and West, drawing from sources ancient, medieval, and modern. When the Supplement is published, those praying the Office of Readings will have full freedom to choose either the annual or biennial cycle.

Optional Lectionary (OL) – The Dicastery has issued a total of 526 ecclesiastical and patristic readings that can be used as alternate Second Readings to those in the annual or biennial cycle. Texts from the Church Fathers and Doctors are given priority as in the *Liturgy of the Hours* but works from men and women of the medieval through modern ages are increased as well. Some of the many authors include Saints Gregory of Narek, John Henry Newman, Gemma Galgani, Elizabeth of the Trinity, Charles de Foucauld, Paul VI, John Paul II, Angela of Foligno, and Teresa of Jesus; Blessed Alfredo Ildefonso Schuster; and Popes Benedict XVI and Francis.

As mentioned above, the Psalm- and Cantic-Prayers are added to the Invitatory, Four-Week Psalter, and Night Prayer; this list of the Proper of Time consolidates the Supplement's other major elements, including the number of alternate readings throughout the Optional Lectionary in parenthesis:

Advent

BC: Cycle I – Isaiah, Ruth, Micah; Cycle II* – Isaiah

OL: Sunday Gospel commentaries (12); Advent-themed texts (15 before Dec. 16, 12 for Dec. 17-24)

Christmas Time

BC: Cycle I* – Colossians, Isaiah; Cycle II – Song of Songs, Isaiah

OL: Sunday Gospel commentaries (8); Nativity-themed texts (34)

Lent and Holy Week

BC: Cycle I – Deuteronomy, Hebrews, Lamentations; Cycle II* – Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Jeremiah

OL: Sunday Gospel commentaries (15); weekday Gospel commentaries (36); Passion-themed texts (35)

Easter Time

BC: Cycle I* – 1 Peter, Revelation, 1 John; Cycle II – Acts of the Apostles

OL: Sunday Gospel commentaries (18); four sections of texts themed on Easter (13), Baptism (13), the Church (23), and modern authors (24); biennial cycle of Pentecost novena readings (19)

Ordinary Time

BC: Cycle I – Romans, 1 Corinthians, James, Joshua, Judges, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, Ephesians, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel; Cycle II – Genesis, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, Zechariah, Nehemiah, Proverbs, Job, Joel, Ecclesiastes, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, 2 Peter, Esther, Tobit, Judith, Sirach, Wisdom, 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees, Daniel

OL: Sunday Gospel commentaries (109); five sections of semi-continuous texts on ancient patristic letters (42); six sections of texts themed on the Eucharist (13), the Lord's Day (10), theological virtues of faith, hope, and love (31), prayer (13), the Blessed Virgin Mary (18), and the Vatican II constitutions (13)

March 2025 Meeting of the Subcommittee on Divine Worship in Spanish

The Subcommittee on Divine Worship in Spanish met at the Holy Name Passionist Retreat Center in Houston, Texas on March 26, 2025. After the praying of Morning Prayer and the customary reports from the Subcommittee Chairman and Secretariat of Divine Worship, members reviewed and approved additional proper texts for recent celebrations added to the General Roman Calendar. The full document of *Misal Romano* and *Liturgia de las Horas* additions, entitled *Nuevos santos en el Calendario Romano general*, is expected to be voted on at the November 2025 USCCB plenary meeting.

Work on the future U.S. *Leccionario* is paused while awaiting completion of the *Biblia de la Iglesia en América*, so much of the meeting was devoted to discernment and planning for future projects of the Subcommittee. At its last meeting in September 2024, members approved the preparation of a U.S. Spanish edition of the *Ritual de la Penitencia*, using both the editions approved for Mexico and Spain as base texts. The Subcommittee agreed on an initial timeline and general principles to be followed as members and consultants work together on the ritual text.

Attentive to the need for liturgical formation among Spanish-speaking Catholics, the Subcommittee investigated options for guidelines or catechetical documents on a variety of liturgical topics. Members approved a plan to draft a new compendium on Hispanic/Latino popular piety to assist bishops and other leaders in adopting best practices and countering abuses. The Subcommittee will also seek ways to improve the fruitful implementation among Spanish-speaking parish musicians of *Cantemos al Señor: La música en el culto divino*, the Spanish translation of the 2007 USCCB music guidelines *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*.

The next in-person meeting of the Subcommittee is scheduled for September 10-11, 2025 in Washington, DC.

Pope Francis Addresses Masters of Ceremonies and Planners for Episcopal Liturgies

On February 26, 2025, Pope Francis addressed a letter to participants in a course for those responsible for planning episcopal liturgical celebrations, held at the Pontifical Liturgical Institute at Sant'Anselmo in Rome from February 24-28. His letter is reprinted below for the benefit of our readers:

I greet the Father Abbot Primate and the Dean of the Pontifical Liturgical Institute, with the professors and students who have attended this second edition of the course for those responsible for episcopal liturgical celebrations. I am pleased to note that you have once again accepted the invitation formulated in the Apostolic

Letter *Desiderio desideravi*, continuing to study the liturgy, not only from a theological perspective, but also in the area of celebratory praxis.

This dimension touches the life of the people of God and reveals its true spiritual nature (cf. Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*, 9). Therefore, the person responsible for liturgical celebrations is not just a teacher of theology; he is not a scribe, who applies the norms; he is not a sacristan, who prepares what is needed for the celebration. He is a teacher placed at the service of the prayer of the community. While humbly teaching the liturgical art, he must guide all those who celebrate, keeping the ritual rhythm and accompanying the faithful in the sacramental event.

As a mystagogue, he prepares every celebration wisely, for the good of the assembly; he translates into celebratory praxis the theological principles expressed in the liturgical books (*Cæremoniale Episcoporum*, 9). Thus assisted, the pastor can gently lead the entire diocesan community in the offering of self to the Father, in imitation of Christ the Lord.

Dear brothers and sisters, every diocese looks to the Bishop and the Cathedral as celebratory models to be imitated. I urge you, therefore, to propose and foster a liturgical style that expresses the following of Jesus, avoiding unnecessary pageantry or prominence. I invite you to carry out your ministry in discretion, without boasting about the results of your service. And I encourage you to transmit these attitudes to the ministers, lectors and cantors, according to the words of Psalm 115 quoted in the Prologue of the Benedictine Rule: “Not to us, Lord, not to us give the glory, but to your name alone” (cf. nos. 29-30).

In all of your tasks, do not forget that care for the liturgy is first and foremost care for prayer, that is, for the encounter with the Lord. When he proclaimed Saint Teresa of Ávila as doctor of the Church, Saint Paul VI defined the mystical experience as a love that becomes light and wisdom: the wisdom of the divine and the human (cf. *Homily*, September 27, 1970). May this great master of spiritual life be an example to you: indeed, to prepare and guide liturgical celebrations means bringing together divine and human wisdom. The first is acquired through prayer, meditation and contemplation; the second comes from study, the commitment to deepen, the ability to listen.

To succeed in these tasks, I advise you to keep your eyes on the people, of whom the Bishop is pastor and father: this will help you to understand the needs of the faithful, as well as the forms and ways to promote their participation in liturgical action.

Since worship is the work of the whole assembly, the encounter between doctrine and pastoral care is not an optional technique, but a constitutive aspect of the liturgy, which must always be incarnated, inculturated, expressing the faith of the Church. Consequently, the joys and sufferings, the dreams and concerns of the people of God possess a hermeneutical value that we cannot ignore (cf. *Videomessage to the International Congress of Theology at the U.C.A.*, Buenos Aires, September 1-3, 2015). I like to recall, in this regard, what the first dean of the Pontifical Liturgical Institute, Benedictine Abbot Salvatore Marsili, wrote. It was in 1964: with foresight he invited us to become aware of the message of the Second Vatican Council, in the light of which no true pastoral work is possible without liturgy, because the liturgy is the peak to which all the action of the Church tends (cf. S. Marsili, *Riforma Liturgica dall’alto*, *Rivista Liturgica* 51 [1964] 77-78).

As I invite you to make these words the fundamental perspective of your ministry, I hope that every one of you will always have at heart the people of God, whom you accompany in worship with wisdom and love. And do not forget to pray for me.