

LITURGY UPDATE

Liturgical Memos

December 15:

Reconciliation Monday

All parishes in the Archdiocese of New York and the Diocese of Brooklyn will have priests available to hear confessions from 2pm-4pm and from 6pm-8pm. Parishes may wish to schedule an [Advent Penance Service](#) on this day.

January 4:

Epiphany of the Lord

The Epiphany Announcement of the Day of Easter may be said or sung following the reading of the Gospel. The text and music for the Announcement may be found in Appendix 1 of the *Roman Missal*.

January 18-25:

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

During this period, special intentions for Christian Unity may be included in the Universal Prayer. Masses for this intention may also be selected from Masses for Various Needs and Occasions (nos. 17, 18, 19), in accordance with liturgical norms (see: *GIRM*, 373-374).

January 25:

Word of God Sunday

Parishioners may be invited to celebrate an "[Enthronement of the Bible](#)" prayer service at home on this day.



Revised Translation of the *Liturgy of the Hours* Approved

In November of this year, Bishop Steven Lopes, chair of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Divine Worship, announced that the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments had confirmed the forthcoming English translation of the Second Edition of the *Liturgy of the Hours*. This project, which is several decades in the making, is scheduled to become available for purchase in early 2027. The first volume to be published will be Volume Two (for Lent and Easter), and it will come into effect on Ash Wednesday, February 10, 2027.

In October, the USCCB also announced the two publishers who will be producing the revised translation of the Hours: Ascension Press and Word on Fire Press. Prices and formats will be communicated in the coming months.

The new translation of the Liturgy of the Hours will give English-speaking Catholics an opportunity to rediscover this beautiful tradition of prayer and to find new ways to fold it into parish life. What follows is a brief history of the use of the Hours by the People of God and a description of the ways in which it can be introduced into parish communities in our own time.



From the earliest days of Christian life, Christians prayed at various times throughout the day in response to **Christ's command to "pray always."** An ancient source from the first century, the *Didache*, indicates that Christians prayed three times a day, reciting the Our Father for the forgiveness of sins. Another early document, *The Apostolic Tradition*, dating from the third and fourth centuries, indicates in some manuscripts that Christians also prayed the psalms at set hours throughout the day.

In the fourth century, two forms of the celebration of the Hours developed. The first, called the **cathedral form**, was celebrated by the bishop along with the faithful each day for morning and evening prayer. Each day, the same psalms were prayed, and intercessions were offered. In urban centers, the cathedral form became a daily rhythm of communal prayer shared by many Christians. Just outside these urban centers, another form of the Hours developed, called the **monastic form**. This form, while no less communal, focused on reciting all 150 psalms per week, and it also included many lengthy readings. The monastic form was clearly the domain of professed religious who had the time to memorize and recite all 150 psalms within the course of a week.

As parishes grew and developed, individual priests found that they could not lead the cathedral form of the Hours with their people each day amid their other parish responsibilities; the faithful themselves were occupied with work and family responsibilities and could not gather regularly

either. As a result, the monastic form began to take greater prominence in the life of the Church, and it was this form of the Hours that served as the basis for the *Roman Breviary* promulgated after the Council of Trent.

Because the Breviary was primarily monastic in form, the average Christian no longer had an experience of praying the Hours, both due to the fact that they could not read Latin and because the style and structure of the Breviary were quite complex. Many parish priests also found the Roman Breviary burdensome because its content and length did not complement the busy nature of parish life.

In the early 20th century, various attempts were made to reintroduce the Liturgy of the Hours into the daily lives of all Christians. This included Pope Pius X's initiative to return to the practice of reciting all 150 psalms per week. At the **Second Vatican Council**, the Council Fathers also sought to rekindle the ancient practice of having the Christian faithful pray the Liturgy of the Hours, given the fact that Christ's command to pray always was directed not only to the apostles or to a certain group of the Christian community, but rather to every baptized member of His Mystical Body.

As such, the Second Vatican Council asked that the Liturgy of the Hours be prayed by all the Christian faithful and that pastors seek ways to introduce this honorable prayer to mothers and fathers, children, and all Christians. One practice that was especially encouraged by the Council was the celebration of Solemn Vespers on Sunday evenings.

The **post-conciliar Liturgy of the Hours**, published in 1974, reiterated that the Hours are the public and common prayer of the People of God (*General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours*, 1), and "a spiritual sacrifice of praise offered to God by the entire Church" (10,15). The various hours, from Morning Prayer until Night Prayer, are meant to give Christians a way to sanctify the entire day, marking their hours of work, study, and rest with prayer and contact with God.



In the years since the Council, official teaching has emphasized the same vision. For example, the *Code of Canon Law* encourages the lay faithful to participate in the Hours according to their circumstances (1174 §2). The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* similarly teaches that the Hours are intended to become the prayer of the whole People of God. More recently, Pope Benedict XVI

strongly encouraged parishes and religious communities to foster the Hours publicly, especially Morning and Evening Prayer, as a way of deepening familiarity with Scripture and fostering a sense of community (*Verbum Domini* [2010], 62).

The forthcoming publication of the new translation of the *Liturgy of the Hours* in 2027 offers another opportune moment for ongoing renewal. Parishes can begin to anticipate this implementation by considering several practical ways of introducing the Hours to their congregation:

- Celebrating **Solemn Vespers** on Sundays or parish feast days. In many parishes, Sunday evening Masses are scheduled, and so the celebration of Vespers on Sunday evening is not always practicable. However, other parish feast days and celebrations throughout the liturgical year can serve as appropriate opportunities to celebrate Solemn Vespers with musicians, lights, and incense, making a striking impression on the Christian faithful.
- In many parishes, there is a strong devotion to **Eucharistic Exposition**. It may be possible, in times of extended Eucharistic Exposition, to introduce the praying of the Hours, perhaps using *Shorter Christian Prayer*, immediately before Benediction and the reposing of the Blessed Sacrament. Ideally, this could be led by designated parishioners who are already present at Eucharistic Exposition and could be given the additional responsibility of leading Midmorning Prayer, Midday Prayer, Midafternoon Prayer, or even Morning or Evening Prayer. Pastors may wish to offer a short training session to members of the congregation who would lead these Hours.



- Many parishes throughout the archdiocese have recently introduced the solemn celebration of the **Office of Readings and Morning Prayer during the Sacred Triduum**, a practice formerly known as **Tenebrae**. Some also continue to use the traditional hearse or triangular candle stand during these hours: the candles are extinguished throughout the recitation of the psalms, creating a moving portrayal of the

light of Christ remaining aglow even in the days of His betrayal and Passion. Current liturgical norms specify that the solemn celebration of these Hours is to take place only on Good Friday and Holy Saturday, given that Thursday morning falls outside the Triduum, which begins with the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Thursday evening.

When celebrating these Hours with song, it can be helpful to have a number of cantors in the congregation who can lead the singing. An ancient pattern was to sing the Lamentations during Tenebrae as well, but these no longer appear in the current Office of Readings and Morning Prayer. Some parishes, wishing to retain them, choose to sing them as a prelude before the Office of Readings as a nod to the former practice while still maintaining the integrity of the current Liturgy of the Hours.

As the *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours* notes, the Liturgy of the Hours belongs to the whole Body of Christ, and, wherever possible, the faithful should celebrate the Hours in community (15). When the People of God pray the Hours, they not only reflect an ancient liturgical practice, but they continue, even today, to fulfill the command of the Lord to join Him in offering praise and glory to the Father, in the Holy Spirit, throughout each day.

Archdiocesan Guidelines for the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults



Revised archdiocesan guidelines for the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults are now available. This comprehensive resource, over 50 pages in length, offers an overview of the OCIA process and addresses many particular questions that can arise in parish life. Topics include:

- Initiating Children of Catechetical Age
- The respective roles of the Community, the Catechumenate Coordinator, Catechists, Sponsors and Godparents, and the Catechumenate Team in the OCIA
- Special Cases: use of the shorter form of the OCIA, danger of death, persons with disabilities, illiteracy, and educational institutions
- Marriage-related matters: marriages, annulments, convalidations, and cases involving Eastern Catholic Churches
- Sacramental considerations: funerals for catechumens, criteria for valid non-Catholic baptisms, conditional baptisms, validity of Confirmations

The new *Guidelines* are available for download from the [Liturgy Office website](#). Questions concerning the catechesis and celebration of the OCIA may be directed to the archdiocesan [Office of Liturgy](#) and the [Office of Adult Discipleship and Marriage Formation](#).

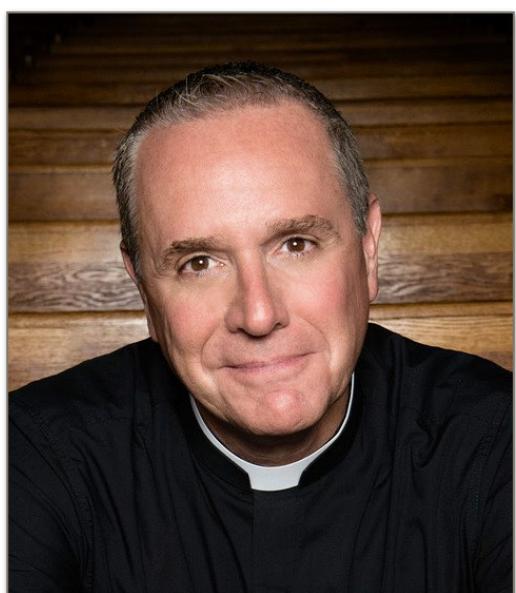
Reminder: Order of the Anointing of the Sick and of their Pastoral Care Available for Purchase

The USCCB's Committee on Divine Worship has announced the confirmation of the English translation of the *Order of the Anointing of the Sick and of their Pastoral Care* and the Spanish translation of the *Ritual de la Unción de los enfermos y de su atención pastoral* by the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. These rites may be used from February 11, 2026 (memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes and World Day of the Sick) and must be used as of April 5, 2026 (Easter Sunday).

A listing of publishers, formats, and standard pricing may be found below. These books may also be [purchased from ICS at a discount](#).

PUBLISHER	SIZE	ENGLISH	SPANISH	BILINGUAL
Catholic Book Publishing	Leatherette: 7.25" x 10.25"	\$34.00		
	Leatherette: 4.25" x 6.25"	\$25.00		\$29.00
Liturgical Press	Hardcover: 6" x 9"	\$59.95	\$59.95	\$105.99
LTP	Leatherette: 5.25" x 8"	\$48.00		\$68.00
Magnificat	Softcover: 4.25" x 5.5"	\$24.95		
Midwest Theological Forum	Leatherette: 7" x 10"	\$49.95		\$69.95

Save the Date!: Lenten Day of Prayer and Reflection for Liturgical Ministers with Father Dave Dwyer, CSP - March 7



On Saturday, March 7, from 10am-2:30pm, the archdiocesan Liturgy Office will be hosting its popular **Lenten Day of Prayer and Reflection for Liturgical Ministers** at Saint Joseph's Seminary, Yonkers. All parish Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, Lectors, Ushers and Musicians are invited to come together and reflect on the meaning of Lent for their lives, their ministry, and their parish communities. Leading the day will be **Father Dave Dwyer, CSP**, host of *The Busted Halo Show* on Sirius/XM's The Catholic Channel.

The day will include several talks, solemn Morning Prayer, and Holy Hour. Registration is \$40, and includes a hot lunch. **Register today** at the [enclosed link](#)!

Liturgical Preparation Aid for Seasons of Advent and Christmas



The *Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions* has published a free resource for the seasons of Advent and Christmas. This preparation aid includes: the full text of the Rite of Reconciliation of Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution, music suggestions, sample penances, calendar advisories for the seasons of Advent and Christmas, the text of the Christmas Proclamation (which may be sung before the Mass at Midnight), and the text of the Proclamation of the date of Easter (which may be sung before the Mass on Epiphany).

This resource may be [downloaded from the Liturgy Office website](#) and distributed freely with the permission of the Confraternity for Christian

Doctrine, the USCCB, and the International Commission on English in the Liturgy.

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