

## The Celebration of Morning Prayer

### 1. Invitatory (*stand*)

Morning Prayer begins with the following:

Leader: **Lord, open my lips.** (Each makes the sign of the cross on his mouth.)

Assembly: *And my mouth will proclaim your praise.*

Afterward psalm 95 (found on page 688 of Christian Prayer) is said with its antiphon. The antiphon is said before the psalm by the leader, then immediately repeated by the assembly; it is repeated after each strophe of the psalm. At the end of the psalm—and at the end of each psalm of Morning Prayer—the *Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen* is said (note the slight change in language from the customary recitation of the *Glory be*). The antiphon for the invitatory is taken from the Proper of Seasons, the Psalter, the Proper of Saints, or the Commons; the leader will indicate its location. (If the Invitatory is not said, the leader begins the hour with **God, come to my assistance**, and the people respond *Lord make haste to help me*, while all make the sign of the cross. The *Glory to the Father* is then said, ending with Alleluia except during Lent.)

### 2. Hymn

Following the invitatory the hymn for Morning Prayer is sung.

### 3. Psalmody (*sit*)

The psalmody follows the hymn and consists of one morning psalm, an Old Testament canticle, and another psalm of praise, together with the appropriate antiphons. For Morning Prayer during the week, the psalms, canticle, and antiphons are taken from the current week of the Psalter. During Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter the antiphons are taken from the Proper of Seasons. For solemnities and feasts, the psalms and canticle are taken from the first Sunday of the Psalter, the antiphons from the Proper of Saints or Commons. For the memorials of saints, the psalms, canticle, and antiphons are taken from the current week of the Psalter, unless there are proper psalms and antiphons.

The psalms and canticle are recited antiphonally, that is, one side of the group alternating with the other according to the division of the strophes. After the leader recites the antiphon, those on his side begin the psalm together. At the end of the psalm, the *Glory to the Father* is said (one side saying *Glory to the Father*, the other saying *as it was in the beginning*) and the antiphon is repeated by all. If the psalm-prayer

is to be said, the leader prays it after the antiphon has been repeated and with a proper introduction and conclusion.

### 4. Reading

For Morning Prayer during the week, the reading is given in the Psalter. During Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter the reading is taken from the Proper of Seasons. For solemnities and feasts, the reading is found in the Proper of Saints or the Commons. For the memorials of saints, the reading, unless it is proper, may be taken from either the Commons or the weekday.

The reader (usually not the leader) may begin the reading with “A reading from...,” and conclude it with “The word of the Lord” with the people responding accordingly.

### 5. Response to the Word of God

A period of silence may be observed after the reading or homily. The responsory given after the reading follows. The reader usually leads the responsory.

### 6. Gospel Canticle (*stand*)

The gospel canticle for Morning Prayer, the Canticle of Zechariah, is from Luke 1:68-79 and is begins on page 691. This canticle is the song of praise to God by Zechariah at the birth of John the Baptist. For the celebration of Morning Prayer on weekdays, the antiphon for the gospel canticle is taken from the Psalter. During Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter the antiphon is taken from the Proper of Seasons. In the celebrations of saints, unless there is a proper antiphon, the antiphon is taken from the Commons.

After the leader recites the antiphon, all present make the sign of the cross at the beginning of the canticle. The gospel canticle, unlike the other psalms and Old Testament canticle, is usually recited by all together (not antiphonally). With this exception, it is prayed like the rest of the psalmody.

### 7. Intercessions

Since Morning Prayer traditionally puts the whole day in God’s hands, there are invocations at Morning Prayer for the purpose of commending or consecrating the day to God. The intercessions are introduced by a brief invitation, given by the leader. In most cases the leader (or another reader) says only the first part of the intention and the assembly responds with the second part; on rare occasions the leader says both parts of the intention and the assembly responds with the uniform

response given in italics. See page 692 for the location of the intercessions for any particular day.

#### 8. The Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer, since it has been taught to us by Jesus himself, is incorporated naturally into the liturgical prayer of the Church, especially at Mass, Morning Prayer, and Evening Prayer. This prayer may or may not be introduced by the leader.

#### 9. Concluding Prayer

The concluding prayer at the end marks the completion of Morning Prayer. At Morning Prayer on weekdays of the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter the concluding prayer is taken from the Proper of Seasons, and on solemnities, feasts, and memorials it is taken from the Proper of Saints. On weekdays in Ordinary Time, the prayer is the one given in the four-week Psalter. The concluding prayer at Morning Prayer, since it follows the Lord's Prayer, is not introduced with "Let us pray."

#### 10. Blessing and Dismissal

If a priest or deacon presides at Morning Prayer, the dismissal is the same as that of the Mass (see pg. 693). If a layperson leads Morning Prayer, the prayer concludes:

Leader: **May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.** (*All make the sign of the cross.*)

Assembly: *Amen.*

#### Glossary of Terms

- **Antiphon:** The short verse preceding and following psalms and canticles, usually containing the key thought of the psalm or an allusion to the mystery or saint of the day.
- **Canticle of Zechariah:** From the gospel of Luke (1:68-79), this passage is said by Zechariah at the birth of his son, John the Baptist, and is frequently referred to as the *Benedictus*, its opening word in Latin ("Blessed"). This canticle is recited each morning at Morning Prayer (see page 691).
- **Common of Saints:** That group of texts placed in the Liturgy of the Hours for those Saints or feasts that do not have assigned texts completely of their own. They are divided into various categories: Dedication of a Church; the Blessed Virgin Mary; Apostles; Martyrs; Pastors; Doctors; Virgins; Holy Men; Holy Women; Religious; Teachers; those who Worked for the Underprivileged (pages 1355-1473)
- **Invitatory:** This verse begins the day's Liturgy of the Hours and is an exhortation to praise God: *Lord, open my lips. And my mouth will proclaim your praise.* It is followed by psalm 95 together with an antiphon that varies according to the day or season.
- **Old Testament Cantic:** A lyric or song of thanksgiving not from the psalms but from another part of the Old Testament. Morning Prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours places this cantic between the two psalms in the Psalter.
- **Proper of the Saints:** That part of the Liturgy of the Hours which contains the formularies (prayers) for the cycle of saints who are celebrated in the Church; ordinarily they are listed in sequence from January to December. There is an interrelationship between this and the Common of Saints, for if certain prayers are not in the Proper of Saints (pages 1059-1353), they are supplied from the Common of the Saints.
- **Proper of the Season:** That section of the Liturgy of the Hours (pages 40-683) which presents the formularies for the seasonal cycle, beginning with Advent, moving to the Christmas Season, Lent, Holy Week, Easter Season, and Ordinary Time. It also includes the Solemnities of the Lord throughout the year.
- **Psalm-prayers:** Prayers that follow the recitation of the psalms which aid in interpreting the psalms in a Christian way and collects the aspirations and intercessions of those celebrating the Liturgy of the Hours.
- **Psalmody:** The practice of chanting the psalms during worship.
- **Psalter:** The collection of the psalms intended for liturgical use and distributed over a four-week period in the Liturgy of the Hours (pages 699-993).
- **Responsory:** The response following each Biblical reading in the Liturgy of the Hours. At Morning Prayer the responsory is an acclamation that allows God's Word to penetrate more deeply into the hearts and minds of those praying the Liturgy.
- **Solemnity, feast, memorial, optional memorial:** These days in the Church year commemorate certain events in salvation history by which special honor accrues to God, our Savior, the angels, the Blessed Mother, and the saints. Solemnities are accorded the highest honor, while optional memorials receive lesser honors. Each designation uses texts proper to the level of commemoration and are found in various parts of *Christian Prayer*.