

# **PAUL VI'S APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTION ON THE BREVIARY: "LAUDIS CANTICUM"**

## **APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTION**

**BY WHICH THE DIVINE OFFICE  
RESTORED ACCORDING TO THE DECREES  
OF THE SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL  
IS PROMULGATED**

**POPE PAUL VI**

The HYMN of praise, which resounds eternally in the heavenly halls, and which Jesus Christ the High Priest introduced into this land of exile, has always been continued by the Church in the course of so many centuries, with constancy and faithfulness, in the marvelous variety of its forms.

The Liturgy of the Hours was gradually developed until it became the prayer of the local Church, where, at established times and places, with the priest presiding over it, it became a necessary completion, as it were, of the whole divine worship contained in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, to be poured forth and spread at every hour of man's life.

The book of the Divine Office, gradually increased by numerous additions in the course of time, became a suitable instrument for the sacred action for which it is intended. Nevertheless, since in the different periods considerable modifications were introduced in the way of celebrating the Hours, including celebration by the individual, it is not surprising that the book itself, later called the Breviary, has been adapted to the various forms, which sometimes required a different composition.

### THE "LAUS PERENNIS" IN HISTORY

For lack of time, the Council of Trent did not succeed in completing the reform of the Breviary, and entrusted the task to the Apostolic See. The Roman Breviary, promulgated by our predecessor St. Pius V in 1568, provides in the first place, in accordance with the common ardent desire, for the uniformity of canonical prayer, which no longer existed in the Latin Church at that time.

In the centuries that followed various innovations were introduced by the Sovereign Pontiffs Sixtus V, Clement VIII, Urban VIII, Clement XI and others.

In the year 1911, St. Pius X had published the new Breviary prepared at his request. The old custom of reciting 150 psalms every week was re-established, the Psalter was completely rearranged, all repetitions were eliminated, and the possibility was offered to bring the week-day Psalter and the cycle of biblical readings into line with the Offices of the Saints. Furthermore the Sunday Office grew in importance and was given a higher rating in order that it could, as often as not, have precedence over the feasts of Saints.

The whole work of liturgical reform was taken up again by Pius XII. He granted the use of a new version of the Psalter, drawn up by the Pontifical Bible Institute, both in private and in public recitation; and having set up a special Commission in the year 1947, he entrusted the question of the Breviary to it. The Bishops of the whole world were consulted on this subject, from the year 1955. This diligent work began to yield its fruits with the «Decree on the simplification of the rubrics» on March 23rd 1955 and with the «Norms on the Breviary», which John XXIII issued in the Code of Rubrics in 1960. But though he had only partly made provision for the liturgical reform, the same Sovereign Pontiff John XXIII realized that the great principles on which the Liturgy was based, called for a more thorough study. He entrusted this task to the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, which he had convened in the meantime.

The Council dealt with Liturgy in general and with the prayer of the Hours in particular so amply and validly that nothing similar can be met with in the whole history of the Church. While the Vatican Council was still going on, it was

our care to make provision for the implementation of the decrees of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy immediately after their promulgation.

For this reason we set up a special group within the «Consilium for the implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy». This group worked very diligently and painstakingly for seven years to prepare the new book for the Liturgy of the Hours, having recourse to the contribution of scholars and experts on liturgical, theological, spiritual and pastoral matters.

After consulting the universal Episcopate and numerous pastors of souls, religious and laymen, the above-mentioned Council, as well as the Synod of Bishops, which met in 1967, approved the principles and structure of the whole work and of its separate parts.

### THE NEW REGULATIONS

It is opportune, therefore, to set forth in detail the new regulations of the Liturgy of the Hours and their motivations.

1. As was requested by the Constitution «Sacrosanctum Concilium», the conditions in which priests engaged in the apostolate find themselves today have been taken into account.

Since the Office is the prayer of the whole people of God, it has been drawn up and prepared in such a way that not only ecclesiastics but also religious and even laymen can take part in it. By introducing various forms of celebration, the attempt has been made to meet the specific requirements of persons of different order and degree. The prayer can be adapted to the different communities that celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours, according to their condition and vocation.

2. The Liturgy of the Hours is the sanctification of the day and therefore the order of prayers has been revised so that the canonical Hours can be adapted more easily to the various hours of the day, taking into account the conditions of human life in our times.

For this reason the Hour of Prime has been suppressed. Lauds and Vespers have been given most importance, as being the hinges on which the whole Office turns: these Hours are presented as real morning and evening prayers. Matins, while

keeping its characteristic of nocturnal prayer for those keeping vigil, can be adapted to any hour of the day. As regards the other Hours, the middle Hour has been suppressed so that anyone who chooses one only among the Hours of Terce, Sext and None, can adapt it to the moment of the day in which he celebrates it and is not obliged to omit any part of the Psalter distributed in the various weeks.

3. In order that in the celebration of the Office the mind may more easily be attuned to the voice and the Liturgy of the Hours and really be a source of piety and nourishment for personal prayer<sup>1</sup>, in the new book of the Hours the portion of prayer established for each day has been considerably reduced, while the variety of the texts has been greatly increased, and various aids are proposed for meditation on the psalms. Such are the titles, the antiphons, the psalmodic prayers, the moments of silence to be introduced as is opportune.

4. According to the norms given by the Council<sup>2</sup>, the weekly cycle being abolished, the Psalter is distributed over a period of four weeks, according to the new Latin version prepared by the Commission for the Neo-Vulgate of the Bible, which we set up. In this new distribution of the Psalter, a few psalms and some verses that are rather difficult to understand have been omitted, keeping in mind the difficulties that may be met with particularly in celebration in the vernacular language. Some new canticles, taken from the books of the Old Testament, have been added to morning Lauds, to increase their spiritual richness, while other canticles from the New Testament have been introduced, like precious pearls, into Vespers.

5. In the new «Ordo» of the readings taken from Holy Scripture, the treasure of God's word is spread out more copiously. It has been arranged in such a way as to correspond to the order of the readings in Mass.

The pericopes present a certain unity of subject on the whole, and have been chosen in such a way as to reproduce the culminating moments of the history of salvation in the course of the year.

<sup>1</sup> Conc. Vat. II, Const. de Sacra Liturgia *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 90; A.A.S. 56 (1964), p. 122.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 91, pp. 122-123.

6. The daily reading of the works of the Fathers and of ecclesiastical writers, for which provision is made according to the decrees of the Ecumenical Council, presents the best writings of Christian authors, in particular of the Fathers of the Church. But to offer the spiritual riches of these writers to a more abundant extent, another optional Lectionary will be prepared, in order that more copious fruits may be obtained.

7. Everything that does not correspond to historical truth has been removed from the texts of the Liturgy of the Hours. In the same way the readings, especially the hagiographical ones, have been revised in such a way as to set forth in the right light the spiritual figure of the Saint and the role he played in the life of the Church.

8. To morning Lauds have been added the Prayers in which it is desired to consecrate the day, and invocations are made for the beginning of daily work. At Vespers a short prayer of supplication is said, structured as universal prayer.

At the end of these Prayers the «Our Father» has been inserted again. In this way, counting its recitation in Mass, the custom prevalent in the ancient Church of reciting this prayer three times a day, is re-established in our times.

The prayer of holy Church having, therefore, been renewed and completely restored according to her earliest tradition, and in consideration of the necessity of our time, it is highly desirable that it should deeply penetrate all Christian prayer, become its expression and effectively nourish the spiritual life of the people of God.

For this reason we hope and trust that there will be a new awareness of the prayer to be recited «without interruption»,<sup>3</sup> which Our Lord Jesus Christ laid upon his Church. In fact the book of the Liturgy of the Hours, distributed in the right time, is intended to sustain prayer continually and help it. The very celebration, particularly when a community meets for this reason, manifests the true nature of the Church prayer, and appears as her marvellous sign.

<sup>3</sup> Cfr. Luke 18, 1; 21, 36; 1 Th. 5, 17; Eph. 6, 18.

## COMMUNITY PRAYER

Christian prayer is above all the prayer of the whole human family, which Christ joins to himself. Everyone takes part in the celebration of this prayer, but it is characteristic of the whole body, therefore the voice of Christ's beloved bride, the desires and wishes of the whole Christian people, the supplications and implorations for the necessities of all men, merge together.

This prayer receives its unity from the Heart of Christ. Our Redeemer willed, in fact, «that the life begun in his mortal body with his prayers and his sacrifice should continue throughout the centuries in his Mystical Body, which is the Church»;<sup>5</sup> so that the prayer of the Church is «the very prayer which Christ himself, together with his Body, addressed to the Father».<sup>6</sup> It is necessary, therefore, that while we celebrate the Office we should recognize the echo of our voices in that of Christ and the voice of Christ in us.<sup>7</sup>

For this characteristic of our praying to shine forth more clearly, there must flourish again in everyone «that warm and living love for Scriptures»<sup>8</sup> that transpires from the Liturgy of the Hours, so that Holy Scripture will really become the main source of all Christian prayer. The prayer of the psalms particularly, which accompanies and proclaims the action of God in the history of salvation, must be learned with renewed love by the people of God. This will happen more easily if a deeper knowledge of the psalms is more diligently promoted among the clergy, in the meaning understood by sacred Liturgy, and if an opportune catechesis makes all the faithful participate in this study. Wider reading of holy Scripture, not only at Mass, but also in the new Liturgy of the Hours, will ensure the uninterrupted commemoration of the history of salvation and the efficacious announcement of its continuation in the lives of men.

<sup>4</sup> Cfr. Conc. Vat. II, Const. de Sacra Liturgia *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 83; A.A.S. 56 (1964), p. 121.

<sup>5</sup> Pius XII, Lett. Encicl. *Mediator Dei*, 20 Nov. 1947, n. 2; A.A.S. 39 (1947), p. 522.

<sup>6</sup> Conc. Vat. II, Const. de sacra Liturgia, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 84; A.A.S. 56 (1964), p. 121.

<sup>7</sup> fr. St Augustine, *Enarrationes in ps.*, 85, n. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Conc. Vat. II, Const. de sacra Liturgia, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 24; A.A.S. 56 (1964), pp. 106-107.

## PRAYER OF THE CHURCH AND PERSONAL PRAYER

Since the life of Christ in his Mystical Body perfects and elevates also the personal life of each member of the faithful, any opposition between the prayer of the Church and personal prayer must be rejected; in fact their mutual relations must be strengthened and increased. Meditation must find a continual nourishment in the readings, in the psalms and in the Office must be adapted, as far as possible, to the necessities of living, personal prayer, owing to the fact, for which provision is made in the general Institution, that those times and ways and forms of celebration must be chosen that are best suited to the spiritual situations of those praying. When the prayer of the Office become real personal prayer, then the bonds that unite Liturgy and the whole of Christian life are manifested more clearly. The whole life of the faithful, during the single hours of the day and the night, constitutes a «leitourgia», as it were, with which they offer themselves in a service of love to God and to men, adhering to the action of Christ, who, by staying among us and offering himself sanctified the lives of all men.

The Liturgy of the Hours expresses clearly and confirms effectively this lofty truth inherent in Christian life.

For this reason the prayers of the Hours are proposed to all the faithful, also to those who are not obliged by law to recite them.

## MANDATE OF THE CHURCH

Let those who, on the contrary, have received from the Church the mandate of celebrating the Liturgy of the Hours, carry out their duty religiously every day with the complete recitation, as far as possible at the correct time, of the single Hours; and let them give due importance first of all to morning Lauds and Vespers.

In celebrating the divine Office, those who as a result of having received sacred Orders are destined in a particular way to being the sign of Christ the Priest, and those who with the vows of religious profession have dedicated themselves to the service of God and the Church in a special way, should not feel impelled solely by a law they must observe but rather by recognition of the intrinsic importance of prayer and by its pastoral

and ascetic usefulness. It is highly desirable that the public prayer of the Church should spring from awareness of the intrinsic necessity of the whole body of the Church. The latter, like her Head, cannot be presented except as a praying Church.

By means of the new book of the Liturgy of the Hours, which we now establish, approve and promulgate by our Apostolic Authority, let divine praise ring out, therefore, more splendidly and beautifully in the Church of our times. Let it unite with the praise of the Saints and the Angels resounding in the heavenly mansions and, growing in perfection, let it approach more and more, in the days of this earthly exile, that full praise that is given for ever «to Him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb».<sup>9</sup>

#### PRACTICAL NORMS

We establish, therefore, that this new book of the Liturgy of the Hours can be used immediately after its publication. It will be the task of the Episcopal Conferences to have editions prepared in the national languages and, after the approval or confirmation of the Holy See, to establish the day on which these versions can or must begin to be used, either wholly or just in part. From the day when the translations for the celebrations in the vernacular language are to be used, also those who continue to use the Latin language must use solely the revised text of the Liturgy of the Hours.

Those who on account of advanced age or other particular reasons meet with grave difficulties in the use of the new «Ordo» are allowed, with the permission of their Ordinary and only in individual recitation, to continue to use the preceding Roman Breviary as a whole or in part.

We wish what we have decreed and ordered to become effective now and in the future, in spite of contrary Constitutions and Apostolic regulations promulgated by our Predecessors and other decrees, even if worthy of particular mention.

Given in Rome, at St. Peter's on November 1st, All Saint's Day, of the year 1970, the eighth of our Pontificate.

PAULUS PP. VI

<sup>9</sup> Cfr. *Apoc.*, 5, 13.



## SACRED CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP NOTIFICATIONS ON THE ROMAN MISSAL, ETC.

With the Instruction "De Constitutione Apostolica Missale Romanum gradatim ad effectum deducenda" published by this Congregation on 20 October 1969 the norms concerning particular cases and difficulties concerning the use of the new Roman Missal were issued and the faculty was given to the Episcopal Conferences to prolong the "vacatio legis" until 28 November 1971.<sup>1</sup>

It was also decided by this Sacred Congregation that the general Calendar and the particular calendars would remain in use "ad interim" during the current year 1971.<sup>2</sup>

Taking account of such dispositions, this Sacred Congregation, with the approval of the Supreme Pontiff, has fixed the norms which follow, concerning the use of the Roman Missal, of the Liturgy of the Hours and the renewed Calendar, and indicates the solution to some difficulties regarding the ordering of the calendar for the years 1972 and 1973.

### I— THE ROMAN MISSAL AND THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS

1. In the celebrations which take place in Latin it is possible to use already the "Missale Romanum" and the "Lectio-narium" of the Mass, published in the typical edition, under the care of this Sacred Congregation.<sup>3</sup>

Equally, the books of the Liturgy of the Hours may begin to be used immediately on their publication.

2. The Episcopal Conferences have the task to complete as soon as possible the work of translating and editing in the vernacular languages these same liturgical books.

<sup>1</sup> Cfr. A.A.S. 61 (1969), pp. 749-753.

<sup>2</sup> Cfr. S. Congreg. for Divine Worship, *Notification* 17 May, 1970: *Notitiae* 6 (1970) p. 193.

<sup>3</sup> Cfr. *Id.*, *Decr. Celebrationis Eucharisticae*, 18 March 1970: A.A.S. 62 (1970) p. 554; *Decr. Ordine lectionum*, 30 September, 1970.

However, considering the special difficulties involved for these editions, they will set a date when the translations approved by them and confirmed by the Holy See may or must begin to be adopted, whether as a whole or simply in part.

From the day on which the definitive translation must be adopted in the celebrations in the vernacular languages, those who continue to use the latin language must uniformly make use of the renewed texts, whether for the Mass or for the Liturgy of the Hours.

3. For those who, for reason of advanced age or other serious reasons, may encounter grave difficulty in the use of the new "Ordo" of the Roman Missal, of the Lectionary of the Mass or of the Liturgy of the Hours, it is permitted, with the consent of the proper Ordinary and only in the celebration "sine populo" to continue, as a whole or in part, the use of the Roman Missal in the typical edition of the year 1962, brought up to date by the decrees of the years 1965 and 1967<sup>1</sup> and the use of the previous Roman Breviary.

#### 4. Regarding the language:

1) For the celebration Mass "Cum populo", the Episcopal Conferences may stabilise the use of the vernacular language in any part of the Mass.

The local Ordinaries, taking into account above all the good of the faithful, will judge where it is opportune, after having introduced the vernacular languages, that in certain churches, especially where more than often people of various languages gather, there should be celebrated one or more masses in Latin, above all with singing.<sup>2</sup>

In Masses celebrated in Latin it is opportune that the biblical readings the prayer of the faithful should be conducted in the vernacular, taking into account also the eventual participation of faithful of different languages.

<sup>1</sup> S. Congr. of Rites, Decr. *Nuper Edita*, 27 Jan. 1965; A.A.S. 57 (1965) pp. 408-409; Decr. *Per Instructionem alteram*, 18 May 1967.

<sup>2</sup> Cfr. *Id.*, Instr. *Musica Sacram*, 5 March 1967, n. 48, A.A.S. 59 (1967), p. 300-320.

2) In Masses "sine populo" every priest may use either latin or the vernacular language.

3) For the Liturgy of the Hours, celebrated privately or in common or in choir, it is possible with the consent of the Ordinary, to adopt the vernacular language.

## II — THE CALENDAR

5. The Episcopal Conferences, taking into account the work of translating the Roman Missal and of the Liturgy of the Hours, will fix the date from which the general Roman Calendar, promulgated with the Motu Proprio "Mysterii Paschalis" of the 14 February 1969, must be used in the places of their jurisdiction.

In the period until the work of translation is completed the same Conferences may give appropriate norms concerning the Calendar to be followed for the celebration of the Mass and for the liturgy of the Hours, whether these are in Latin or in the vernacular language.

6. In so far as they will adopt a proper Calendar, until it is revised, they will use the Calendar now in use for the celebration of particular feasts, changing the grades of the same celebrations according to the norms of the universal calendar, and applying the necessary variants in accord with the same norms. For the remainder what is decided by the Episcopal Conference is to be observed.

The work of the revision of Particular Calendars should be completed within the time fixed by the Instruction on the Calendar.<sup>6</sup>

7. In the year 1972 the solemnity of Saint Joseph falls on the 5th Sunday of Lent. Thus it is to be anticipated on the Saturday, that is on the 18th March.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> S. Cong. for Divine Worship, Instr. *De calendaris particularis atque Officiorum et Missarum propriis recognoscendis*, 24 June 1970, n. 4; A.A.S. 62 (1970), pp. 651-663.

<sup>7</sup> Cfr. *Calendarium Romanum*, Normae universales de anno liturgico et de Calendario, n. 5, 1969, p. 12.

Wherever pastoral reasons suggest it, local ordinaries may, in the celebration on Saturday evening, celebrated on Saturday 18 March to give the possibility of fulfilling the Sunday precept, permit the adoption of the formulas of the Mass of Saint Joseph.

8. In the year 1973, when certain solemnities fall on the same day, the Calendar is to be ordered as follows:

a) 24 June, Sunday: Birthday of Saint John the Baptist, solemnity.

Where the celebration of the feast of *Corpus et Sanguis Christi* is transferred to this Sunday, the solemnity of Saint John the Baptist is celebrated on the previous day, 23 June;

b) 29 June, Friday: Saint Peter and Paul, Apostles, Solemnity. The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Solemnity.

The feast of Saints Peter and Paul is to be celebrated on this day and the feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus is to be transferred to the following Sunday.

However, where the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul is not of obligation and is generally transferred to the following Sunday, then the Feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus is to be celebrated on the 29 June and the feast of Saints Peter and Paul on the 1 July.

(From: *L'osservatore Romano*, June 24, 1971)

"Most of all, we priests need to laugh at ourselves more often. A vocation director told me a few years ago that one of the first things he looks for in priesthood candidates is a sense of humor. When he doesn't find it, when he sees humor stifled by a heavy seriousness masquerading as maturity, he puts off a prospective candidate until that person matures more and can start to realize how essential humor is to a priestly or religious vocation. If a sense of humor is essential for entering the priesthood, it is also an important factor for staying in the priesthood."

DANIEL DURKEN