

AN UP-DATED INTERIM BREVIARY?

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QUESTION: Instead of the Latin Roman Breviary, I use instead the book "The Prayer of the Church" published by Chapman, London. I understand that it has been approved by Rome and the Philippine Bishops' Conference. In November 1971 the BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO published "Norms for Interim Texts" both for Mass and the Divine Office, issued by the Congregation of Divine Worship on November 11, 1971. But these norms are different from what my "Prayer of the Church" says on a number of occasions. Is my new book, purchased only in 1970, already outdated?

ANSWER: Your "Prayer of the Church" is exactly what its subtitle says, an "interim version of the Roman Breviary". Vatican II had decreed a reform of the Divine Office. This involved a tremendous work which took more than five years to complete. Your book represents the state of the reform reached in early 1969, when the Holy Father abolished the Council for the Implementation of the Constitution of the Liturgy and entrusted its work to the newly created Congregation of Divine Worship.

After this date the work of revision and reform went on. In order to meet the impatience of many priests and religious, Rome had originally in mind to bring out an "interim Breviary" of its own. This plan, however, was abandoned later on. But at the insistence of the French bishops, the material, prepared so far, was made accessible to them and in early autumn 1969 they published a French version of an interim Breviary with the Imprimature of the chairman of the French Bishops' Liturgical Commission and the approval of the Roman Congregation of Divine Worship. Subsequently, there appeared a Dutch version, and in the first days of July 1970 also an English version, your "Prayer of the Church." It is largely modelled after the French version.

When the work of reform continued under the guidance of the Congregation of Divine Worship, a number of former decisions had to be revoked, others had to be changed. These changes are largely responsible for the differences which you observed in the "Norms" published in November 1971.

In January 1969 the Council for the Implementation of the Constitution on the Liturgy had sent a booklet with the General Instruction on the new Liturgy of the Hours to the bishops of the whole world. It added two model offices, a ferial office of the memorial day of St. Ignatius of Antioch. Article 52 of this Instruction said: "Except for the sacred seasons, when every year certain books are read according to tradition, the lessons have been arranged in a two-year cycle, as is also done in the readings for ferial days at Mass, with the result that every year the whole New Testament is read, partly in Mass and partly in the Divine Office. In addition to this a survey is offered of the whole history of salvation in the double series of readings from the Old Testament. For practical reasons the new Liturgy of the Hours will consist of three volumes. The first will contain the sacred seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter; the second and third offer the time throughout the year in a two-year cycle."¹

In a last minute decision this plan has been abandoned. The new "Liturgia Horarum" as published in 1971 and 1972 contains four volumes of 1300, 1800, 1650 and 1400 pages. The material collected for the new Liturgy of the Hours was so rich that three volumes could not hold it; a four-volume set had to be published. The two-year cycle of readings from Sacred Scripture had to be abandoned. Thus the two-year cycle which you find on pp. 520-534 in your "Prayer of the Church" is not found in the Latin original of the new Divine Office.

In view of all this perhaps you may be anxiously asking yourself: How much will this new Liturgy of the Hours cost? It is extremely expensive, especially for us here with the floating Peso. The four volumes mentioned cost US \$ 94. — This is a very high price and the Secretary of the Congregation of Divine Worship had to defend it against various complaints, ultimately placing the blame at the door of the printer.² It is

¹ Liturgical Information Bulletin of the Philippines 4 (1969) p. 38.

² A. Bugnini, Circa editionem libri "Liturgiae Horarum", *Notitiae* 7(Dec. 1971) 441-413.

sincerely to be hoped that the English translation will be entrusted to a single publisher who can, therefore, calculate at relatively low prices; this should be possible since the former prescription to print both the Latin and the vernacular texts together has been officially abandoned by Rome.

These were the most conspicuous changes made between 1969 and summer 1971 when the first volume of the "editio typica" was placed on sale. A lot of minor changes, additions and omissions have to be noted now. I list here those which you have observed yourself together with some you did not see.

1. INTRODUCTORY VERSE AND PSALM 94 (Invitatory)

Misleading now is the rubric on page 1 of your book: "This psalm (94) may replace the hymn at morning prayer (Lauds)." What is correct is that this psalm with its antiphon may be *omitted* when it comes before.³ In many religious communities and major seminaries the insertion of this psalm with its verse would unduly prolong the liturgical morning prayer which now has replaced the community morning prayers formerly said in these communities.

The same psalm may be replaced by other psalms; not only by Psalm 99 as your book says, also by Ps 66 and 23.

2. LAUDS AND VESPERS

Compared with your "Prayer of the Church" the conclusion of these two Hours is different. If Lauds and Vespers are said in common and a priest or deacon leads the celebration, he dismisses the congregation in the same way as at Mass. He greets them after the concluding prayer with "The Lord be with you", blesses them, saying "May almighty God bless you..." and tells them finally "Go in the peace of the Lord" (*Ite in pace*). If in a common celebration no priest or deacon presides and also in private recitation, these Hours are concluded with the blessing "May the Lord bless us, may He keep us from all evil and lead us to life everlasting. — Amen." The words "Let us bless the Lord. — Thanks be to God." still found in your version, are to be left out, since they would constitute a dup-

³ General Instrct. on the Liturgy of the Hours, no. 35.

lication of the conclusion. In the Middle Hour they bring along the liturgical Hour to an end.

3. NIGHT PRAYER (Compline)

Misleading is the rubric on page 503 of your book: "When night prayer is celebrated in common, it may begin with a brief reflection on our Christian living, or with an act of penance." This places the examination of conscience together with the penitential act completely outside the liturgical prayer Hour.

Actually, both the examination of conscience and the penitential act should be inserted after the introductory verses of Compline. Our liturgical night prayer begins, therefore, with the verse "O God, come to my assistance", etc. "It is praiseworthy to *follow* the introductory verse with an examination of conscience. In common recitation it is either made in silence or inserted into one of the penitential acts given in the Roman Missal." This penitential act has to be adapted to place and time, as for example: "My brothers (and/or: sisters), to prepare ourselves for this night's rest, let us call to mind our sins." There follows the Confiteor or one of the two other forms of the penitential act with the concluding petition "May almighty God have mercy on us. . ." Then the hymn is sung or recited.

After the concluding prayer of the Hour, the blessing, formerly found at the beginning of Compline, is to be inserted, also in private recitation: "May God almighty grant us a quiet night and a perfect end. — Amen."

"The Prayer of the Church" correctly states that — outside Eastertide — one may freely choose one of the remaining three Marian antiphons (Alma Redemptoris Mater; Ave, Regina Caelorum; Salve Regina). But these "antiphons" no longer have their versicles and their orations. With the recitation or singing of the antiphons themselves the "cursus" of the daily Office comes to an end.

4. FURTHER CHANGES

After the reading of the Word of God at Lauds and Vespers you find in your new book a short response. You may omit this response if you wish to do so (Gen. Instr., no. 49).

¹ Ibid., no. 86.

² Ibid., no. 91.

The antiphon has to be said before the psalm, but need not be repeated after the psalm. "An antiphon is said at the beginning of each psalm . . . The antiphon may, if so desired (in Latin: *pro opportunitate*), be repeated after the psalms" (Gen. Instr., no. 123). One is, therefore, free to say the antiphon only at the beginning — as a kind of motto of the psalm — or after every sentence or after every verse or after every division of the psalm, or at the end.⁹

When the new Liturgy of the Hours uses a longer psalm and divides it into several sections, it is *recommended* to add the "Gloria Patri" at the end of each piece. It is, however, also permitted to say the whole psalm under its antiphon straight through.

Officially the distinction between major and minor Hours has been dropped. But there remain a few traces of this distinction. Thus the Office of Readings (the former Matins), Lauds and Vespers conclude their final prayer with the long conclusion (e.g., We make our prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever). Middle Hour and Compline (Night Prayer) conclude their final oration with the short conclusion (e.g., Through Christ our Lord).

⁹ A. Bugnini, *First Reactions to the Liturgy of the Hours*, L'Osservatore Romano (English Ed.) Jan. 20, p. 5.
Footnotes, Chapter 23

Thus the family is the foundation of society. In it the various generations come together and help one another to grow wiser and to harmonize personal rights with the other requirements of social life. All those, therefore, who exercise influence over communities and social groups should work efficiently for the welfare of marriage and the family

Public authority should regard it as a sacred duty to recognize, protect, and promote their authentic nature, to shield public morality, and to favor the prosperity of domestic life. The right of parents to beget and educate their children in the bosom of the family must be safeguarded. Children, too, who unhappily lack the blessings of a family should be protected by prudent legislation and various undertakings, and provided with the help they need.

(*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 52)