

TREASURES of OUR FAITH

by: Deacon Ryan Adams

Greetings brothers and sisters. As we go through this 'Year of Faith', each week we will take a journey together to deepen and rediscover our faith as Catholic Christians. We will take time to look at the rich traditions of our Church, we'll look at what certain things signify and their symbolism, take time to answer some frequently asked questions and look at why we do certain things as Catholics. This week we'll look at the Liturgy of the Hours aka The Divine Office.

"The purpose of the Divine Office (Liturgy of the Hours) is to sanctify the day and all human activity." - "The Divine Office (Liturgy of the Hours) is the prayer not only of the clergy, but of the whole People of God." – *Apostolic Constitution, Canticum Laudis*.

The Liturgy of the Hours is the richest single prayer resource of the Church, with prayers, psalms, and readings for each of the Hours, changing each day and through each of the seasons. It is prayed by clergy and religious and is very much encouraged to be prayed faithfully by the laity as well. It is the universal, common prayer of the church. It is amazing to think that throughout the world, throughout each day and its hours, these common prayers and petitions are being prayed, whether in rectories, monasteries, seminaries or in people's homes.

Both public and common prayer by the people of God is considered to be among one of the primary duties of the Church. From the very beginning of our Church, those who were baptized "devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the community, to the breaking of the bread, and to prayer" (Acts 2:42). The Acts of the Apostles gives frequent testimony to the fact that the Christian community prayed together communally. The witness of the early Church teaches us that individual Christians devoted themselves to prayer at fixed times throughout the day. For example, the last hour of the day when evening draws near, or the first hour when night draws to a close with the rising of the sun for a new day. In the course of time other hours came to be sanctified by prayer. Such prayer in common gradually took the form of a set cycle of hours. This liturgy of the hours or divine office, enriched by readings, is principally a prayer of praise and petition. It is the prayer of the Church with Christ and to Christ.

It is Prayer which is about the sanctification of time and of each day, and is linked with the Feasts and Seasons of the Liturgical Year.

The Lord calls us to *pray without ceasing*, and this is what the Hours enable us to do.

