

FOREWORD

This hymnal is intended primarily for communities which throughout the Church Year daily celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours, especially Morning and Evening Prayer. Hymnals for these celebrations compiled since the publication of the revised Divine Office of the Roman Rite (1971) provided for an immediate need and they served well. Repeated use of these resources, however, and a growing sensitivity to ongoing liturgical reform have made many communities aware of the shortcomings of available collections. This awareness is a necessary part of the ongoing process of building a worthy tradition of liturgical music in English. The present collection is, we hope, a significant step in this process.

Several years ago a number of liturgists and musicians from various religious communities began this collaborative effort. The inspiration towards collaboration came at a meeting of the North American Academy of Liturgy where many of us were members of the study group on Liturgy in Religious Communities. Each of us had some experience in collecting hymns for our communities' daily celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours. Some had completed such hymnals and were working on second editions; others were just beginning this work and were dissatisfied with the available resources. By articulating the specific reasons for our dissatisfaction we established the following brief for our work.

1. The reformed Roman Catholic Liturgy of the Hours is based on the Church's centuries-old tradition that the daily Office is a liturgy bound to certain times of the day and night.

Since the Liturgy of the Hours is the means of sanctifying the day, the order of the prayer has been revised so that the canonical hours could be more easily related to the

chronological hours of the day in the circumstances of contemporary life. (Apostolic Constitution, LAUDIS CANTICUM, no.2)

As its title suggests, the Liturgy of the Hours is a Christian celebration in which time itself becomes a symbol of the Paschal Mystery which is at the heart of our life. The rising and setting of the sun, dawn and dusk, the beginning and the closing of the day, the sun's light and the lights we kindle at the onset of darkness — these time-events become sacramental for Christians who celebrate these experiences in word, gesture and symbol. We celebrate Christ's Passover in the daily rhythms of our lives. Thus dusk:Cross/dawn:Resurrection imagery has guided our selection of hymns for the hinge Hours of Morning and Evening Prayer. This imagery is lacking in much of the hymnody assigned for these Hours in hymn collections now serving religious communities which celebrate the daily Office throughout the Church Year. We believe that it is important that the hymns for the celebration of the Hours be selected with care. It is not the case that "any old hymn" will do.

2. Our renewed sense of the Church Year makes us aware of the dearth of hymnody suitable for the daily celebration of the Hours during the liturgical seasons, especially Lent. Symptomatic of the situation is the fact that there are many more suitable hymns for the Solemnity of the Epiphany than for the entire Lenten season. Our retrieved understanding of Lent as the Church's annual retreat in preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation led us to see as generally unsuitable the bulk of Lenten hymnody centering on ascetic practice as the principle means of becoming united in Christ's Paschal Mystery. Much of this particularly penitential hymnody seems to make little reference to the Lenten season.

We do not intend to negate this aspect of our spiritual heritage. We have attempted, however, to select for the Lenten season hymns which make some reference to its baptismal focus.

3. If suitable Office hymnody for the liturgical seasons is sparse, that for the sanctoral celebrations is like a desert. It is our conviction that the Office, like all liturgical prayer, begins and ends as a sacrifice of praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and is not properly addressed to a particular saint.

In the Liturgy of the Hours the Church exercises the priestly office of its head and offers to God 'unceasingly' a sacrifice of praise, that is, a tribute of lips acknowledging his name. This prayer is the 'voice of the bride herself as she addresses the bridegroom; indeed, it is also the prayer of Christ and his body to the Father.'

(GENERAL INSTRUCTION ON THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS, no. 15)

Devotional prayer, on the other hand, is sometimes addressed directly to one of the saints. The existing sanctoral material seems more often than not to fall into the devotional category. The poetry is often weak and the sentiments expressed are rarely grounded in Scripture and are often alien to the insights of contemporary liturgical theology. To fill this gap we have combed hymnals assembled by various communities but have found that there are few hymns which meet the criterion of being addressed to God for the celebration of the saints. We have commissioned new hymns from one of our members, Ralph Wright, O.S.B. This is a beginning; more work of quality is needed.

4. Virtually all the Churches of the

English-speaking world share the often painful blessing of a new sensitivity to the often exclusive language of our liturgical prayers and hymns. We are also aware that the same Churches and/or members within a particular tradition do not yet enjoy unanimity with regard to the principles to be employed in revising these texts or writing new ones. We reflect that lack of agreement. An appendix to this collection includes the hymn text revisions of Ralph Wright, O.S.B. Though taking a different position on this question from other members of our group, Ralph has been willing to revise his texts for this collection. His appendix contains the original versions.

We have tried to be consistent in rejecting any hymn which could not be revised to modify horizontal exclusive language (generic man) or vertical pronominal usage (God as 'he'). If the copyright holders of hymn texts would not allow such revision their texts have been omitted from this collection. Our concern for language also focuses upon the archaic English of many hymns, especially those written or translated in the nineteenth century. In some instances "old favorites" were abandoned because we could not arrive at acceptable revisions.

5. Our attention has been centered on music as well as text. We have tried to provide singable hymn tunes while also offering resources to expand a community's musical repertoire. We have provided chant melodies in addition to classical hymn tunes. While chant may quite authentically be sung without accompaniment, the same holds for a number of familiar metrical tunes. Small communities should find this a useful feature. Where possible, we have also included a number of early American hymn tunes. Finally, several new tunes appear here. They have been commissioned for some of the new texts of Ralph Wright, O.S.B. When unfamiliar

music is given for a hymn, we try to provide alternatives for those who might wish to sing a text to a more familiar tune. Thus, wherever a chant tune appears a metrical tune is ordinarily provided immediately after as an option. Whenever an unfamiliar tune is encountered, the metrical index may be consulted to provide an alternative. Thus we expect that almost all of the texts here should be musically accessible to most communities.

We want to thank Peter Finn of ICEL for his constant support, encouragement and advice. This project would never have gone beyond our first few meetings were it not for the openness and cooperation of Robert J. Batastini of GIA. The North American Academy of Liturgy gave us an annual forum for meeting and sharing our work with other liturgists and musicians. We thank our own respective communities for their patience and support.

If the prayer of the Divine Office becomes genuine personal prayer, the relation between liturgy and the whole Christian life also becomes clearer. The whole life of the faithful, hour by hour during night and day, is a kind of **leitourgia** or public service, in which the faithful give themselves over to the ministry of love toward God and humanity, identifying themselves with the action of Christ, who by his life and self-offering sanctified the life of all.

(Apostolic Constitution, LAUDIS CANTICUM, no. 18)

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Feast of the Triumph of the Cross