

WHY THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS?



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At present, the Church—both institutionally, and as the living body of Christ—is suffering from the denial to the faithful of the communal Eucharistic celebration, which we revere as the "source and summit of Christian life". One way in which I have found solace over the past months is to turn to the Liturgy of the Hours (also termed the Divine Office) as a means of both personal prayer and communion with our universal Church.

Although the Liturgy is sometimes incorrectly perceived as being reserved for clergy and religious, Vatican II affirms that the Liturgy, as the Church's universal and public prayer, is available to all the faithful.

By way of background, the Liturgy of the Hours is rooted in Jewish prayer "rhythms" of the time of (and before) Jesus. One such rhythm was daily recitation of the psalms, which set on Jews of Jesus' time the ideal of frequent prayer, and of almost constant meditation on the Judaic law. We can safely assume that this is one way in which Christ himself would have prayed daily with his disciples. Following the Resurrection, the new Christian faithful adapted Jewish prayer traditions, especially the psalms. And it is the psalms that are the foundation of the Liturgy.

"Although the Liturgy of the Hours is the collective prayer of the Church, every voice praying the Liturgy of the Hours is unique, and God listens to each of us as much as He listens to the harmony of collective prayer."

Vatican II celebrates Christ's gift to humanity of the "hymn which to all eternity is sung in the courts on high". The Council explains that when the faithful participate in this hymn, Christ "draws about him the whole [worldly] community and makes them his companions in singing with him this song of praise." Although Christ makes clear that communal singing of this song is possible in a multitude of contexts—"where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them"—Vatican II, in this instance, highlights the song's public nature, as opposed to other forms of more inwardly-focused and private praise. The Council stipulates that, although the Church's supreme ritual of worship is the Liturgy of the Eucharist, of the other forms that the Church's hymn of praise can take, the greatest is the Liturgy of the Hours—the Church's principal public prayer.

Through the Holy Spirit, God speaks to each person in a unique, individual manner. He calls each of us to bring the fruits of this dialogue to Him through the universal, public prayer of the Church. Although the Liturgy of the Hours is the collective prayer of the Church, every voice praying the Liturgy of the Hours is unique, and God listens to each of us as much as He listens to the harmony of collective prayer. By its nature and structure, the Liturgy of the Hours offers everyone—especially those who are lonely—a way to communicate with God as part of a larger community, and in a way that allows for extended personal introspection and meditation.

I would encourage anyone with whom the Liturgy of the Hours resonates to explore the numerous available resources. One easy pathway into the Liturgy, for example, is through the Universalis app, which sets forth the entire daily Liturgy in scrollable and audio formats. Collins publishes several editions of the Divine Office, and the CBCEW's online Liturgy Office has numerous resources.

- Nicholas Baumgartner

“
I was glad
when they
said to me....

”



What an intriguing social experiment. Sixty million people in lockdown for an indefinite number of days or weeks, maybe even months. That is the reality that we woke up to on March 23, 2020 as the Covid19 pandemic started to take hold. The government called on the people of the nation to stop all non-essential social contact.?And that included the gathering of the Church for public worship. It felt intense and surreal. A sense of disconnection prevailed.

"The Blessed Sacrament was exposed for silent adoration. And we were once again able to connect with our Faith and our Church. It felt intense and surreal."

However, this week we had reason to rejoice. On Wednesday, 17 June, after almost three long months, St Joseph's opened for private individual prayer. The Church had to be made Covid-safe and I thank all those who put time and effort into preparing St Joseph's to safely receive our people. It was a moment of joy as we welcomed 25 of the faithful after what has been a difficult journey through Lent and Easter and the great feasts of Pentecost and Corpus Christi. The Blessed Sacrament was exposed for silent adoration. And we were

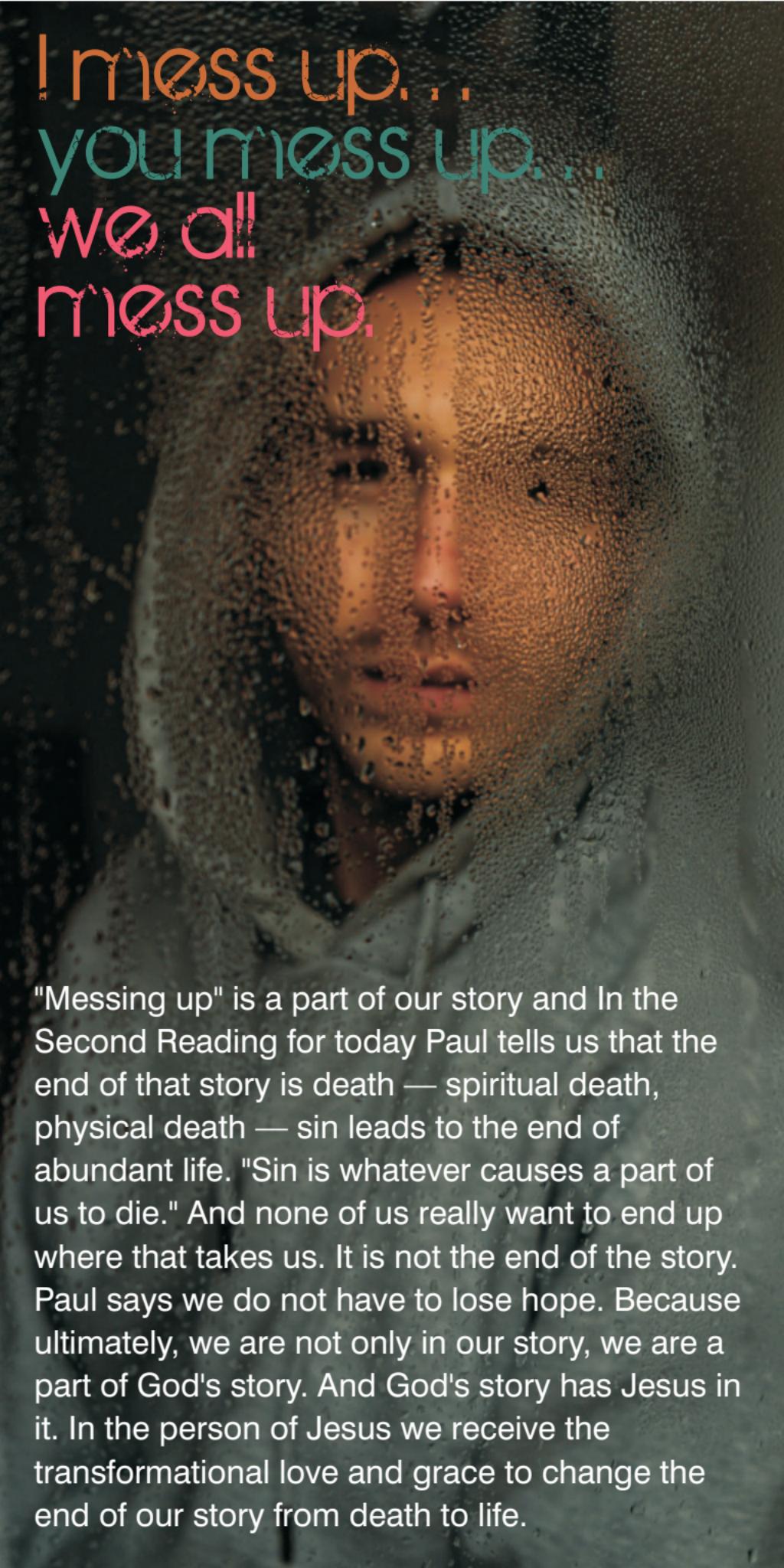
once again able to connect with our Faith and our Church.

We will continue to be open each Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 12 noon. Given social distancing requirements, the church can accommodate a maximum of 30 people at any one time. So you may have to limit the time you spend in church to allow everyone the opportunity to visit and pray. Volunteer stewards will be in attendance to ensure that we comply with the government's health and safety regulations. We take this opportunity to thank the volunteers for giving generously of their time. We await further guidance from the government on opening for public worship. The current thinking is that we should be able to open for Mass and the Sacraments from July 4th. We will of course update you as we receive further news. For later on when we are allowed to resume Masses and other public services, we will continue to need volunteers. If you are able to help, please could you get in touch with Betty Pires (**Email: bettypires1503@gmail.com** or **Tel 07785925780**).

As we experience the silence and peace of St Joseph's in the coming weeks, let us allow this place of refuge to be the source of our strength in the days ahead.

Parish Taskforce for Reopening

I mess up...
you mess up...
~~we all~~
mess up.



"Messing up" is a part of our story and In the Second Reading for today Paul tells us that the end of that story is death — spiritual death, physical death — sin leads to the end of abundant life. "Sin is whatever causes a part of us to die." And none of us really want to end up where that takes us. It is not the end of the story. Paul says we do not have to lose hope. Because ultimately, we are not only in our story, we are a part of God's story. And God's story has Jesus in it. In the person of Jesus we receive the transformational love and grace to change the end of our story from death to life.

*Today I invite you to engage
your reflective imaginations
in sharing with Jesus
your experiences of sin.*



Sin
is whatever
causes a
part of us
to die

Reflection

Distribute pens and paper and invite the group to a time of personal, silent confession, encouraging everyone to find a place to sit by themselves and make a list of what they consider to be their sins and reminding them that they will not be asked to publicly share this list. When each person has completed their list, have them rejoin the group and sit silently as they await the other participants. After everyone has returned to the group, lead them in the following prayer time:

Close your eyes and consider one of the sins on your list – choose the one that is in the forefront of your mind. (pause for a couple of minutes)

- Picture your sin in your mind (pause)
- If you would like to, let any concrete, realistic picture shift to an abstract image that presents this particular sin. Imagine holding that image in your hands. What does it feel like in your hands? Look like? How does it make you feel? What thoughts come to mind? (pause a bit longer)
- Imagine that Jesus shows up near you, and asks "What are you holding?" How do you respond? (long pause)

- If you wish, imagine that you give Jesus what you are holding in your hands. Picture him taking it into his own hands. Stay with this for a few moments and see what happens. If it is difficult for you to give your sin to Jesus, simply continue holding it in your hands. Stay with this for a few moments and see what happens. In either case, listen and watch Jesus for anything he might say or do. Respond as you want to. (long pause)
- Close your prayer time by simply resting in Jesus' presence.

After the reflection, invite people to share what it was like for them to experience the prayer time. As people share, remind the group to simply receive the content without interpreting, fixing, or analysing anyone's experience. (Note that for some people, the prayer time might be something they had difficult connecting to, which is perfectly okay.) Ask:

- What happened in your time with Jesus?
- What insights, questions and/or feelings are in your mind from the prayer?
- Close by reading the passage again, and then praying a brief prayer.

Happy Father's Day

God took the strength of a mountain, the majesty of a tree,
the warmth of a summer sun,
the calm of a quiet sea,
the generous soul of nature,
the comforting arm of night,
the wisdom of the ages,
the power of the eagle's flight,
the joy of a morning in the spring, the faith of a mustard seed,
the patience of eternity,
the depth of a family need,
then God combined these qualities, when there was nothing more to add, he knew His masterpiece was complete,
and so, He called it... Dad.

*Happy Father's Day
to all the Incredible Dads
out there!*



The Rainbow of the Covenant

"I have placed my rainbow in the clouds. It is the sign of my covenant with you and with all the earth." Genesis 9:13

Our faith is about the building of the rainbow bridge. It is about connections at the most intimate level conceivable. God meets death, death meets life. Darkness is shattered into a spectrum of light and on the back of God the rainbow bridge is built.



A Big Thank You to Maureen Bocking
for blessing Holy Joe with all her
powerful paintings on these challenging times.



It is my great pleasure on behalf of our parish community to thank **Roxane Sterling, Anthony Davey, and Jonathan Cooper** for their dedication and the great job they have accomplished last six months as the members of our Finance Committee. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their hard work and commitment in journeying with me through this challenging period of transition. We wish them all the very best in their future endeavours and assure them of our prayers as we look forward to their ongoing involvement in the life of our parish.

Remember and pray

+ Eleanor Frost

+ Dallas Maria Weir



REMEMBER HOLY JOES

Please visit our website and the portal
'Donate to Our Parish' and download the
forms you need and make your offerings.

www.stjosephshighgate.org.uk



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