INWARDLY **DIGEST**

THE PRAYER BOOK AS GUIDE TO A SPIRITUAL LIFE

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Forward Movement

Praise for *Inwardly Digest: The Prayer Book as Guide to a Spiritual Life*

Too often, *The Book of Common Prayer* is open to a few familiar pages on Sunday and closed the rest of the days, with little regard to the deep, transformative spirituality inside. With humor, deep reverence, and academic insight that is anything but dry and boring, Derek Olsen reminds us of the breath of the Spirit, the lives of the saints, the love of Jesus, and the magnificence of God held in the words, silence, and worship of our *Book of Common Prayer*. Clergy and laity should read this to discover and re-discover the daring words and liturgies of our faith spanning eons and to engage the prayers and worship of our faith.

—Laurie Brock
Episcopal priest and author of *Horses Speak of God: How Horses Can Teach Us to Listen and be Transformed*

Derek Olsen is the patron saint of the overlooked; campaign manager of the undervalued; tour guide to the taken for granted. His patient, scholarly watchfulness and his gift for rendering complex ideas in clear, concise prose make *Inwardly Digest* an insightful guide to *The Book of Common Prayer* and a sure and steady introduction to Anglican spiritual practice.

—Jim Naughton
Founder of Episcopal Café and
partner of Canticle Communications

SECTION 2

THE DAILY OFFICE

CHAPTER 5
THE ESSENCE OF THE DAILY OFFICE

The Calendar gives us the big picture—the year is the grand cycle. The Daily Office, on the other hand, is the smallest liturgical cycle, giving shape to our hours and days. If the Calendar and collects help us see the full arc of salvation history, the Daily Office helps us see the life of faith as a daily activity that must be consistently chosen from among a hundred other things all clamoring for our time and attention. This is devotion as the constant daily practice of the faith.

Just as a runner is someone who gets out there every day—or at least several times a week—and pours some sweat on the pavement, so too someone who is formed by the liturgy and the Daily Office has to consistently choose it day after day, not just once in a while as the mood strikes. The Office is a discipline. To be formed by it requires constancy and dedication—but it is well worth the effort.

The essence of the Daily Office must be found on one hand in Paul's exhortation for Christians "with gratitude in your hearts [to] sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God" (Colossians 3:16), and, on the other hand, to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). The two central themes here

are the use of songs and poetic praises offered to God and that continuous prayer springs from deliberate acts of prayer. As we consider the Daily Office and its various parts and acts, we will return time and time again to these two basic principles that form its foundation.

PSALMS, HYMNS, AND SPIRITUAL SONGS

In her book, *Worship*, Evelyn Underhill, an Anglican mystic of the twentieth century, reinforces the poetic character of the Daily Office and the significance of that quality:

> Liturgical worship shares with all ritual action the character of a work of art. Entering upon it, we leave the lower realism of daily life for the higher realism of a successive action which expresses and interprets eternal truth by the deliberate use of poetic and symbolic material. A liturgical service should therefore possess a structural unity; its general form and movement, and each of its parts, being determined by the significance of the whole. By its successive presentation of all the phases of the soul's response to the Holy, its alternative use of history and oratory, drama and rhythm, its appeals to feeling, thought, and will, the individual is educated and gathered into the great movement of the Church. . . . Nevertheless since its main function is to suggest the supernatural and lead men out to communion with the supernatural, it is by the methods of poetry that its chief work will be done. . . . [P]oetry still remains a chief element at least in the Daily Office, which is mainly an arrangement of psalms, canticles, and scripture readings.[1]

She goes on to remind us of the interpretive errors that occur when we attempt to read poetry literally and miss its deeper sense and direction. As she sees it, poetry in the liturgy has three main purposes:

> (1) It is the carrying-medium of something which otherwise wholly eludes representation: the soul's deep and awestruck apprehension of the numinous. . . .
> (2) It can universalize particulars; giving an eternal reference to those things of time in and through which God speaks to men. . . .
> (3) It is a powerful stimulant of the transcendental sense. . . .
>
> All these characters of poetry are active in good liturgy, and indeed constitute an important part of its religious value. Moreover, poetry both enchants and informs, addressing its rhythmic and symbolic speech to regions of the mind which are inaccessible to argument, and evoking movements of awe and love which no exhortation can obtain. It has meaning at many levels, and welds together all those who use it; overriding their personal moods and subduing them with a grave loveliness.[2]

Great art—great poetry—captures our minds and hearts and suffuses reality with a new light, a new perspective. It helps us see our ordinary, everyday world as not so ordinary and cracks open everyday reality to help us see the beauty, glory, and wonder that is concealed within it. It helps us see new possibilities; it helps us see grander movements.

Like great poetry, scripture invites us into a different way of seeing the world and our relationships within it. It invites us to experience the whole cosmos arrayed around the throne of God as portrayed in the heavenly throne-room of Revelation 4-6 and leads us to speculate about what it means to live in a world where justice, mercy, and loving-kindness are fundamental guiding principles. We are invited to recognize our own world transformed and suffused with the light of God. We function as mirrors, lenses, and crystals, reflecting—focusing—diffusing—the divine light, casting it through our facets upon the world and the people around us.

With its language of poetry, the Daily Office reminds us of and orients us to this understanding and reflection. It also can help us move beyond a literalism and dogmatism that can either frustrate or limit our sense of the holy and the divine. The Athanasian Creed can be a hard pill for many to swallow. On the one hand, it is chock full of complicated and philosophical technical terms. On the other, it ends with a declaration of damnation with a certainty that seems to arrogate to itself a judgment properly left with God alone. The Episcopal Church has never been comfortable with it. Bishop Samuel Seabury, the first American Episcopal bishop, wrote that he was never convinced of the propriety of reading it in church, yet he did want to include it along the same lines as the Articles of Faith to show that we hold the common faith of the West. Indeed, the 1979 revision is the only American prayer book to include it. Especially as modern people, we don't know what to do with it—but the monks did. They sang it as a canticle complete with antiphons at the Morning Prayer service of Prime on Sundays, the poetic and musical setting potentially subverting its dogmatism and softening its philosophical formality in song.

After speaking of the eight individual Hours that formed the classical Daily Office in the West, Underhill draws them together and unites them with their purpose:

> The complete Divine Office, then,...is best understood when regarded as a spiritual and artistic unity; so devised, that the various elements of praise, prayer, and reading, and the predominantly poetic and historic material from which it is built up, contribute to one single movement of the corporate soul, and form together one single act of solemn yet exultant worship. This act of worship is designed to give enduring and impersonal expression to eternal truths; and unite the here and now earthly action of the Church with the eternal response of creation to its origin. It is her "Sacred Chant," and loses some of its quality and meaning when its choral character is suppressed: for in it, the demands of a superficial realism are set aside, in favour of those deeper realities which can only be expressed under poetic and musical forms.[3]

The more we sing the Office, the more in touch we are with these melodies, harmonies, and rhythms. Yet, even if we are reading the Office alone in our rooms, we can still find the cadences.

On a purely literary level, we can go through the Office step by step and note the presence of poetry and music. The psalms form the heart of the Office. We respond to the scripture readings with canticles, most of which are infused and inspired by the psalms—or songs like them. The suffrages themselves are verses of psalms recombined and related to one another in new ways. The collects and prayers speak in the language of the psalms and scriptures.

As we pray the Office and sing it—whether aloud or in our hearts—we are incarnating the Pauline injunction to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God and to one another. As its poetry becomes more deeply a part of us, as these songs become implanted within our hearts, they lead us to a more beautiful lens for locating God at work in our world.

TO PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

This notion of having the songs and psalms implanted in our hearts and consciousness leads us to the second principle, to pray without ceasing. To learn the meaning of this phrase, we turn our eyes to the Desert Fathers and Mothers, who devoted their entire lives to its meaning.

The legalization of Christianity in Rome during the fourth century brought a flood of converts and triggered a

crisis of spirituality. For decades, Christian authenticity had been bound up with martyrdom; fidelity to the way of the cross was identified with the willingness to die a martyr's death at the hands of a hostile state. With martyrdom waning, where was an earnest Christian to turn?

The answer came in the form of the desert. Christians who sought to embody the commands of scripture sold their possessions, renounced family life, and sought lives of prayer and austerity in the deserts, either on their own or in the company of like-minded souls. This way of life was popularized by bishops and theologians who wrote inspiring accounts of the lives of simple men and women and the spiritual riches they uncovered. Bishops and teachers like Athanasius, Jerome, and John Cassian wrote in detail about the lives and the rigorous spiritual practices of these early monks and the practice flowered into monasticism and has fed the Church spiritually for centuries.

As we sift through the literature of the early monastic movement and the desert saints who founded it, we come back repeatedly to this injunction to pray without ceasing, to pray some form of the Daily Office and the fundamental belief that the use of the Office was the key to praying without ceasing. The characteristic pattern of desert life is captured in Athanasius's brief description of how Saint Antony lived:

> The money he earned from his work he gave to the poor, apart from what he needed to buy bread, and he prayed often, for he learned that one should pray to the Lord without ceasing. He also listened attentively to the scriptures so that nothing should slip from his mind. He preserved all the Lord's commandments, keeping them safe in his memory rather than in books.[4]

Note the way that work, prayer, and memorization of the scriptures are interconnected here. This way of life is further

clarified by an episode where a desert hermit was arguing with a group of pietists called the Euchites or Messalians:

> Some of the monks who are called Euchites went to Enaton to see Abba Lucius. The old man asked them, "What is your manual work?" They said, "We do not touch manual work but as the Apostle says, we pray without ceasing." The old man asked them if they did not eat and they replied they did. So he said to them, "When you are eating, who prays for you then?" Again he asked them if they did not sleep and they replied they did. And he said to them, "When you are asleep, who prays for you then?" They could not find any answer to give him. He said to them, "Forgive me, but you do not act as you speak. I will show you how, while doing my manual work, I pray without interruption. I sit down with God, soaking my reeds and plaiting my ropes, and I say, 'God have mercy on me; according to your great goodness and according to the multitude of your mercies, save me from my sins [Psalm 51:1,2].'" So he asked them if this were not prayer and they replied it was. Then he said to them, "So when I have spent the whole day working and praying, making thirteen pieces of money more or less, I put two pieces of money outside the door and I pay for my food with the rest of the money. He who takes the two pieces of money prays for me when I am eating and sleeping; so, by the grace of God, I fulfill the precept to pray without ceasing."[5]

This blend of piety and practicality is found throughout this early literature. The life described is filled with basic manual labor—weaving ropes or baskets made from the leaves of the desert palms or scratching out subsistence gardens from rocky soil—suffused with constant prayer. Indeed, the Egyptian monks in particular were famous for prayers that were brief but frequent.

The prayer recited by Abba Lucius is an adaptation of the start of Psalm 51. Reading through the *Life of Antony* and

the description that Athanasius gives of Antony's struggles in spiritual travail, a pattern emerges. At a great turning point in Antony's life, during a struggle with demons that left him both physically and spiritually battered, he retained his faith and focus by ceaselessly chanting, "If they place an encampment against me, yet my heart shall not be afraid" (Psalm 27:3). When people came from the cities, hoping to find him dead, he would pray verses from Psalms 68 and 118. Throughout the literature, the words of the psalms constantly appear in prayers and discussions. In truth, the conversations are full of scripture, but consistently the psalms predominate. The Egyptian brief but frequent prayers that appear in the corpus are almost always drawn from scripture and the psalms. One of the works of Evagrius of Pontus (345-399 CE) consists entirely of one-liners from scripture to be used for prayer in situations organized by the eight vices identified by the desert monks.

For these monks—many of whom were illiterate—scripture came through hearing. Scripture was heard and memorized in the Daily Offices. The foundation of the Office gave them the words they needed to meditate on in the midst of their work and to truly pray without ceasing no matter what they were doing.

Perhaps the preeminent connection between the scriptures, the psalms, and praying without ceasing comes from the second conference on prayer recorded by John Cassian. Abba Isaac says that the whole goal of the monastic way of life can be summed up like this: "This, I say, is the end [goal] of all perfection—that the mind purged of every carnal desire may daily be elevated to spiritual things, until one's whole way of life and all the yearnings of one's heart become a single and continuous prayer." [6] Cassian's companion, Germanus, asks how this sort of focus can be achieved. The reply from Abba

Isaac is that there is one particular formula for meditation that can secure this result:

> The formula for this discipline and prayer that you are seeking, then, shall be presented to you. Every monk who longs for the continual awareness of God should be in the habit of meditating on it ceaselessly in his heart, after having driven out every kind of thought, because he will be unable to hold fast to it in any other way than by being freed from all bodily cares and concerns. Just as this was handed down to us by a few of the oldest fathers who were left, so also we pass it on to none but the most exceptional, who truly desire it. This, then, is the devotional formula proposed to you as absolutely necessary for possessing the perpetual awareness of God: "O God, make speed to save me; O Lord, make haste to help me" [Psalm 70:1].[7]

Yes, this is the line that is used as a verse and response to open each of the prayer Offices. No, that's not an accident.

Cassian makes the explicit connection between the Daily Office and the continuous prayer of the Egyptian monks in his other book, *Institutes*, but he does so by framing it in the midst of one of the disputes about monastic practice. By the end of the fourth century, there were two major centers of monastic practice—the deserts of Egypt and the deserts of Palestine. They had different ways of praying the Daily Office. The Egyptian model was the same format as what appears to have been done in many of the early cathedrals of the period—one public service in the morning and another in the evening. Twelve psalms were sung, then there was a reading from the Old Testament, then one from the New Testament. That was it for the day. The Palestinian model was to gather more frequently. Jerome, writing from his monastery in Bethlehem, advises this:

> Farther, although the apostle bids us to "pray without ceasing," and although to the saints their very sleep is a supplication, we ought to have fixed hours of prayer, that if we are detained by work, the time may remind us of our duty. Prayers, as everyone knows, ought to be said at the third, sixth, and ninth hours, at dawn and at evening....We should rise two or three times in the night and go over the parts of scripture which we know by heart.[8]

He instructs the parents of a young woman dedicated to the Church to train her in the same way: "She ought to rise at night to recite prayers and psalms; to sing hymns in the morning; at the third, sixth, and ninth hours to take her place in the line to do battle for Christ; and lastly to kindle her lamp and to offer her evening sacrifice."[9]

The Egyptians responded to these alternate prayer practices rather harshly. One characteristic response comes from the Egyptian-trained Epiphanius:

> The Blessed Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus, was told this by the abbot of a monastery he had in Palestine, "By your prayers we do not neglect our appointed round of psalmody, but we are very careful to recite [the prayer Offices of] Terce, Sext and None." Then Epiphanius corrected them with the following comment, "It is clear you do not trouble about the other hours of the day, if you cease from prayer. The true monk should have prayer and psalmody continuously in his heart."[10]

Epiphanius suggested that by having more set hours of the day, the monks were neglecting this continual prayer of the heart and instead were satisfied only to pray when the clock told them it was time to do so. Frankly, this is kind of a cheap shot. An argument could equally be made that since the Palestinian monks were hearing the psalms more, they had better opportunity to memorize them and keep them always

in their hearts—but the (Egyptian) sayings don't give us the Palestinian abbot's response!

In light of this argument between the two parties, Cassian tries to take a middle path. After explaining the Egyptian system and before talking about how to pray the day hours, he says:

> For, among [the Egyptians as opposed to the monasteries of Palestine and Mesopotamia] the Offices that we are obliged to render to the Lord at different hours and at intervals of time [i.e., the day Offices of Terce, Sext, and None] to the call of the summoner, are celebrated continuously and spontaneously throughout the course of the whole day, in tandem with their work. For they are constantly doing manual labor alone in their cells in such a way that they almost never omit meditating on the psalms and on other parts of scripture, and to this they add entreaties and prayers at every moment, taking up the whole day in Offices that we celebrate at fixed times. Hence, apart from the evening and [morning] gatherings, they celebrate no public service during the day except on Saturday and Sunday, when they gather at the third hour for Holy Communion. For what is offered [freely] is greater than what is rendered at particular moments, and a voluntary service is more pleasing than functions that are carried out by canonical obligation. This is why David himself rejoices somewhat boastfully when he says: "Willingly shall I sacrifice to you." And: "May the free offerings of my mouth be pleasing to you, Lord."[11]

Cassian is, in essence, admitting that the Egyptians have a more perfect practice: the two Offices of Morning and Evening Prayer give the stern Egyptian monks all they need to pray without ceasing for the rest of the day. But then he goes right ahead and tells his monks to pray the additional hours in the middle of the day in Palestinian fashion. The Egyptian way

may be better, but the Palestinian is easier—and is likely better training for those still needing to learn their psalms.

These two groups show us two different ways of using the Daily Office to learn how to pray without ceasing. The Egyptian model is to have only two long Offices with psalms and readings at both. The Palestinian model is to have shorter and more frequent Offices with psalmody, leaving the reading of scripture for the long Office at night. The Palestinian model wins decisively in the West; Benedict expresses in his rule what has become normative in the West: eight liturgical services of prayer with an additional monastic business meeting—Chapter—that itself acquires liturgical material. Indeed, this pattern of frequency in corporate recitation of the Offices gets taken to its extreme in the monasteries of Cluny in France. At one point, the monks spent a full eight hours of the day singing liturgies!

With the creation of *The Book of Common Prayer* at the Reformation, Archbishop Cranmer put the Anglican churches onto the other path. Whereas for centuries the Western Church had followed the Palestinian model, Cranmer turned us back to the Egyptian model. Up until our present book, our Offices had consisted of the same elements as the Egyptian Office: psalms, a reading from the Old Testament, a reading from the New Testament, and prayers, all done twice a day. (The 1979 book gives a "Palestinian" nod with the introduction of Noon Prayer and Compline.)

If prayer without ceasing is our goal (and why shouldn't it be?), we must recall that the Egyptian model is the harder path. In order to fulfill the call, we would be wise to follow that model. Pray the long Offices as they're appointed, but then—throughout the day—make our private prayers "brief but frequent." Take a verse that strikes you in the morning. Ponder it through the day; make it your prayer. Repeat it to yourself as you sit in silence. Whisper it to yourself as you

work. Roll it around in your mind while you eat. Make it part of your prayer without ceasing.

This, then, is the essence of the Office—to make our spiritual sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. By speaking in "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God," our hearts are lifted and our minds expanded to see a world imbued with God. As we take the words of the psalms and the scriptures into ourselves, we provide ourselves with the basic resources to pray without ceasing. The practice of the Office—whether together or alone—builds up in us the pattern of praise and points us in the way of the habitual recollection of God.

THE SACRIFICE OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

When the Church Fathers spoke of the chief morning and evening services of the Daily Office—Lauds and Vespers in the Western Church—they often did so with reference to the temple sacrifices. A classic example is Isidore of Seville (c. 560-636) whose encyclopedic writings formed the basis for most Western treatments of the liturgy for almost a thousand years. In describing Vespers, he writes:

> Vespers is the end of the Daily Office and the setting of another daylight. Its solemn celebration is from the Old Testament. It was the custom of the ancients to offer sacrifices and to have aromatic substances and incense burnt on the altar at that time. [David], that hymn-singing witness, performed a royal and priestly Office saying: "Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice" (Ps 141:2). (De Eccl. Off., 1.20.1).

Isidore asserts a few things that we need to look at more carefully. First, he finds Vespers in the Old Testament. Second, he clarifies this remark by talking about sacrifices, particularly around the offering of incense. Third, he mentions David, citing a psalm in support of his statements. What is he talking about, and in what sense do we take this?

Looking through the legislation in the Torah, the first five books of the Hebrew scriptures, we find a double reference to what Isidore was describing. Numbers 28:1-8 gives a summary:

> The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: Command the Israelites, and say to them: My offering, the food for my offerings by fire, my pleasing odor, you shall take care to offer to me at its appointed time. And you shall say to them, This is the offering by fire that you shall offer to the LORD: two male lambs a year old without blemish, daily, as a regular offering. One lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight also one-tenth of an ephah of choice flour for a grain offering, mixed with one-fourth of a hin of beaten oil. It is a regular burnt offering, ordained at Mount Sinai for a pleasing odor, an offering by fire to the LORD. Its drink offering shall be one-fourth of a hin for each lamb; in the sanctuary you shall pour out a drink offering of strong drink to the LORD. The other lamb you shall offer at twilight with a grain offering and a drink offering like the one in the morning; you shall offer it as an offering by fire, a pleasing odor to the LORD.

So—lambs, bread, and wine. This legislation is described again at the end of Exodus 29; Exodus 30 then gives directions for the incense altar right before the Holy of Holies in the inmost part of the temple and states: "Aaron shall offer fragrant incense on it; every morning when he dresses the lamps he shall offer it, and when Aaron sets up the lamps in

the evening, he shall offer it, a regular incense offering before the Lord throughout your generations" (Exodus 30:7-8).

Although these twice daily offerings are described separately, we find them joined together in some of the standard summary statements of priestly activity in the temple. Thus, when King Abijah tries to persuade the people of Israel to join the kingdom of Judah, he argues, "We have priests ministering to the LORD who are descendants of Aaron, and Levites for their service. They offer to the LORD every morning and every evening burnt offerings and fragrant incense, set out the rows of bread on the table of pure gold, and care for the golden lampstand so that its lamps may burn every evening" (2 Chronicles 13:10b-11a). When we think about services in the temple, then, this was a big piece of the daily activity: the twice daily burnt offerings of food and incense. The best description that we have from the time of the temple is in Ecclesiasticus 50:12-21 where the service is described while praising Simon, son of Onias, high priest from around 219-196 BCE. While interesting in its own right, the only point that we need to observe from this description is that it includes a description of the Levites singing a psalm at the time of the sacrifice. This agrees with the much later—and much more comprehensive—description of this ceremony in the *Mishnah* (the third-century, written collection of Jewish oral teaching) where set psalms are appointed for the sacrifices for each day of the week.

To recap: there were daily temple sacrifices at morning and evening where prayers were prayed, psalms sung, and sacrifices performed—both food and incense. This is the Old Testament precedent that Isidore is referring to. I am not suggesting that there is any direct liturgical link between the sacrifices and the Offices, only that the pattern is similar and that common elements are likely due to a Christian appropriation of an Old Testament practice.

These offerings of food, drink, and incense are the type that anthropologists refer to as alimentary offerings. That is, in these sacrifices, the community is feeding the deity. In traditions that include images or statues of the gods, they may be clothed during this time as well. While it is easy to dismiss these offerings as primitive and pointless, to do so misses their deeper meaning. Even in those societies, only the very young or unsophisticated believed that the gods needed these feedings and would perish without them. Indeed, Psalm 50 explicitly mocks this shallow understanding: "If I [the Lord] were hungry, I would not tell you, for the whole world is mine and all that is in it. Do you think I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving and make good your vows to the Most High" (50:12-4). Rather, the community is taking some of its common supplies—food, drink, things that people use—and choosing to give them up. The fact that useful (and sometimes even scarce) resources are being exclusively devoted to the deity is a symbol of the community's dedication to their god. That's what's really behind this: These sacrifices are an act of self-dedication showing the material loss the community is willing to incur for the sake of faithfulness to their deity. This kind of sacrifice (and there are other kinds that we'll talk about later) demonstrates dedication because a limited good is being directed toward the god rather than the well-being of the community (or individual).

Psalm 141, with its spiritualization of the sacrifice, is pointing to something important when the psalmist asks that the prayer itself be considered a substitute for or an act of worship united—though at a distance—with the act of sacrifice: "Let my prayer be set forth in your sight as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice" (141:2). Even though the psalmist isn't actually burning lambs, the act of prayer itself reflects an act of sacrifice. A good that is

inherently limited—time itself—is being voluntarily dedicated to God.

Thus, if the morning and evening sacrifices of the temple are seen as acts of communal self-dedication to God, the Morning and Evening Prayers of the Church mirroring these sacrificial acts are also acts of self-dedication. We are voluntarily giving up twenty to thirty minutes to God—time that could be spent doing a hundred, a thousand, other things but instead we choose to spend this most precious resource in the praise of God.

There are two direct links that the Church has appropriated from the Old Testament practice that connect us with the spirit of these sacrifices: the use of psalms and the presence of incense. When we sing the psalms at morning and evening prayer, we are uniting our voices across time not just with the early Anglicans of Cranmer's day, not just with Isidore's Spanish monks, but also with the Levites serving God in the Jerusalem temple. We are separated by centuries, yet united in song.

Likewise, when we use incense—and this usually occurs either at formal expressions of public worship or, on the other end of the spectrum, as the act of an individual worshiper praying alone—we use it in direct remembrance of the incense offered to God in the temple ceremonies. We are not trying to recreate the temple sacrifices or to put ourselves under Old Testament ceremonial legislation, of course, but—like the psalms—we offer the incense in spiritual unison with the offerings of God's people through time. Thus, when incense is used at the Offices, it should be used to cense the altar alone and not the people around it. At this point, we are not using incense as a holy purifier but rather offering it directly to God as a sacrifice in and of itself and as a visual representation of the prayers ascending to God's throne.

By putting substantial prayer Offices at the hinges of the day—morning and evening—the Church joins its worship spiritually and symbolically with the twice daily sacrifices God commanded the Israelites to perform in scripture. As they did in worship, we too are sacrificing something of value—our time—to God as an act of dedication. When we pray the psalms, say the prayers, and lift up our hands with or without incense, we unite ourselves with the people of God across time and offer our own sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

CHAPTER 6
THE ANATOMY OF THE DAILY OFFICE

THE SERVICES

When we consider the Daily Office—the regular prayer services of the Church and our official public services on all days of the year that aren't holy days—we see that a number of items fall under this heading. They are grouped together at the front of the prayer book:

Rite I (Traditional language)

Concerning the Service (p. 36)
Daily Morning Prayer: Rite One (pp. 37-60)
Daily Evening Prayer: Rite One (pp. 61-73)

Rite II (Contemporary language)

Concerning the Service (p. 74)
Daily Morning Prayer: Rite Two (pp. 75-102)
An Order of Service for Noonday (pp. 103-107)
Concerning the Service (p. 108)
An Order of Worship for the Evening (pp. 109-114)
Daily Evening Prayer: Rite Two (pp. 115-126)
An Order for Compline (p. 127-135)