

The place of the Daily Office in a balanced and full spiritual life

The real significance of the Divine Office is that in its recitation the individual or group enters the ancient cycle of prayer, by which day by day and hour by hour the church in the name of all creation adores and implores the eternal God. -Evelyn Underhill, quoted in John MacQuarrie's Paths in Spirituality

Daily prayer in the prayer book tradition embodies a spiritual practice that is practical, ordered, and not dependent on feelings that are subject to change. The daily offices of the prayer book are intended to be familiar, regular, and participatory, leading to what one author calls a "divine monotony." Indeed, the word "office" is derived from the Latin officium, meaning the performance of a task or duty. The offices have a corporate familiarity that leads us deeper into the regular rhythms of the day and of our life with God --From - Opening the Prayer Book, Jeffrey Lee 1999

The value of the Office is its objectivity. It is a means by which we pray with the whole church, uniting our prayer with that of millions of other Christians living and dead. This is true whether one is alone or in a group, for the Office is essentially a corporate act. It is objective too in that it does not depend on our feelings, but gives our prayer life a regularity and a disciplined framework. -Kenneth Leech, True Prayer

The Office holds up in a public way the fact that the journey with and to God is central - God is all in all. It enables a connecting-up process where individual and community are held in contact with God. In a very particular way it builds community, providing bricks and mortar wherewith God's community is continually brought to be. It releases love, not simply for the community, or even perhaps not at all for the community sometimes, as far as they can perceive it. It feeds into the invisible economy of Grace, God's hidden plumbing, for the good of the world. From - What shall we say about the Daily Office? Father George Guiver CR

I lost fear in the black belt when I began to know in my bones and sinews that I had been truly baptized into the Lord's death and Resurrection, that in the only sense that really matters I am already dead, and my life is hid with Christ in God. I began to lose self-righteousness when I discovered the extent to which my behavior was motivated by worldly desires and by the self-seeking messianism of Yankee deliverance! The point is simply, of course, that one's motives are usually mixed, and one had better know it. As Judy and I said the daily offices day by day, we became more and more aware of the living reality of the invisible "communion of saints"--of the beloved community in Cambridge who were saying the offices too, of the ones gathered around a near-distant throne in heaven--who blend with theirs our faltering songs of prayer and praise. With them, with black men and white men, with all of life, in Him Whose Name is above all the names that the races and nations shout, whose Name is Itself the Song Which fulfils and "ends" all songs, we are indelibly, unspeakably ONE. - Jonathan Daniels on the Daily Office

...a way by which we keep ourselves in constant awareness of the divine order; an order of love and justice which embraces and underlies all order "The cantus firmus is the recurring rhythmic pattern which serves as the basis for the music, giving it a unity and consistency. ...it is the recurring cycle of prayer and communing with God which gives, as it were, the dominant 'set' to life. But over that cantus firmus all kinds of distinct melodies may be heard interweaving in a complex texture" "...the offices keep us in touch with the whole church. They do not impede the individual's spiritual growth, but both nourish it and supply a standard by which it is to be judged" "...we need immersion too in Christian truth if we are rightly to interpret life and culture -John MacQuarrie, Paths in Spirituality