

Horarium, Hours Of The Day

Opus Dei (the Work of God)

Opus Dei was performed through a daily routine organized around work and liturgy. The monastic day was divided into twelve *horarium* (hours of the day); the length of which varied, depending on the ecclesiastical division of the year. The Summer schedule occurred from Easter to 12 Sep and the Winter schedule from 13 Sep to Holy Thursday.

Summer	Winter	Activity
	1:20 am	Rising
	1:30 am	Matins (or Vigils) (night office), canonical hour
1:45 am		Rising
2:00 am		Matins (or Vigils) (night office), canonical hour
	2:30 am	<i>lectio divina</i> (religious reading)
3:00 am		Private prayer and reflection
3:10 am		Lauds (at first light), canonical hour
4:00 am		Prime (at sunrise), canonical hour
4:15 am		Chapter (meeting of the community)
4:40 am		Manual labour
	7:05 am	Private prayer and reflection
	7:15 am	Lauds (at first light, canonical hour
7:45 am		Terce, canonical hour
8:00 am		Mass (whole convent)
	8:00 am	Prime (at sunrise), canonical hour
	8:20 am	Mass (whole convent)
8:50 am		Reading
	9:10 am	Chapter (meeting of the community)
	9:20 am	Terce, canonical hour
	9:35 am	Private prayer and reflection
	9:55 am	Manual Labour
10:40 am		Sext (midday prayers), canonical hour
10:50 am		Midday meal
	11:10 am	Private prayer and reflection
	11:20 am	Sext (midday prayers), canonical hour
	11:30 am	Rest
11:35 am		Manual labour
12:50 pm		Rest
	1:20 pm	Nones, canonical hour
	1:35 pm	Midday meal
1:45 pm		Private prayer and reflection
2:00 pm		Nones, canonical hour
2:30 pm		Manual labour
	2:30 pm	<i>lectio divina</i> (religious reading)
	2:50 pm	Vespers, canonical hour
	3:30 pm	Private prayer and reflection
	3:45 pm	Collation (monks gather in the gallery to listen to reading)
	3:55 pm	Compline, canonical hour
	4:05 pm	Sleep
5:30 pm		Private prayer and reflection
6:00 pm		Vespers, canonical hour
6:45 pm		Evening meal
7:30 pm		Collation (monks gather in the gallery to listen to reading)
7:50 pm		Compline, canonical hour
8:00 pm		Sleep

The canonical hours (or offices) that formed the core of *opus Dei* were performed eight times a day; consisting of psalms, hymns and readings. One-hundred and fifty psalms, which all

monks knew by heart, were chanted over the course of a week. On weekdays, liturgy was supplemented by the Office of the Dead. On two of the great feast days and during Lent, liturgy was supplemented by a daily mass - monks who were also ordained could perform mass privately on these occasions.

The time of rising was the eighth hour of the night (second hour after midnight) when monks would cross themselves and recite a prayer before leaving their dormitory. They then entered the church, pushed back their cowl, and bowed to each altar they passed and the High Altar. When they reached their allotted stall they knelt (except on Sundays and certain feast days) and recited the Lord's Prayer and the Creed. They remained kneeling until the psalm '*deus in adiutorium meum intende*' had been said, then stood for the remainder of the Service - unless especially marked otherwise.

The Canonical Hours

Matins. This office involved the chanting of psalms interspersed with anthems. Monks remained standing throughout with arms on the chest in the form of a cross, during the office stalls were unlit as the monks recited from memory.

Lauds. This office was always held at dawn.

Prime. This office was sung.

Terce. Those in the field returned to the Abbey on the first stroke of the bell.

Sext. During Lent the monks said *sext* at the place of their manual labour, otherwise the monks said *sext* in Church.

Nones. During Lent the monks said *nones* at the place of their manual labour, otherwise the monks said *nones* in Church.

Vespers. Always held at sunset/twilight, this office was sung.

Compline. This office was sung. After *compline* the abbot stood and sprinkled holy water over each brother as he departed for the dormitory to sleep.

Between the Offices

Several periods were set aside during the day for monks to carry out private prayer, reflection and reading. This could be done in the church or sat in the cloister. Those in the cloister would sit in the prescribed area for reading from the Holy Scriptures. These were also opportunities for the cantor to lead lessons for those monks who required it, who would repeat in a low voice. During these moments novices would learn to recite the Psalter by heart.

lectio divina - spiritual reading and meditation, was reserved for the early morning hours of the Winter schedule.

Morning mass, attended by the whole community, was held daily in the church.

Chapter was the time devoted to internal matters of the community that all monks (and novices on the first Sunday of Lent) attended. It was signalled by ringing of the bell by the sacristan; who continued to ring the bell until the blessing, which was given by the abbot. After the blessing was the reading of the martyrology for that day. Prayers were then said, followed by the reading of the *tabula* (list of daily tasks). Any letters received from the Pope

or bishops were then read to the community. The abbot would read a rule from the Book of Rules and explain its purpose to the monks; on Sundays, there would also be readings from the statutes of the General Chapter and other Cistercian regulations. There would then follow absolution of the dead when the abbot appointed which prayers were to be said for that soul. Next, those with fault prostrated themselves at the feet of the abbot and confessed their sin, after-which, those known by others to have fault, and who did not confess themselves, were then proclaimed by one who knew, and the proclaimed were obliged to prostrate themselves. The mistakes and faults of those who confessed, or who were proclaimed, were then corrected and punishments metered out. If there was a need, on the first Sunday of Lent a new abbot was elected following the death or resignation of the previous abbot. Chapter concluded with commemoration of the dead of the abbey and recitation of the *De Profundis* (the common name for the 129th psalm - in the traditional numbering system of psalms). All then left to their allotted tasks, save those who wished to first give their confession.

opus manuum - manual labour, when the monks went to their allotted tasks.

Meals were eaten in the Refectory, except on fast days (Wednesdays and Fridays). During the Summer schedule there were two meals (midday and evening), during the Winter schedule there was only the one meal (midday). The midday meal consisted of one pound of coarse bread (two thirds if there were to be an evening meal, when the remaining third would be taken), two dishes of different vegetables boiled without grease, and a drink that consisted of either sour wine of the country - well diluted, thin beer, or a *sapa* - a decoction of herbs the consistency of a vegetable soup. When there was an evening meal, this consisted of the remainder (one third of a pound) of their coarse bread, a few raw fruits or vegetables (such as radish, lettuce or apples) as was furnished from their gardens. Meals were eaten in silence with a reading from the Scripture by a nominated monk.

Collation, the reading of collations of Cassian - a collection of the lives of early monks and the early saints. This was read aloud in the cloister. After the reading the monks all turned their faces to the east and the abbot said, "Our help is in the name of the Lord", to which the monks responded, "Who hath made heaven and earth".

The Lay Brothers' Day

Lay brothers followed a structured day similar to that of the choir monks, dependent on the schedule; Summer (Easter to 12 Sep) or Winter (13 Sep to Holy Thursday).

Work Day	Summer Non-Work Day and Sunday	Work Day	Winter Non-Work Day and Sunday	Activity
			1:20 am	Rising
			1:30 am	Vigils
	1:45 am	1:45 am		Rising
	2:00 am	2:00 am		Vigils
		2:30 am		Labour
3:00 am				Rising
3:10 am				Lauds (first light)
4:00 am				Labour
		3:55 pm	3:55 pm	Compline
		4:05 pm	4:05 pm	Sleep
7:50 pm	7:50 pm			Compline
8:00 pm	8:00 pm			Sleep

Whether in the abbey or at the granges, the lay brothers said their prayers at *vigils* and at the Day Hours. On the days when they worked in winter, their time for rising was the ringing of the bell that signalled the final psalm of the first *nocturn* of *vigils*. On all days, lay brothers in the abbey would join the choir monks in church for the remainder of *vigils*, for *lauds* and *compline*, whilst lay brothers in the granges said their prayers for *vigils*, *lauds* and *compline* in the Oratory for the appointed duration. For the remainder of the day lay brothers said their prayers at the Day Hours wherever they were working.

Lay brothers did not work on the following solemnities:

The Day of the Lord's Birth and the following three days, on the Circumcision of the Lord and on the Epiphany of the Lord.

On Good Friday, on Easter and on Easter Monday, and on the Ascension of the Lord.

On Pentecost and Pentecost Monday.

On the days of Saint Mary the Blessed Virgin.

On the days of Saint Michael the Archangel, of the Birth of John the Baptist, of Saint Lawrence, of All Saints, of Saint Martin the Bishop of Tours, and (for those staying at the abbey) of the Dedication of the abbey church.

On days of the apostles Saints Peter and Paul, Saint Andrew, Saint James the Greater, Saints Philip and James the Less, Saint Bartholomew, Saint Thomas, Saint Matthew, and Saints Simon the Zealot and Jude.

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