

On the Roman Breviary as Embodying the Substance of the Devotional Services of the Church Catholic. [Introduction Only]

by J.H. Newman

The Roman Breviary is a collection of devotional offices and prayers that developed from the Apostolic worship and the Hours of Prayer, but its omission of Scripture Readings has had serious consequences for the Church.

Scripture: Psalm 119:105, Matthew 6:6, Acts 2:1, Romans 8:26, 1 Corinthians 14:15, Colossians 3:16, 1 Thessalonians 5:16, 1 Timothy 2:5, 2 Timothy 3:16, James 5:16

Topics: "Church History", "Liturgical Prayer"

Description

J.H. Newman preaches about the history and significance of the Breviary, highlighting its structure, purpose, and the changes it underwent over the centuries. He emphasizes the importance of returning to the ancient practice of reading Scripture and the need to restore the original intent of the Church's devotional services. Newman discusses the impact of the Breviary on private devotions, the arrangement of Psalms, and the connection to Apostolic worship. He also addresses the introduction of questionable practices, such as invocations to saints, and the need to discern and preserve the true Catholic elements of the Breviary.

Transcript

Teach her to know and love her hour of prayer,

And evermore,

As faith grows rare,

Unlock her heart, and offer all its store,

In holier love and humbler vows,

As suits a lost returning spouse.--Christian Year.

There is so much of excellence and beauty in the services of the Breviary, that were it skilfully set before the Protestant by Roman controversialists as the book of devotions received in their communion, it would

undoubtedly raise a prejudice in their favour, if he were ignorant of the circumstances of the case, and but ordinarily candid and unprejudiced. To meet this danger is one principal object of the following pages; in which, whatever is good and true in those Devotions will be claimed, and on reasonable grounds, for the Church Catholic in opposition to the Roman Church, whose only real claim above other Churches is that of having adopted into the Service certain additions and novelties, ascertainable to be such in history, as well as being corruptions doctrinally. In a word, it will be attempted to wrest a weapon out of our adversaries hands; who have in this, as in many other instances, appropriated to themselves a treasure which was ours as much as theirs; and then, on our attempting to recover it, accuse us of borrowing what we have but lost through inadvertence. The publication then of these selections, which it is proposed presently to give from these Services, is, as it were, an act of re-appropriation. Were however the Breviary ever so much the property of the Romanists, by retaining it in its ancient Latin form, they have defrauded the Church of that benefit which, in the vernacular tongue, it might have afforded to the people at large.

Another reason for the selections which are to follow, lies in the circumstance, that our own daily Service is confessedly formed upon the Breviary; so that an inspection of the latter will be found materially to illustrate and explain our own Prayer-Book.

It may suggest, moreover, character and matter for our private devotions, over and above what our Reformers have thought fit to adopt into our public Services; a use of it which will be but carrying out and completing what they have begun.

And there is a further benefit which, it is hoped, will result from an acquaintance with the Breviary Services, viz. that the adaptation and arrangement of the Psalms therein made, will impress many person with a truer sense of the excellence and profitableness of those inspired compositions than it is the fashion of this age to entertain.

Lastly, if it can be shown, as was above intimated, that the corruptions, whatever they be, are of a late date, another fact will have been ascertained, in addition to those which are ordinarily insisted on, discriminating and separating off the Roman from the primitive Church.

With these views a sketch shall first be given of the history of the Breviary; then the selections from it shall follow.

Introduction:--On the history of the Breviary.

The word Breviarum first occurs in the work of an author of the eleventh century, and is used to denote a compendium or systematic arrangement of the devotional offices of the Church. Till that time they were contained in several independent volumes, according to the nature of each. Such, for instance, were the Psalteria, Homilaria, Hymnaria, and the like, to be used in the service in due course. But at this memorable era, and under the auspices of the Pontiff who makes it memorable, Gregory VII., an Order was drawn up, for the use of the Roman Church, containing in one all these different collections, introducing the separate members of each in its proper place, and harmonizing them together by the use of rubrics. Indeed, some have been led to conclude that in its first origin the word Breviary was appropriated to a mere collection of rubrics, not to the offices connected by them. But even taking it in its present sense, it will be obvious to any one who inspects the Breviary how well it answers to its name. Yet even thus digested, it occupies four thick volumes of duodecimo size.

Gregory VII. did but restore and harmonize these offices; which seem to have existed more or less the same in constituent parts, though not in order and system, from Apostolic times. In their present shape they are appointed for seven distinct seasons in the twenty-four hours, and consist of prayers, praises, and thanksgivings of various forms; and, as regards both contents and hours, are the continuation of a system of worship observed by the Apostles and their converts. As to contents, the Breviary Services consist of the Psalms; of Hymns, and Canticles; of Lessons and texts from inspired and ecclesiastical authors; of Antiphons, Verses and Responses, and Sentences; and of Collects. And analogous to this seems to have been the usage of the Corinthian Christians, whom St. Paul blames for refusing to agree in some common order of worship; when they came together, every one of them having a Psalm, a doctrine, a tongue, a revelation, an interpretation. On the other hand, the Catholic seasons of devotion are certainly derived from Apostolic usage. The Jewish observance of the third, sixth and ninth hours for prayer, was continued by the inspired founders of the Christian Church. What Daniel had practised, even when the decree was signed forbidding it, "kneeling on his knees three times a day, and praying, and giving thanks unto his GOD," St. Peter and the other Apostles were solicitous in preserving. It was when "they were all with one accord in one place," at "the third hour of the day," that the Holy Ghost came down upon them at Pentecost. It was at the sixth hour, that St. Peter "went up upon the house-top to pray," and saw the vision revealing to him the admission of the Gentiles into the Church. And it was at the ninth hour that "Peter and John went up together into the temple," being "the hour of prayer." But though these were the more remarkable seasons of devotion, there certainly were others besides them, in that first age of the Church., After our Saviours departure, the Apostles, we are informed, "all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren:" and with this accords the repeated exhortation to pray together without ceasing, which occurs in St. Pauls Epistles. It will be observed that he insists in one passage on prayer to the abridgement of sleep; and one recorded passage of his life exemplifies his precept. "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto GOD, and the prisoners heard them." Surely it is more natural to suppose that this act of worship came in course, according to their wont, and was only not omitted because of their imprisonment, somewhat after Daniels pattern, than that they should have gone aside to bear this sort of indirect testimony to the Gospel.

Such was the Apostolic worship as far as Scripture happens to have preserved it; that it was as systematic, and as apportioned to particular times of the day, as in the aftertimes of peace and prosperity, is not to be supposed; yet it seems to have been, under ordinary circumstances, as ample and extended, as then. If St. Paul thought a prison and a prisons inmates no impediment to vocal prayer, we may believe it was no common difficulty which ever kept him from it.

In subsequent times the Hours of prayer were gradually developed from the three, or (with midnight) the four seasons, above enumerate, to seven, viz. by the addition of Prime (the first hour), Vespers (the evening), and Compline (bed-time); according to the words of the Psalm, "Seven times a day do I praise Thee, because of Thy righteous judgments." Other pious and instructive reasons existed, or have since been perceived, for this number. It was a memorial of the seven days of creation; it was an honour done to the seven petitions given us by our Lord in His prayer; it was a mode of pleading for the influence of that Spirit who is revealed to us as sevenfold; on the other hand, it was a preservative against those seven evil spirits, which are apt to return to the exorcised soul more wicked than he who has been driven out of it; and it was a fit remedy of those seven successive falls, which the Scripture says happen to "the just man" daily.

And, as the particular number of their Services admitted of various pious meanings, so did each in its turn suggest separate events in our Saviours history. He was born, and He rose again at midnight. At prime, (or 7 A.M. according to our reckoning,) He was brought before Pilate. At the third, (or 9 A.M.) He was devoted to crucifixion by the Jews, and scourged. At the sixth, (or noon,) He was crucified. At the ninth, (or 3 P.M.) He expired. At Vespers He was taken down from the cross; at which hour He had the day before eat the Passover, washed His Apostles feet, and consecrated the Eucharist. At Completorium, or Compline, He endured the agony in the garden.

These separate Hours, however, require a more distinct notice. The night Service was intended for the end of the night, when it was still dark, but drawing towards day; and, considering that the hour for rest was placed soon after sunset, it did not infringe upon the time necessary for repose. Supposing the time of sleep to extend from 8 or 9 P.M. to 3 or 4 in the morning, the worshipper might then rise without inconvenience to perform to service which was called variously by the name of Nocturns, or Matins, as we still indifferently describe the hours in which it took place, as night or morning. It consists, when full, of three parts or Nocturns, each made up of Psalms and Lessons; and it ended in a Service, supposed to be used shortly before sunrise, and called Lauds, or Praises. This termination of the Nocturn Service is sometimes considered distinct from it, s as to make eight instead of seven hours in the day; as if in accordance with the text, "Give a portion to seven, and also to eight." Accordingly it is sometimes called by the name of Matins, instead of the Nocturns; and sometimes both together are so called.

This subdivision of the night-service has the effect of dividing the course of worship into two distinct parts, of similar structure with each other; the three Nocturns, Lauds, and Prime, corresponding respectively to the three day hours (of the 3d, 6th, and 9th) Vespers and Compline. Of these the three day hours are made up of Psalms, Hymns, and Sentences. These are the simplest of the Services, and differ very little from each other though the year. Lauds answer to Vespers, the sun being about to rise or about to set in the one or the other respectively. Each contains five Psalms, a Text, a Hymn, Evangelical Canticle, Collect, and Commemoration of Saints. These hours are the most ornate of the Services, and are considered to answer to the morning and evening sacrifices of the Jews.

Prime and Compline were introduced at the same time (the fifth century), and are placed respectively at the beginning of the day and the beginning of the night. In each there is a Confession, four Psalms, a Hymn, Text, and Sentences.

The ecclesiastical day is considered to begin with the evening or Vesper service; according to the Jewish reckoning, as alluded to in the text, "In the evening, and morning, and at noon-day, will I pray, and that instantly." The ancient Vespers are regarded by some to be the most solemn hour of the day. They were sometimes called the *Officium Lucernarum*. Prayers were in some places offered while the lamps were lighting; and this rite was called *lumen offere*. The Mozarabic service supplies an instance of this, in which the Office ran as follows:

"Kyrie eleyson, Christe eleyson, Kyris eleyson. Pater noster, &c. In nomine Domini Jesu Christi, lumen cum pace. R. Amen. Hoc est lumen oblatum. R. Deo gratias."

On Festivals, the appropriate Services, beginning on the evening of the preceding day, are continued over the evening of the day itself; so that there are in such cases two Vespers, called the First and the Second, of which the First are the more solemn.

This is the stated succession of the sacred offices through the day, but the observances of the precise hours has not been generally insisted on at any time, but has varied with local usages or individual convenience. Thus the Matin and Laud Services may be celebrated on the preceding evening, as is done (for instance) in the Sistine Chapel at Rome during Passion week, the celebrated Miserere being the first Psalm of Lauds. Prime may be used just before or after sunrise; the Third soon after; and soon after the Sixth; the Ninth near dinner; Vespers and Compline after dinner. Or Prime, the Third, Sixth, and Ninth may come together two or three hours after sunrise. Noon, which in most ages has been the hour for the meal of the day, is made to divide the Services; there is a rule, for instance, against Compline coming before dinner.

Such is the present order and use of the Breviary Services, as derived more or less directly from Apostolic practice. Impressed with their antiquity, our Reformers did not venture to write a Prayer-Book of their own, but availed themselves of what was ready to their hands: in consequence our Daily Service is a compound of the portions of this primitive ritual, Matins being made up of the Catholic Matins, Lauds, and Prime, and Evensong of Vespers and Compline. The reason why these changes were brought about will be seen in the following sketch of the history of the Breviary from the time of Gregory VII.

The word has already been explained to mean something between a directory and an harmony of offices; but it is to be feared there was another, and not so satisfactory reason for the use of it. It implied an abridgement or curtailment of Services, and so in particular of the Scripture readings, whether Psalms or Lessons, at least in practice. Of course there is no reason why the Church might not, in the use of her discretion, limit as well as select the portions of the inspired volume, which were to be introduced into her devotions; but there were serious reasons why she should not defraud her children of "their portion of meat in due season;" and it would seem, as if the eleventh or at least the twelfth century, a time fertile in other false steps in religion, must be charged also, as far as concerns Rome and its more intimate dependencies, with a partial removal of the light of the written Word from the Sanctuary. Whatever benefit attended the adjustment of the offices in other respects, so far as the reading of Scripture was omitted, it was the productive of evil, at least in prospect. An impulse was given however slight in itself, which was followed up in the centuries which succeeded, and in all those churches which either then, or in the course of time, adopted the usage of Rome.

Even now that usage is not universally received in the Latin Communion, and it was in no sense enjoined on the whole Communion till after the Council of Trent; but from the influence of the papal see and of the monastic orders, it seems to have affected other countries from a much earlier date. This influence would naturally be increased by the circumstance that the old Roman Breviary had long before Gregory's time been received in various parts of Europe: in England, since the time of Gregory the Great, who, after the pattern of Leo, and Gelasius before him, had been a Reformer of it; in Basle, since the ninth century; in France and Germany by means of Pepin and Charlemagne; while Gregory VII. himself effected its reception in Spain. Other Breviaries however still were in use, as they are at this day. The Ambrosian Breviary used in the Church of Milan, derives its name from the great St. Ambrose; and in the ninth century Charles the Bald, while sanctioning the use of the Roman, speaks also of the usage of Jerusalem, of Constantinople, of Gaul, of Italy, and of Toledo.

In Gregory's Breviary there are no symptoms of a neglect of Scripture. It contains the offices for festival-days, Sundays, and week-days; Matins on festivals having nine Psalms and nine Lessons, and on Sundays eighteen Psalms and nine Lessons, as at present. The course of the Scripture Lessons was the same as it had been before his time; as it is preserved in a manuscript of the thirteenth century. It will be

found to agree in great measure both with the order of the present Breviary and with our own. From Advent to Christmas were read portions of the prophet Isaiah; from the Octave of the Epiphany to Septuagesima, St. Pauls Epistle to the Romans; from Septuagesima to the third Sunday in Lent, the book of Genesis, the i. xii. and xxvii. on the Sundays to which they are allotted in our own offices; on the fourth in Lent to Wednesday in Passion Week, Jeremiah; from Easter to the third Sunday after, the Apocalypse; from the third to the fifth, St. James; from the Octave of the Ascension to Pentecost, the Acts; after the Octave of Trinity to the last Sunday in July, the books of Kings; in August, Proverbs; in September, Job, Tobit, Judith, and Esther; in October, Maccabees; and in November, Ezekiel, Daniel, and other prophets.

Well would it have been if this laudable usage, received from the first ages, and confirmed by Pope Gregory VII. had been observed, according to his design, in the Roman Church; but his own successors were the first to depart from it. The example was set in the Popes chapel of curtailing the sacred Services, and by the end of the twelfth century it had been followed in all the churches in Rome, except that of St. John Lateran. The Fratres Minores, (Minorists or Franciscans,) adopted the new usage, and their Breviaries were in consequence remarkable for the title "*secundum consuetudinem Romanae Curiae*," contrary to the usage of such countries as conformed to the Roman Ritual, which were guided by the custom of the churches in the city. Haymo, the chief of this order, had the sanction of Gregory X. in the middle of the thirteenth century, to correct and complete a change, which, as having begun in irregularity, was little likely to have fallen of itself into an orderly system; and his arrangements, which were conducted on the pattern of the Franciscan Devotions, nearly correspond to the Breviary, as it at present stands.

Haymos edition, which was introduced into the Roman Church by Nicholas III. A.D. 1278, is memorable for another and still more serious fault. Graver and sounder matters being excluded, apocryphal legends of Saints were used to stimulate the popular mind; and a way was made for the use of those Invocations to the Virgin and other Saints, which heretofore were unknown in public worship. The addresses to the blessed Mary in the Breviary, as it is at present constituted, are such as the following: the Ave Mary, before commencing every office through the day and at the end of Compline; at the end of Lauds and Vespers, an Antiphon invocatory of the Virgin; the Officium B.

Mariae, on the Sabbath or Saturday, and sundry other offices, containing Hymns and Antiphons in her honour. These portions of the Breviary carry with them their own plain condemnation, in the judgment of an English Christian; no commendation of the general structure and matter of the Breviary itself will have any tendency to reconcile him to them; and it has been the strong feeling that this is really the case, that has led the writer of these pages fearlessly and securely to admit the real excellences, and to dwell upon the antiquity, of the Roman Ritual.

He has felt that, since the Romanists required an unqualified assent to the whole of the Breviary, and that there were passages which no Anglican could ever admit, praise the true Catholic portion of it as much as he might, he did not in the slightest degree approximate to a recommendation of Romanism. But to return;--these Invocations and Services to the Blessed Virgin have been above enumerated, with a view of observing that, on the very face of them, they do not enter into the structure of the Breviary; they are really, as they are placed, additions, and might easily have been added at some later period, as (e.g.) was the case with our own Thanksgiving, or the Prayer for the Parliament.

This remark seems to apply to all the intrinsically exceptionable Addresses in the Breviary; for as to the Confession at Prime and Compline, in which is introduced the name of the Blessed Virgin and other Saints, this practise stands on a different ground. It is not a simple gratuitous Invocation made to them, but

it is an address to Almighty GOD in His heavenly court, as surrounded by His Saints and Angels, answering to St. Pauls charge to Timothy, "before GOD and the LORD JESUS CHRIST and the elect Angels," and to Daniel and St.

Johns address to the Angels who were sent to them. The same may even be said of the Invocation "Holy Mary and all Saints," &c. in the Prime Service, which Gavanti describes as being of very great antiquity. These usages certainly now do but sanction and encourage that direct worship of the Blessed Virgin and the Saints, which is the great practical offense of the Latin Church, and so are a serious evil; but it is worth pointing out, that, as on the one hand they have more claim to be considered an integral part of the service, so on the other, more can be said towards their justification than for those addresses which are now especially under our consideration.

This is what occurs to observe on the first sight of these Invocations; but we are not left to draw a conjectural judgment about them. Their history is actually known, and their recent introduction into the Church Services is distinctly confessed by Roman ritualists.

The Ave Mary, for instance, is made up of the Angels salutation, "Hail, thou," &c. Elizabeths "Blessed art thou among women," &c., and the words "Holy Mary, Mother of GOD, pray for us sinners, now and in the hour of our death." The last clause "now and," &c. was confessedly added by the Franciscans in the beginning of the sixteenth century; and the words preceding it, "Holy Mary," &c. which Gavanti, after Baronius, wished to attribute to the Council of Ephesus (A.D. 431.) are acknowledged by the later critics, Grancolas and Merari, to have had no place in any form of prayer till the year 1508. Even the Scripture portion of the Ave Mary, which, as Merari observes, is an Antiphon rather than Prayer, and which occurs as such in the lesser Office of the Blessed Virgin, and in St. Gregorys Sacramentary in the Mass Service for the fourth Sunday in Advent, is not mentioned by any devotional writer, nor by Councils nor Fathers, up to the eleventh century, though they do enjoin the universal and daily use of the Creed and Lords Prayer, which are in the present Breviary used with it. It first occurs among forms of prayer prescribed for the people in the statutes of Otho, Bishop of Paris, A. D. 1195, who was followed after the interval of a hundred years, by the regulations of Councils at Oxford and elsewhere. Another space of at least fifty years intervenes before the introduction of rosaries and crowns in honour of the Virgin. As to the Roman Breviary, it did not contain any part of the Ave Mary, till the promulgation of it by Pope Pius V., after the Tridentine Council, A. D. 1550.

The four Antiphons to the Blessed Virgin, used at the termination of the offices, are known respectively by their first words; the Alma Redemptoris, the Ave Regina, the Regina coeli, and the Salve Regina. Gavanti and Merari plainly tell us they are not to be found in ancient authors. The Alma Redemptoris is the composition of Hermannus Contractus, who died A. D. 1054. The author of the Ave Regina is unknown, as is that of the Regina coeli. The Salve Regina is to be attributed either to Hermannus, or to Peter of Compostella. Gavanti would ascribe the last words "O clemens, O pia, O dulcis," &c. to St. Bernard, but Merari corrects him, the work in which they are contained being suppositious. These Antiphons seem to have been used by the Franciscans after Compline from the thirteenth century; but are found in no Breviary before A. D. 1520.

The Saturday or Sabbath office of the Blessed Virgin was introduced, according to Baronius, by the monks of the Western Church, about A. D. 1056.

The Officium Parvum B. V. M. was instituted by the celebrated Peter Damiani at the same date. It is said indeed to have been the restoration of a practice three hundred years old, and observed by John Damascene; which it may well have been: but there is nothing to show the identity of the Service itself with the ancient one, and that is the only point on which evidence would be important. Thirty years after its introduction by Damiani, it was made part of the daily worship by decree of Urban II.

The Breviary then, as it is now received, is pretty nearly what the Services became in practice in Rome, and among the Franciscans, by the middle of the thirteenth century; the two chief points of difference between it and the ancient Catholic Devotions, being on the one hand its diminished allowance of Scripture reading, on the other its adoption of uncertain legends, and of Hymns and Prayers to the Virgin. However, the more grievous of these changes were not formally made in the Breviary itself, till the Pontificate of Pius V. after the Tridentine Council; at which time also it was imposed in its new form upon all the Churches in communion with Rome, except such as had used some other Ritual for above two hundred years. Not even at the present day, however, is this Roman novelty, as it may be called, in universal reception; the Paris Breviary, as corrected by the Archbishop of that city A. D. 1735, differs from it considerably in detail, though still disfigured by the Invocations.

Before concluding this account of the Roman Breviary, it is necessary to notice one attempt which was made in the first part of the sixteenth century to restore it to a more primitive form. In the year 1536, Quignonius, Cardinal of Santa Crux, compiled a Breviary under the sanction of Clement VII., and published it under his successor, Paul III. This Ritual, the use of which was permitted, but not formally enjoined by the Holy See, was extensively adopted for forty years, when it was superseded by the Franciscan Breviary, as the now authorized one may be called, in consequence of a Bull of Pius V. The Cardinals Breviary was drawn up on principles far more agreeable to those on which the Reformation was conducted, and apparently with the same mixture of right and wrong in the execution. With a desire of promoting the knowledge of Scripture, it showed somewhat of rude dealing with received usages, and but a deficient sense of what is improperly called the imaginative part of religion. His object was to adapt the Devotions of the Church for private reading, rather than chanting in choir, and so to encourage something higher than that almost theatrical style of worship, which, when reverence is away, will prevail, alternately with a slovenly and hurried performance, in the performance of Church Music. Accordingly he left out the Versicles, Responses, and Texts, which, however suitable in Church, yet in private took more time, as he says, to find out in the exiting formularies than to read when found. He speaks in his preface expressly of the "perplexus ordo," on which the offices were frames. But his great reform was as regards the reading of Scripture. He complains that, whereas it was the ancient rule that the Psalms should be read through weekly and the Bible yearly, both practices had been omitted. The Ferial of week-day service, had been superseded by the Service for feast days, as being shorter; and for that reason every day, even through Lent was turned into a festival. To obviate the temptation which led to this irregularity, he made the Ferial Service about the length of that of the old feast day; and he found space in these contracted limits for the reading of the Psalms and the whole Bible, except part of the Apocalypse, in the week and the year respectively, by omitting the popular legends of the Saints which had been substituted for them. He observes, that these compositions had been sometimes introduced without any public authority, or sanction of the Popes, merely at the will of individuals. Those which he retained, he selected from authors of weight, whether of the Greek or Latin Church. Besides, he omitted the Officium Parvum B. M. V., on the ground that there were sufficient services in her honour independently of it. In all his reforms he professes to be returning to the practice of antiquity; and he made use of the assistance of men versed "in Latin and Greek, in divinity, and the jus pontificium."

This Breviary was published in Rome, A. D. 1536, under the sanction, as has been said, of Paul III. However, it was not of a nature to please the divines of an age which had been brought up in the practice of the depraved Catholicism then prevalent; and its real faults, as they would appear to be, even enabled them to oppose it with justice. The Doctors of the Sorbonne proceeded to censure it as running counter in its structure to antiquity and the Fathers; and though they seem at length to have got over their objections to it, and various editions at Venice, Antwerp, Lyons, and Paris, showed that it was not displeasing to numbers in the Roman Communion, it was at length superseded by the Bull of Pius V. establishing the Franciscan Breviary, which had been more or less grown into use in the course of the preceding three hundred years.

This account of Cardinal Quignoniuss Breviary, and the circumstances under which it was compiled, will remind the English reader of the introductory remarks concerning the Service of the Church, prefixed to our own Ritual: which he may read more profitably than heretofore, after the above illustrations of their meaning. For this reason they shall be here cited:

"There was never any thing by the will of man so well devised, or so sure established, which in continuance of time hath not been corrupted; as, among other things, it may plainly appear by the Common Prayers in the Church, commonly called Divine Service. The first original and ground whereof, if a man would search out by the Ancient Fathers, he shall find, that the same was not ordained but of a good purpose, and for a great advancement of godliness. For they so ordered the matter, that all the whole Bible, (or the greatest part thereof,) should be read over once every year; intending thereby, that the Clergy, and especially such as were Ministers in the Congregation, should (by often reading and meditating on GODS Word) be stirred up to godliness themselves, and be more able to exhort others by wholesome doctrine, and to confute them that were adversaries to the truth; and further, that the people (by daily hearing of Holy Scripture read in the Church,) might continually profit more and more in the knowledge of GOD, and be the more inflamed with the love of His true religion.

³But these many years past, this godly and decent order of the ancient Fathers hath been so altered, broken, and neglected, by planting in uncertain Stories and Legends, with multitude of Responds, Verses, vain Repetitions, Commemorations, and Synodals; that commonly when any book of the Bible was begun, after three or four chapters wee read out, all the rest were unread. And in this sort the book of Isaiah was begun in Advent, and the book of Genesis in Septuagesima; but they were only begun, and never read through. After like sort were other books of Holy Scripture used. And furthermore, notwithstanding that the ancient Fathers have divided the Psalms into seven portions, whereof every one was called a Nocturn, now late time a few of them have been daily said, and the rest utterly omitted. Moreover, the number and hardness of the rules called the Pie, and the manifold changings of the service, was the cause, that, to turn the book only was so hard and intricate a matter, that many times there was more business to find out what should be read, than to read it when it was found out.

"These inconveniences therefore considered, here is set forth such an Order, whereby the same shall be redressed. And for a readiness in this matter, here is drawn out a Calendar for that purpose, which is plain and easy to be understood; wherein (so much as may be) the reading of Holy Scripture is so set forth, that all things shall be done in order, without breaking one piece from another. For this cause be cut off Anthems, Responds, Invitatories, and such like things as did break the continual course of the reading of the Scripture."

It remains but to enumerate the selections from the Breviary which follow. First has been drawn out, an Analysis of the Weekly Service, as well for Sunday as other days. This is followed by an ordinary Sunday Service at length, as it runs when unaffected by the occurrence of special feast or season, in order to ground the reader, who chooses to pursue the subject, in the course of daily worship as a whole. With the same object a Week-day Service has also been drawn out. Two portions of extraordinary Services are then added, one from the Service for the Transfiguration, the other for the Festival of St. Laurence, with a view of supplying specimens of a more elevated and impressive character. Next follows a design for a Service for March 21st, the day on which Bishop Ken was taken from the Church below, and another for a Service of thanksgiving and commemoration for the anniversaries of the days of death of friends or relations. These have been added, to suggest to individual Christians a means of carrying out in private the principle and spirit of these inestimable forms of devotion which are contained in our authorized Prayer-Book. The series is closed with an abstract of the Services for every day in Advent, fitting on to sections 2 and 3, which contain respectively the types of the Sunday and Week-day Service. Except by means of some such extended portion, it is impossible for the reader to understand the general structure, and appreciate the harmony of the Breviary.

Lastly, the writer of these pages feels he shall have to ask indulgence for such chance mistakes, in the detail of the following Services, as are sure to occur when an intricate system is drawn out and set in order, with no other knowledge of it than is supplied by the necessarily insufficient directions of a Rubric.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jh-newman/on-the-roman-breviary-as-embodying-the-substance-of-the-devotional-services-of-t/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net