

# Exordium

## UNIT NINE

### LITURGY

#### *Cistercian Liturgy*

*Fidelity of the Rule of Saint Benedict requires that “nothing be given priority over the Opus Dei”. This unit examines the liturgical principles and practice of the early Cistercians and invites us to reflect on how their values find expression in the daily liturgy of contemporary communities.*

#### **Objectives**

- 1) To recognise simplicity and sobriety as hallmarks of Cistercian liturgy.
- 2) To appreciate the extraordinary energy invested by the first-generation Cistercians in adapting the liturgy to accord with the principles of the reform.
- 3) To understand the factors involved in the liturgical reform of 1147.

## CISTERCIAN LITURGY

Almost a quarter of the monastic day is assigned to the worship of God. The dynamic interaction of liturgy and life means that there must be harmony and continuity between what is done in the church and what happens outside. Consistency and common sense demanded that the motivating principles of the Cistercian reform needed to find concrete expression also in this area. Thus the Founders deliberately paid attention to bringing the liturgy into accordance with their stated ideals of authenticity and simplicity. This is clearly stated in the initial list of *instituta*:

Thus continuing the straight path of the Rule over the entire tenor of their life, **in ecclesiastical as well as in other observances**, they matched or conformed their steps to the footprints traced by the Rule. (EP 15.3)

### 1. The Pedigree of Cistercian Liturgy

Cistercian liturgy is not Eastern but Western and Latin. It also belongs to the “monastic” stream of liturgy as distinct from that found in cathedrals or among canons regular, although this distinction had become blurred. St Benedict had borrowed freely from the usage of the Roman basilicas and subsequent centuries witnessed some degree of mutual influence. In general, however, despite its particularities, Cistercian usage is best understood in the context of the prevailing liturgical practice among the Black monks. The most obvious difference is that the liturgy was shortened to achieve the possibility of more working hours and a more balanced daily horarium.

Chrysoygonus Waddell traces the lineage of Cistercian liturgy from Marmoutier to Montier-la-Celle (maybe with some influence from early Cluny), to Molesme. From Molesme the Founders kept the *Kalendarium*, the lectionary for Vigils (but purged), the system of Collects and the *Evangelarium*. Magnificat and Benedictus antiphons are from this tradition and not from Metz. Cistercian usage is not unlike the Cluniac ferial rite. Needless to say Cluny’s additional psalmody was not continued. This was the tradition known at Molesme and brought to the New Monastery. It was the foundation on which subsequent modifications were introduced.

### 2. The First Liturgical Reform

Once the founders had settled into their new and rugged lifestyle, the first priority was to conform the liturgy to the prescriptions of the Rule, interpreted according to reformist principles. For the first Cistercians this meant a liturgy marked by sobriety and simplicity. The *instituta* given after the death of Alberic, make this principle more explicit. Nothing in God’s house was to be ostentatious or superfluous: poverty was to be practised also in the liturgy.

They resolved to retain no crosses of gold or silver, but only painted wooden ones; no candelabra except a single one of iron, no chasuble except of plain cloth or linen, and without silk, gold, and silver; no albs or amices except of linen, likewise without silk, gold and silver. As for all mantles and copes and dalmatics and tunics, these they rejected entirely. They did retain, however, chalices not of gold but of silver, and gilded if possible; and a communion tube of

silver, and only gilded, if that could be so; only stoles and maniples could be of silk, without gold or silver. As for altar cloths, they explicitly decreed that they must be of linen, without pictorial ornamentation, and that the wine cruets be without gold or silver.  
(EP 17.6-8)

The same provision is repeated in the *Capitula* attached to the *Exordium Cistercii- Summa Carta Caritatis*:

XXV That it is not permissible for us to have gold, silver, precious stones and silk: Altar linens and the vestments of the ministers must be without silk, except for the stole and the maniple. The chasuble is to be of only one colour. All the ornaments of the monastery, its vessels and utensils, are to be without gold, silver and precious stones except for the chalice and the communion-tube. These two things alone may be of gilded silver: we are never permitted to have them in gold.

XXVI On sculptures and painting and wooden crosses:  
It is never lawful to have sculptures: paintings are permissible only on crosses and these are only to be of wood.

The first collection of the so-called “Statutes of 1134” returns to the theme of liturgical sobriety and restates certain restrictions..

- prohibition of precious vestments, repeating Capitulum XXV (above) (#10),
- prohibition of gold or silver clasps on books and of (silk) covering for books (#13),
- sculptures and paintings are prohibited not only in the church, but also in the working areas, “since while monks are paying attention to these the usefulness of good meditation and the gravity of religious discipline are neglected” (#20),
- initials in manuscripts are to be of one colour and not painted: windows are to be white and without crosses or pictures (#80),

For other Statutes in from the General Chapters of the twelfth century, see Appendix 1.

The founders recognised that the style of liturgy is formative of community spirituality and so they were determined that the spirit of the reform would be constantly reinforced by a common liturgy. It was required that all monasteries “have the usages and chant and all the books needed for the day and night hours and for Mass according to the form of the usages and books of the New Monastery”(CC 3.2) The uniformity of liturgical texts upon which the *Charter of Charity* and subsequent General Chapters insisted seems to have been sufficiently well-observed to have established a tradition of liturgical usage that reasonably may be called “Cistercian”.

### **3. The Ongoing Pursuit of “Authenticity”**

The first task assigned to the nascent scriptorium of Cîteaux, following the return of Robert to Molesme was the copying of the liturgical books (EP 7.11). In line with the Founders’ shared zeal for

accuracy — as evidenced by Alberic’s letter on orthography and Stephen’s revision of the Vulgate Bible — “authentic” liturgical texts were sought.

- 1) Sources for the Antiphony and *Graduale* were sought in Metz, which claimed to represent the genuine “Gregorian” tradition.
  - The more Germanic mode of chant seemed insensitive in pitch and rhythm to those nearer the French heartlands. (Bernard describes it as “corrupt, quite badly structured and deserving of contempt in every respect”) and the system of musical notation was so old-fashioned as eventually to be rejected as inadequate.
- 2) To follow the usage apparently indicated by RB, hymns were limited to those composed by Ambrose, *ambrosianum*, and so prototypes were sought from Milan. There were 34 texts and 19 melodies — 15 of which were locally unknown. Stephen introduced the first Hymnal in 1108-1112 with a *Monitum*. The text of this is translated in Unit 2.
  - This hymnal was extremely problematic, based as it was on a fanatical and narrow interpretation of the text of RB. The number and variety of hymns was severely restricted. *Aeternae rerum conditor* was sung every day of the year for Vigils. Such rigorism meant leaving aside traditional known favourites such as *Vexilla regis*, *Ave maris stella* and *Conditor alme siderum*. The Latin of the hymns was difficult. Many lines were hypometric or hypermetric (too few or too many words for the music) and so disrupted the easy flow of normal singing..
- 3) In 1130-32, Stephen introduced a new *Breviarium* containing, among other elements, the cycle of Vigils readings.
- 4) Sometime after 1134, when Stephen had departed the scene, provisions for a liturgical renewal were enacted which gave the possibility of remedying some glaring imperfections.
  - In Letter 10, Peter Abelard lists the “novelties” of the Cistercian liturgy: abandoning the suffrages to the saints, restriction of processions to Candlemas and Palm Sunday (the Ascension was added in 1151), chanting alleluia in Septuagesima in accordance with RB but not current custom, omission of the Apostles’ Creed at Prime and Compline, adding doxologies to responsories and a special office for the *triduum sacram*.
- 5) Sometime before 1147 a second Hymnal was produced under the auspices of Bernard out of “concern for theological precision and literary congruity”. All the Milanese hymns were retained though some were corrected on the basis of alternative readings. The

longer hymns were divided, and 18 new hymns (selected from those previously rejected from the Molesme hymnal plus *Summa largitor praemii*) were added for the Little Hours and Compline where an *ambrosianum* was not prescribed. Some of the melodies were rewritten, 7 new melodies introduced. These “Cistercian” melodies manifest a certain lyric exuberance and relate well to the text.

- 6) Between 1142-1147 Work was done on upgrading the Antiphony and *Graduale*. Bernard was assisted by Abbot Guy of Cherlieu and Richard of Vauclair who later became abbot of Fountains. They made provision for First Vespers. A complete office for evangelists was introduced, a proper office for Mary Magdalen, Marian chants were modelled on the Song of Songs. Bernard wrote a prologue to the revised antiphony (translated in CF 1; pp. 161-162) and there was a detailed preface which gave the rationale of the changes.
- 7) There was a minor reform of the hymnal in 1180-1182.

Perfect conformity with the prescriptions of the Rule was not achieved—nor apparently even sought. Some divergences, inherited from the Black Monks, continued to exist.

The almost-daily **Office of the Dead** seems to have been instituted by St Anglebert in 800-801 and was known by the Synod of Aachen. It was widely used in monasteries including those in the Cluniac tradition. In a period of uncertainty about salvation, coinciding with the evolution of a doctrine of purgatory, the **Office of the Dead** was not discontinued by the Cistercians. No doubt the perpetual offering of substantial suffrages for the dead was a very attractive proposition to potential benefactors who, being rich, probably recognised the necessity of some life insurance.

- The Roman Office of the Dead (comprising Vespers, Vigils and Lauds) was recited by the Cistercians in addition to the liturgy of the Hours: in winter after vespers and vigils and in summer after vespers and lauds. A *Requiem aeternam* replaced the *Gloria* at the end of each Psalm. The sick were dispensed from it.

On the other hand, the third of the daily offices in use was a product of devotion. The **Little Office of our Lady** (added on top of the canonical office and the Office of the Dead) was instituted in 1095 by the former Cluniac, Pope Urban II to be prayed for the success of the First Crusade. At first the Cistercians did not follow this usage. Its recitation in choir was expressly forbidden (EM 1.34.5; p. 95), though it was used privately. It was only in 1185 that the General Chapter added it to the daily prayer (Statute 28).

#### **4. Concern for the Quality of Celebration**

That the quality of liturgical was important for the first Cistercians can be seen from the following evidence.

- 1) The fact that liturgical matters are included in the agenda of the reform and the existence

of detailed regulation governing celebration, culminating in the voluminous rubrics of the *Ecclesiastica Officia*.

- 2) The series of liturgical sermons marking the progression of the liturgical year, using the texts of the liturgy for meditation and being influenced by the aural Bible of liturgical celebration. In the case of Gertrude of Helfta, there is also evidence that she studied and reflected upon liturgical texts, including those of rites not celebrated in the monastery (e.g. the Consecration of Bishops).
- 3) There are several texts designed to improve the quality of participation in psalmody: Bernard's SC 47.8, Arnulph of Bohéries, *Mirror of Monks* 2, Stephen of Sawley, *On the Recitation of the Divine Office*, Gueric of Igny *Sermon* 38.4 and the *Sermon On Arousing Devotion during Psalmody*. There is a chapter in the *Exordium Magnum* entitled "On the Danger of Negligence in Psalmody" (Dist. 5 C. 16)
- 4) The existence of a twelfth-century commentary on the hymnal: *Explanatio super hymnos quibus utitur ordo cisterciensis* (1175-1200). This was probably intended for novices or for those to whom the meaning of the hymns was not immediately evident.
- 5) There are several treatises on the Eucharist, including those by William of St Thierry, Isaac of Stella and Baldwin of Forde.
- 6) The liturgical character of the spirituality of Gertrude of Helfta is generally appreciated. It has been remarked that the Eucharist seems to figure more strongly in the spirituality of the *moniales* of the thirteenth century than in the monks of the twelfth. In part this may be due to the increase in Eucharistic devotion, but it may also be that the nuns, being more passive during Mass, had the opportunity of entering more fully into the mystery instead of concerning themselves with rubrics and practicalities. The same may also have been true of the *conversi*. The growing influence of scholastic theology (less potent for the laybrothers and the nuns) may also begun a process of alienating devotion from liturgy among the monks.

#### 4. Principles of the Second Reform

Because of the widespread dissatisfaction with the results of the chant "reforms" made under Stephen, an effort at improvement was begun after his death. Since most of the Office was sung by heart, the changes necessarily entailed a painful transition. The previous chants were considered bad enough to outweigh the inconvenience of change. The problem was heightened when large numbers of cultured and musically literate entrants began to outnumber the rustics. The following is from St Bernard's Prologue to the revised *Antiphonarium* or book of antiphons. (See CF 1, p. 161-162.)

Bernard, humble abbot of Clairvaux, to all who transcribe this antiphonary or sing from it.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Placing his own name first indicates that this is an official and

Among the various endeavours in which our fathers, the founders of the Cistercian Order, strove to excel was one to which they paid the most scrupulous and zealous attention: that in the divine praises they should use the chant which was found to be the most authentic. To this end they sent several men to transcribe and bring back the Antiphony of the Cathedral of Metz, for it was said to be “Gregorian”. But they found matters to be far different from what they had heard. For upon examining it, they were disappointed because in respect to both music and text it was discovered to be corrupt, very poorly structured, and despicable from almost every point of view. Nevertheless, because they had begun, they continued to use it, and they retained it until our time.

At last, however, since our brother abbots of the Order could no longer endure it, and since they decided it should be revised and corrected, they committed the task to my supervision. For my part, summoning some of those brothers who have been found to be better instructed and more skilled in the theory and practice of chant — together we have finally collected from many and diverse sources a new Antiphony, the attached volume. It is, we believe, irreproachable in both music and text. And any who sing it, if they be knowledgeable about chant, will testify to this.

The Prologue is followed by a treatise on chant, known by its first words as *Cantum quem Cisterciensis*. The first part was probably written by Guy, Abbot of Cherlieu, the second part either by Guy of Eu, a monk of Clairvaux and later of Longpont, or Richard of Vauclair. It is printed in PL 182, 1121-1132.

Although the chant which the churches of the Cistercian Order were accustomed to sing is degraded by harsh and numerous incongruities, nevertheless the authority of those who long made use of it in choir lent it the stamp of approval. Yet it seemed altogether unfit that the very persons who had set themselves to live according to rule should oppose the rule in singing praise to God. And so by their agreement you will find the chant corrected, in the sense that

- through the removal of the defiling impurity of errors, and
- by the rejection of the illicit liberties taken by unskilled hands,

the chant now stands buttressed by the pure truth of the rules. It is more accurate for purposes of both notating and singing than the chants of others, whereas once it was meaner than these.

It is indeed altogether proper that those who cling to the truth of the rule (*qui tenent regulae veritatem*) should put aside the exceptions allowed by others, and should hold to the correct principles of chanting. They should repudiate the liberties of those who, by paying more attention to a counterfeit than to the natural form of the chants, separate things which belong together, and join elements which are opposed. Thus throwing everything into confusion,

- they begin and end a chant,
- they make it go low or high,
- they shape and structure the melody

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not a personal letter.

just as they please, and not as is permitted.

The reform was solidly based, drawing on work done at Rheims, Beauvais, Amiens and Soissons. Four guiding principles are cited— all of them related to the ideal of simplicity — ease of performance, consistency with “nature”, and the capacity of chants to contribute to the prayerfulness of the liturgy:

- 1) *Modal Unity of Chant Melodies*: the melodies were modified so that the limitations proper to each mode especially regarding final notes were observed. The confusion of modes within a single piece led to unnatural mongrel chants (*degeneres et non legitimi*) which rendered their performance more difficult. The reformers systematically brought all antiphons back to conformity with the theoretical norms.

### **The Spirit of the Second Reform**

We believe that their aesthetic sense differed from that of preceding centuries. They were, moreover, reformers in every domain. In everything (monastic life, observance of RB, liturgy, etc) they desired honesty, sincerity and logic, they energetically avoided everywhere whatever seemed to them as superfluous, too refined or uncertain. They consciously renounced the over-complicated nuances of a tradition whose authenticity they seriously doubted.

S. Marosszéki, p. 61.

- 2) *Restriction of Range of Melodies*: to produce more subtlety in the melody. The range of chants was restricted to 10 notes (the decachord — on the authority of the Psalter) for practical reasons both for singing and for writing, so that extra lines were not needed. The chief targets were the responsories and graduals that “ascended as high as the heavens and descended as low as the abyss” by mingling authentic and plagal expressions of the mode. Such compenetration was regarded as an offence to nature. The effect was achieved by bringing the errant notes back into the fold of the decachord, by transposition, or by simply altering the melody.
- 3) *Exclusion of B Flat from Chant Notations*: so that modal unity and tonal structure were maintained. This was usually achieved by transposition. There are very few exceptions to this rule in twelfth-century Cistercian manuscripts, although in the thirteenth century some reversion to former practice is evident.
- 4) *Elimination of Textual and Musical Repetitions*: This simplification was thought to be an antidote to the corruption brought over time to the purity of Gregorian Chant. “All those chants are to be excluded that are sung not correctly but contrary to rule and order (*irregulariter et inordinate*). This involved the suppression of textual repetitions

with their melodies, the shortening of long vocalisations and other simplifications.

The reformers saw themselves as continuing the work of the Founders by their zeal for fidelity to the rules of music. “Since ‘music is the science of singing correctly’, all of those chants are excluded from being “music” which are not sung correctly, but are against the rules and principles of composition.” The resulting chant was considered worthy of respect (*honestus*) and beautiful, without ceasing to be sober and modest. In addition, it gave expression to the firm Cistercians belief that the melody must be at the service of the text. On this Bernard wrote concerning the office he composed for St Victor.

The sense of the words should be unmistakable, and they should shine with truth, tell of righteousness, incite to humility and inculcate justice; they should bring truth to the minds of the hearers, devotion to their affections, the Cross to their vices and discipline to their senses. If there is to be singing, the melody should be grave and not flippant or uncouth. It should be sweet but not frivolous; it should both enchant the ears and move the heart; it should lighten sad hearts and soften angry passions; it should never obscure but enhance the sense of the words. Not a little spiritual profit is lost when minds are distracted from the sense of the words by the frivolity of the melody, when more is conveyed by the modulations of the voice than by variations of meaning. (Ep 398)

The primacy of text comes from respect for the inspired word. The music must be a means of allowing the words of the Psalms to impact more strongly on the heart of the singer. Monks and nuns, for their part, need to ensure that they pay attention to the text and not let their thoughts wander.

I say that psalmody should be performed with a pure heart to indicate that during psalmody you should not be thinking of anything except the Psalm itself. Nor do I mean that only vain and useless thoughts are to be avoided. At that time and in that place are to be avoided those necessary thoughts about necessary community matters which frequently importune the minds of those brothers who have official positions. Furthermore, my advice is that even those thoughts are to be left aside which come from attending on the Holy Spirit before psalmody begins; for example, as you sit in the cloister or read books or as you listen to my conference, which you do now. These are wholesome thoughts, but it is not at all wholesome to reflect upon them during psalmody. At such a time the Holy Spirit is not pleased to receive what you offer if it is not what you owe, since you are neglecting to render your due. (SC 4.8)

Only if the text shines through the melody can those present attain that state of radical receptivity in which the fruits of the liturgy are most amply garnered. If the music or the performance draw the attention, then the inspired text is hidden and something of vital importance is lost.

## **5. The Technique of Singing**

Following is a translation of a little text that claims to convey Bernard’s views on psalmody: the *Institutio . . . Quomodo Cantare vel Psallere Debeamus*

Our venerable father, blessed Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux, taught monks to keep this manner of singing, affirming that this was pleasing to God and the angels. This is what he said.

Let us not draw out the psalmody too much but let us sing with a rounded tone and a lively voice. In unison let us intone the first and second half of the verse, and in unison let us finish them. Let no one hold onto the final note, but quickly let go of it. After the *metrum* (the break at mid-point) let us make a good pause. No one is to begin before the others or to hold onto the final note. In unison let us sing, in unison pause always listening [to the others].

Whoever begins an antiphon or psalm, hymn, responsory or alleluia, let him say only one or two parts protractedly (*tractim*) while the others keep silence; where he leaves off let them begin, not repeating what he has already said. The same holds when the cantor begins the repetition of an antiphon, alleluia or responsory. This should be kept everywhere: no one is to repeat what has been said by another.

When we sing hymns, alleluia or responsory we should pause a little at the conclusion, especially on festival days.

There are several aspects of singing that are touched upon in this text:

- 1) **Pace:** The speed of the chant varied according to circumstance as judged by the sacristan (the community timekeeper (EO 115.10), for instance the chant was accelerated at times of extraordinary work (GC 1175.22), on solemnities when a sermon in chapter was to follow, to prevent the brothers sleeping. On the other hand, the priest slows and draws out the intonation of the “O God, come to my assistance” at Vigils (EO 68.16). Perhaps the lesson to be learned here is that the liturgy should be adapted to sit comfortably with the real demands of daily life.
- 2) **Fully Rounded Voice:** Bernard writes thus on this matter. “I admonish you dear friends, always to be present at the praise of God with purity and vigour. Vigorously because you should serve the Lord not only with reverence but also with enthusiasm (*alacriter*). Do not be lazy or somnolent. Do not yawn. Do not spare your voices, clip off half the words, or skip them altogether. Do not sing with weak little voices, stammering like women, or sounding through the nose, but sing like men, as is proper, by sound and feeling giving forth the words of the Holy Spirit. (SC 47.8)
- 3) **Unity:** Maintaining the unity of the choir requires that we listen to others and take the lead from the cantors.

We note also in this short exhortation the concern to avoid useless repetition and the acceptance of the principle that to mark major feasts some variation in manner of chant is possible.

## 6. The Mass

The first Cistercian century corresponded with greater emphasis on the Mass and on private Masses to give greater worship to God: *ad ampliacionem divini cultus*. This led inevitably to the ordination of greater numbers of hitherto lay monks. The change in mentality is witnessed by corresponding architectural modifications as more minor altars were provided to allow for private Masses, and monks usually attended more than one Mass daily. Initially, there was no community Mass during harvest time; later this was changed. Habitually, granges were not supplied with priests, and the laybrothers resident there had to go without Mass.

The Cistercian Rite was quite similar to that used on ferial days at Cluny. Mass Rubrics are in EO 53-54; Community actions are detailed in EO 56-58. Frequent reception of the Eucharist was not common. The brothers were permitted to communicate as specified in EO 66: Christmas and Pentecost unless the abbot has forbidden them; every Sunday if they can. If they cannot go on Sunday they may go during the week. Further feasts were added as the years passed. Communion was preceded by the kiss of peace and **mutual** confession. The brothers received in two species: the host was given at the right corner of the altar, then the procession continued behind the altar to the left corner, where communion was taken with a reed (unless only one or two brothers were to receive, then they drink direct from the chalice), afterwards an ablution of wine was offered by the sacristan.

## 7. Laybrothers and the Liturgy

The *Exordium Parvum* states explicitly that the management of far-flung domains by laybrothers was essential if the monks were to have the necessary income while maintaining their freedom to keep the precepts of the Rule day and night (EP 15.9-13). Whatever their former social status, the laybrothers were not pious laymen but professed religious, living under religious discipline. While the celebration of the Opus Dei devolved upon the monks, it was made possible on by the assistance of the *conversi* who were considered to be equal sharers also in the spiritual goods of the community (EC-SCC 20). Since the laybrothers were generally illiterate (Alan of Lille being a notable exception), they had a simple format for the Hours, but the principles of corporate prayer and sanctifying time were maintained. **“Let them make their prayers at Vigils and at the daily Hours just as the monks do”** (UC 1).<sup>2</sup>

The laybrothers rose later than the monks. In winter they normally rose at the end of the first nocturn, in summer (since the nights were shorter and they had no siesta) they rose only at Lauds. Vigils Lauds (and maybe Prime) were recited together in the church, the other Hours at the place of work. All who did not attend choir were forbidden to speak while the Opus Dei was being celebrated (GC 1186, Statute 15). Those who resided at the monastery and not in the granges, attended Compline in the church. In the church they conform to the postures of the choir (UC 4). The format of their prayer when said as a group (*ordo psallendi*) was as follows. The same introductory verse as the monks (*Deus in adiutorium, Domine labia mea aperies*) followed by a series of units composed of a silent *Pater Noster* and the *Gloria* said aloud bowing. For Vigils this unit was said 20 times (40 on greater feasts); at Lauds and Vespers 10 times, and at the other Hours five times. The Office was concluded with *Kyrie*

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<sup>2</sup> *Usus Conversorum* the Laybrothers' regulations, parallel to the monks' *Eccllesiastica Officia*.

*eleison*, the *Pater Noster* said aloud with *Per Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum* added and then *Benedicamus Domino*. When not recited as a group, the entire Office was said alone and in silence.

Whenever two Masses were celebrated, the laybrothers “heard” Mass, unless obedience called them elsewhere. They received communion several times a year (eleven later reduced to seven; monks communicated every Sunday, lay folk annually) (UC 5, EO 66.1). Those resident at the granges returned to the monastery on Sundays and holy days, if possible.

## 8. Our Lady in the Liturgy

Following the tradition brought from Molesme, “it was ordained that all our *coenobia* are founded in honour of the Queen of heaven and earth” (EC-SCC 9.2). The miniature of the *Virga Iesse* in Jerome’s commentary on Daniel from the scriptorium of Cîteaux in the early 1120s attests to the monks’ devotion. Apart from the Marian flavour of the Advent-Christmas period, four feasts of Our Lady were celebrated as Feasts of Sermon (Purification, Annunciation, Assumption and Nativity). Most of the major authors of the period have left literary versions of the sermons preached on these occasions. The statutes of General Chapters throughout the twelfth century make provision for Marian commemorations at Lauds and Vespers, the addition of Marian collects, the daily Mass *de Beata*, the votive Mass on Saturday and special postures of honour to be adopted by the choir. The *Salve Regina* was not used as a daily chant in the twelfth century. It was sung in processions at Cluny about 1135 and its use extended by Peter the Venerable in 1146 (Statute 76). Its employment in the Cistercian Order is regulated by General Chapter statutes in 1218 and 1251. Images of the Blessed Virgin were placed in Cistercian churches only much later.

*The distinctiveness of early Cistercian liturgy was an application of the principles operative in the reform as a whole. It was not so great that it overshadowed the Founders’ global acceptance of the rubrical, theological and devotional presuppositions about liturgy current in the Latin Church. The style of liturgy was an issue for them, but more important and often unsung was the role played by liturgy in bringing about the goal for which men became monks: communion with God and with one another. Liturgy was at the service of spiritual life.*

## Exordium

### Unit 9: Liturgy

#### Appendix 1: Statutes of the General Chapters about Liturgical Style

Here are some statutes that signal liturgical abuses; as time passed, these became more frequent and more serious.

- 1152:16 Abbots are forbidden to wear silk copes except at their own blessing, (on that occasion he was vested in alb and cope — 1180.3)
- 1157:15 Crosses must not be gold or too large to carry easily in procession — nor gold or silver crosses of noteworthy size,
- 1157:17 Even when a bishop celebrates, ministers do not wear copes and dalmatics,
- 1157:21 Bells are restricted to 500 lbs; they should be rung singly and not two at a time,
- 1159:3 Coloured windows that have already been banned (1134.80) must be removed within three years.
- 1182:11 Coloured windows are to be removed within two years. If not, the abbot, prior and cellarer must fast on bread and water every Friday until it is done.
- 1185:4 An extra cross with the relics but without candles may be put on the altar during Mass on the principal feasts.
- 1192.31 The abbot of Clairvaux is punished for failing as Visitor to prevent the erection of a sumptuous and superfluous church at Vaucelles. Undertaking such a project “was done badly and against the simplicity of the Order”.
- 1195.33 Silk copes prohibited. The *cappa oloserica* mentioned is a cope made entirely of silk.
- 1196.17 The carpets and candles in the presbytery at Froidmont, considered redolent of vanity, are condemned.
- 1199.5 Altar cloths with fancy borders are condemned.

**Exordium**

**Unit 9:  
Liturgy**

**Transparency 1**

with input from early Cluny

Marmoutier

**B**

Montier-la-Celle

**B**

Molesme

**B**

from  
Milan

**CÎTEAUX**

from  
Metz

**FIRST REFORM**

1108-1112

**B**

SECOND REFORM

## Exordium

### Unit 9: Liturgy

#### Questions for Reflection and Dialogue

**1.** Following are 12 suggested principles of Cistercian liturgy. What do they mean in practice? Reread some of the ancient texts. Were they important to the first Cistercians? How may they be better implemented in your community?

- |                                   |                                   |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1) Simple, not complicated        | 8) Promoting participation        |
| 2) Authoritative, not lightweight | 9) Not too difficult, accessible  |
| 3) Giving primacy to the text     | 10) Expressive of good theology   |
| 4) Marked by beauty and dignity   | 11) Stable or somewhat uniform    |
| 5) Carefully performed            | 12) Able to form real Cistercians |
| 6) Peaceful and prayerful         | 13) Joyful, lyrical, exuberant    |

**2.** Reflect and comment on this quotation:

“The task, then, is . . . to provide such a liturgy as is good for the whole person in the best tradition and patiently school the individual in it. . . The duty we have to tradition and to handing on a patrimony ought to see us valiant in the endeavour to retain all that is good, loyal to the trust, and passing on to those after us not merely what they like but, in the best sense, what is good for them, good for them as human persons. Matthew Kelty OCSO, *Sermons in a Monastery*, p. 74.

**3.** Using Fr Chrysogonus’ work on the evolution of the Cistercian hymnal as a case study, we notice that the too rigid application of good principles under Stephen led to an imperfect conclusion — which others had later to correct. What moral do you find in this story?

**4.** How seriously do you/your community/the Order apply St Benedict’s principle that nothing is to be given priority over the *Opus Dei*?

**5.** Is liturgy a celebration for you? Or is it a burden, a duty, a source of tension, an area of conflict, something that consumes energy rather than restores it?

## Exordium

### Unit 9: Liturgy

#### Examination of Conscience

Liturgy is often a cause of conflict or controversy in community. Perhaps before assessing the quality of what the community does, it is worthwhile examining our personal contribution to the community's worship.

- Since most of the liturgical changes of the twentieth century have been intended to promote *active participation*, maybe we can each ask ourselves: **How much effort do I spend on taking part in the liturgy?**
- 1) Preparation:
    1. Physical (Calm and not flurried): **Much / Little ?**
    2. Organisational (At ease with books/music): **Much / Little ?**
    3. Mental (Focussed, familiar with readings): **Much / Little ?**
    4. Spiritual (Recollected, ready for prayer): **Much / Little ?**
  - 2) Being present: **Much / Little ?**
  - 3) Full-voiced singing: **Much / Little ?**
  - 4) Attention to the quality of the chant: **Much / Little ?**
  - 5) Attention to posture and the various actions I perform: **Much / Little ?**
  - 6) Active and attentive listening to readings, homilies: **Much / Little ?**
  - 7) Willingness to share in the various ministries (Presiding, serving, reading, singing, playing an instrument. . .): **Much / Little ?**
  - 8) Care in the exercise of ministries (Preparation, attention): **Much / Little ?**
  - 9) Familiarity with the rubrics that concern me: **Much / Little ?**
  - 10) Being conscious of my contribution to the prayerful spirit and recollection of the whole assembled community: **Much / Little ?**

## Exordium

### Unit 9: Liturgy Further Reading

#### Primary Sources

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2. BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX, *Office of St Victor*, SBOp 3, 501-508. Translated in *Treatises 1* (CFS 1; Cistercian Publications, Spencer, 1970), pp. 165-179.
3. BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX, Ep 398; SBOp 377-379. Translated in *Treatises 1* (CFS 1; Cistercian Publications, Spencer, 1970), pp. 180-182.
4. *Explanatio super hymnos quibus utitur Ordo Cisterciensis*, edited by John Michael Beers (Henry Bradshaw Society, Vol. CII, 1982).
5. GUY OF CHERLIEU, *Cantum quem Cisterciensis ordinis*, PL 182, col. 1121-1132.
6. ISAAC OF STELLA "On the Canon of the Mass," *Liturgy OCSO* 11.3 (October 1977), pp. 21-75.

#### Secondary Sources

5. Etienne Soeur, "Psallite Sapienter, Psalm 46:8," *Liturgy OCSO* 11.1 (January 1977), pp. 67-81.
7. LACKNER Bede K., "The Liturgy of Early Cîteaux," in *Studies in Medieval Cistercian History presented to Jeremiah F. O'Sullivan* (CSS 13; Cistercian Publications, Spencer, 1971) pp. 1-34.
6. WADDELL Chrysogonus, "Peter Abelard's *Letter 10* and Cistercian Liturgical Reform," in John R. Sommerfeldt [ed.], *Studies in Medieval Cistercian History II* (CSS 24; Cistercian Publications, Kalamazoo, 1976) pp. 75-86.
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9. WADDELL Chrysogonus, “The Place and Meaning of the Work of God in Twelfth-Century Cistercian Life,” *CSQ* 23 (1988), pp. 25-44.

## **A: CHANT**

10. BOCART Abbé L., “Sur une phase de la musique religieuse au temps de saint Bernard,” in *Saint Bernard et son temps, II*, (L’Académie des sciences, arts et belles-lettres de Dijon, 1929), pp. 41-53.
8. GRIESSER Bruno, “The Breviar of Saint Stephen: Readings and Pericopes, Part I,” *Liturgy OCSO* 8.2 (July 1974), pp. 37-43.
11. HERBERT Rembert, “Gregorian Chant in Context,” *Monastic Studies* 19 (1991), pp. 119-141
9. MAROSSZÉKI Solutor, “Les origines du chant cistercien,” *ASOC* 8 (1952), pp. vii -137.
12. STAPERT Calvin, “Gregorian Chant and the Power of Emptiness,” in George C. Berthold [ed.] *Faith seeking Understanding: Learning and the Catholic Tradition* (Saint Anselm College Press, Manchester, 1991), pp. 107-115.
13. TOMATIS Alfred, “Chant” [text of an interview by Timothy Watson], (Soundscape Productions, Toronto, 1978.)
14. VERSOLI Cristiano, “La revisione musicale bernardina e il Graduale Cisterciense,” *ASOC* 47 (1991) pp. 3-142; 48 (1992), pp. 3-104; 49 (1993), pp. 147-256.
15. WADDELL Chrysogonus, “A Plea for the *Institutio Sancti Bernardi quomodo cantare et psallere debeamus*,” in M. Basil Pennington [ed.], *Saint Bernard of Clairvaux: Studies Commemorating the Eighth Centenary of his Canonization* (CSS 28; Cistercian Publications, Kalamazoo, 1977), pp. 180-208.
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17. WADDELL Chysogonus, “The Clairvaux Saint Bernard Office: Ikon of a Saint,” in John R. Sommerfeldt [ed.], *Bernardus Magister: Papers Presented at the Nonacentenary Celebration of the Birth of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, Kalamazoo, Michigan*, (CSS 135; Cistercian Publications, Kalamazoo, 1992), pp. 381-427.
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