

Introduction to the Divine Office

Even as The Church begins her new year liturgically on the first of September, she begins her new day with the setting of the sun.

The day is divided liturgically (the Divine Office) by prayers appropriate to various times. The first service of the day, that (theoretically at least) of the setting of the sun, is Vespers or *Hesperinos*. Compline or *Apodeipnon* follows supper and Nocterne or *Mesoniktikon* occurs in the middle of the night. Matins and Lauds or *Orthros*, the prayer of the morning, generally precedes the Divine Liturgy. The Hours, Prime, Terce, Sext and None (First, Third, Sixth and Ninth) generally occur at 6 am, 9 am, Noon and 3 pm. In most parishes, only Vespers and *Orthros* would be served.

“Let my prayer rise like incense before you:
the lifting up of my hands like an evening sacrifice.”