

THE OFFICE—THE PRAYER OF CHRIST

EVERY Priest has heard of—and tried—many devices that might help him to say the Office well; to have an intention for each hour, or even each psalm, to associate each hour with some mystery of Our Lord's life and death; to visualize the Saint of the day, or the Angels of Our Lady or even Our Lord Himself as saying the Office with him. Such plans may be used in so far as they prove to be helpful; for many, however, they soon fail to help, and ultimately may even become a hindrance. First of all one must allow oneself sufficient time to say the Office properly. While many priests find that a brisk recitation is necessary to avoid distractions, precipitancy is always an enemy of devotion. The place, too, is a difficult matter. The ideal of course would be to recite it before the Blessed Sacrament, but this is not always practical, and so the sound rule is to say the Office in the way one finds best. There are some who can be quite recollected in the middle of a crowd; others must have peace and quiet. Some men find that an effort to preserve external 'recollection' is a distraction from internal recollection while others know that their only hope is to preserve a proper exterior attitude. This problem, like those of duration and of fixing a set time each day for the Office, is difficult, but they all must be faced and settled with decision. We grant the innumerable difficulties, but where there is a will there is a way. We shall discuss the finding of the will further down, and, that found, we are confident that the way will find itself. It is of course impossible, even if there were time enough, to follow in detail all the thoughts of all the psalms. One could, however, decide to say one hour, or one nocturn each day, a little more slowly than the rest; the particular part being varied from week to week. Alternatively, one could pause at a particular verse in each psalm—an 'old friend' with an old

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