

## **Monday week 20 in ordinary time (Mt. 19:16-22)**

“Come follow me” (Mt. 19:21). These are very familiar words from the Gospel and much has been written about the saints who were able to respond to Jesus’ invitation; who sold or gave away all that they had and lived a life totally dedicated to Christ. For the majority of us, this is not a viable option, so how can we follow Jesus within the context of our daily lives? The answer is prayer.

Prayer is both very simple and very hard. It's as simple as turning our minds to God, and recognising His presence, as Jesus said that He would not leave us orphans (Jn. 14:18), however in order to really follow Jesus and to begin to share an intimate relationship with Him, a regular “timetable” of prayer is helpful and it could be said, necessary.

The Church in her wisdom has given us such a timetable. It's the “Liturgy of the Hours”, or “Divine Office” which is prayed to a greater or lesser extent by all religious and priests. There are seven “hours” or prayer, which means, prayer at seven times, over a twenty-four-hour period, but for most of us, morning prayer (Lauds) or evening prayer (vespers) are the easiest starting point.

These are a series of psalms and canticles which include in the morning, the *Benedictus* and in the evening, the *Magnificat*, as well as some intercessions and the Our Father. Prayed slowly and meditatively, the rhythm of these most ancient of prayers can help us to converse with the Father and recognise His invitation to us to follow His Son by the grace of His Holy Spirit. Sometimes the Psalms are joyful when we are not, and sometimes they are sad or angry when we are joyful, but at these times, we offer up these feelings for the Body of Christ which is suffering or rejoicing, even if we are not.

The most wonderful thing about the Liturgy of the Hours is that it's the prayer of the Church, the Body of Christ, which is praying constantly. When we join in, it's as if we are taking part in a worldwide “Mexican wave” of prayer. Sometimes it's our turn to pray on behalf of our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world, sometimes it's their turn to pray on our behalf.

To find the Liturgy of the Hours as well as Mass for each day, go to [www.universalis.com](http://www.universalis.com) Access is free, but you can buy the app and download it to all your devices, and this means that you would also have the texts for Mass as well.

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