

THE MEDIEVAL MONASTIC PSALTER OF
ORTHODOX ENGLAND,
NOTED IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

of the Old Catholic Sarum Rite Monastic Office of the
Portiforium of Saint Oswald of York and the Antiphonale Wigorniensis
in accordance with the Holy Rule of Saint Benedict of Nursia

for use in Orthodox Monasteries of the Western Rite

VOLUME I

The Psalter Outside of Paschaltide

(Quotations from the Psalms have been made from
The Psalter According to the Seventy,
translated by the Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Boston, Massachusetts,
used by permission.)

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PREFACE

Many attempts have been made in the early and latter parts of this century to produce a version of the Hours of the Monastic Office in the English language that could be easily used for prayer by those with little or no training in ancient languages or musical theory. The need to put forward another attempt comes from certain lackings in previous versions that made the Editors feel that no previous version incorporated all the needs present before them.

First, by way of correction, was the need to present the ancient Western usage of Monks and Nuns that followed the Rule of St. Benedict of Nursia in a manner that was completely Orthodox, i.e. completely in accordance with the doctrine, canons, and practices of the Orthodox Church. This, of course, requires that the Hours be done in the completely ancient manner that was practiced in the first millennial Orthodox Churches of the West, which by the year 950 A.D. had spread through the greater part of the civilized world, from the Baffin Islands in what is now Canada, to the island of Valaam in Lake Ladoga in present day Russia, to the Western Rite Monastery of Amalphon (called Morphonu by the Greeks) on Mount Athos. This usage was the singularly predominant prayer of the Monks and Nuns of present day Italy, France, Ireland, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and England. It has been considered most appropriate to look to the latter country, whose Monks and Nuns were the source of conversion for the aforementioned countries in the north of Europe, and which had received the Monastic Office itself from St. Augustine of Canterbury, the Italian monk that had been the Prior of St. Andrew's Monastery on the Cœlian Hill in Rome where our Father among the Saints, St. Gregory Dialogus, Pope of Old Rome, had been the Abbot. St. Bede the Venerable writes that St. Gregory, after learning that St. Augustine had successfully begun the mission among the Angles and relating his joy for this success in a letter to St. Eulogius, Patriarch of Alexandria, sent "all things needed in general for Divine Worship and the services of the Church, sacred vessels, altar cloths, furniture for Churches, vestments for the Clergy, relics, and also many books." It is the latter books that served as the foundation for the life of prayer in the Latin usage of the Monks and Nuns of medieval England that these volumes of the Monastic Office in the English language are meant to continue.

Secondly, it was needed to produce these Office books using that ancient and essential tool of assistance for prayer service in the Western Rite that has come to be known as Gregorian Chant. This was no small matter of difficulty, since much that had existed in manuscript form from the various monasteries of England had been destroyed during the Protestant Revolt. Three main manuscripts were available, however, being the Portiforium of St. Oswald of York, (also known as the Portiforium Wulstani), the Antiphonale Wigorniese of Worcester Cathedral Priory where St. Oswald (died A.D. 992) was Bishop, and the Breviary of Abingdon Abbey in Winchester (later called Hyde Abbey) where St. Ethelwold (died A.D. 984) was Bishop. These two Saints, acting jointly with St. Dunstan of Canterbury (died A.D. 988), were the three great monastic reformers of the 10th Century Orthodox Church in England. They have left for us a wonderful treasure of prayer for the entire Church year. Second only to the Rule of St. Benedict which provides the main structure and cycle of Psalms for the Psalter, the aforementioned Antiphonale Wigorniese provided the main details in completing this Psalter, including the psalm tones and chants for the many Antiphons and Responsories. For this, the Editors are most grateful to the Very Reverend Father John Shaw, onetime Dean of Holy Protection Russian Orthodox Cathedral in Chicago for the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia. Father John first pointed us in the direction of these manuscripts, and then spent many hours translating the chant notation and clarifying an understanding of the manuscript which our ineptitude prevented. The Portiforium of St. Oswald, which appears also to have been derived from Winchester, provided the many Chapters

and Collects that have been used, and the Abingdon Breviary provided those items missing from the first two manuscripts. Together, they provide us with a clear picture showing how the Monks and Nuns of the Orthodox West conducted what St. Benedict calls "the Work of God."

Thirdly, the Editors needed a version of the Psalms from a recognizable Orthodox source. This, of course, had to be the Septuagint, or the Old Testament in Greek according to the Seventy. Translated from Hebrew into Greek some 200 years before the Birth of Our Lord and Saviour, these are the Psalms quoted in the New Testament Greek, and which survived the rewriting and repointing of the Hebrew Psalms begun at the Rabbinical Council of Jamnia after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Even here there were variant manuscripts available. We are most grateful to Father Justin of Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Boston, Mass. for extending to us the kind permission of Bishop Ephraim for using their translation (1987) of the Psalter. This translation served well our purposes in preserving ancient Orthodox worship, and in the rare places (Psalms 13 and 94) where the ancient Western usage derived from the Latin Vulgate translation of St. Jerome of Sidonium had made use of Septuagint manuscripts with additional phrases, these phrases, taken from the translation of the Septuagint by Sir Lancelot Brenton (1851), have been included in our Psalter within parentheses. We are confident that this usage has preserved the ancient meaning of the Psalms which were so dear to the early Christians, and which spoke so directly of the prophecies that were fulfilled in the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

In editing this material, we have taken some liberties regarding matters of capitalization, hyphenation, and versification (which follows that of the Vulgate), so as to best allow the unpracticed eye to chant these texts prayerfully and with a minimum of error. Also, the chant melodies for the many Hymns have been kept to a simple number preserved in these manuscripts, and variant melodies are provided only when the manuscript so directs. In actual medieval usage, many more melodies were probably utilized at the discretion of the Precentors, depending mainly on the training of the Monks or Nuns. In keeping the number of these lower, it is hoped that our enfeebled minds may not be overly more occupied by the mechanics of chanting our praises than by the content of offering in our prayer.

Also, we would like to thank our brethren of our Synod at St. Hilarion's Monastery and St. Hilarion's Guild Press in Austin for providing so fine a computer typing of the text of the Psalms which we were able to edit. This entire volume is printed using Multi-Lingual Scholar, a word processing DOS program put out by Gamma Productions in Santa Monica, California, combined with our own rendition of Gregorian Chant fonts. This software has made possible that which Monks and Nuns of the ancient Scriptorium could only have dreamed about.

This series is divided into many Volumes, for which Volume I is the Psalter Outside of Paschaltide, Volume II is the Psalter in Paschaltide (from Low Sunday through the Octave of Pentecost), and Volume III begins the Proper Offices for Advent. The Offices of the week of Pascha, while having a Monastic usage, are not technically part of the Monastic Psalter, as the Cathedral Use like that of Old Sarum, not the Rule of St. Benedict, has provided the structure for these offices ever since the Monastic Council of Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle) in 817 A.D., and thus will be provided for in a separate Volume of the Proper.

Finally, we apologize that our effort could not prove to be more grand, since, in order to complete these Volumes in a suitable time frame, we have neglected style and the multitudinous ornamentations that our holy predecessors provided in their manuscripts. May Heaven forgive us! And may all who use these volumes pray for the souls of the unworthy workers who have put them together. O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon us, the sinners.

Abbey of the Holy Name

January 14 / 27, 1993

St. Sava of Serbia

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