

# INTRODUCTION TO THE DAILY OFFICES

## Liturgical Roles

In the daily offices, there are these roles:

The **Liturgist** (pastor, *Vorbeter*): He is active in the Opening Sentences, in the Explanation of the Scripture Reading, in the Prayer section (Kyrie, Our Father, Responsive Prayer, Salutation, Collects), in the Benedicamus, and in the Blessing. In addition, at Compline he takes over the Blessing at the beginning of the office, the Confiteor, and the Confiteor's closing versicle. If there is no lector, the liturgist then takes over the Reading as well.

The **Congregation**: It sings the hymn (perhaps responsively: Congregation I -- Congregation II, or choir -- congregation) and the other congregational chants, and possibly also the antiphons. It responds in the responsorial chants: Opening Sentences, Responsory, Kyrie, Our Father (Doxology), Responsive Prayer (Preces), Salutation, and Benedicamus, and concludes the Collects and Blessings with "Amen." In the Psalmody and Canticle, a trained congregation will be able to take over the role of Choir II.

The **Choir**: It sings (divided into two choirs, or responsively with the congregation) Psalms, stanzas of the Hymn, and the Canticle, as well as the Antiphons, perhaps also the Responsory. If there is no choir, the congregation's chants can take the place of the choir parts.

The **Cantor** (Lead Singer): He sings the intonation in the Psalmody, Responsory, Hymn, and Canticle, as well as in the congregation's chants, if these are executed without organ accompaniment. He leads the singing of Choir I; Choir II has its own cantor.

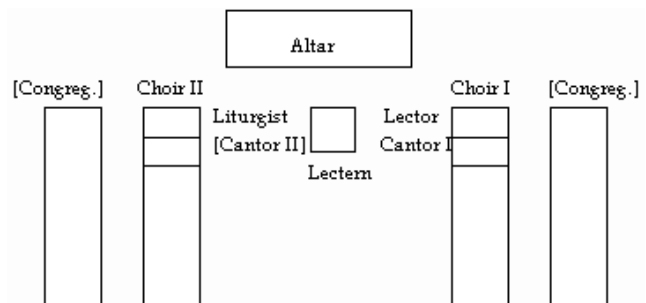
The **Lector** (Reader): He takes over the Reading and may read an Explanation or Meditation. If there is no cantor, the lector or the liturgist can take over his tasks.

## Liturgical Space

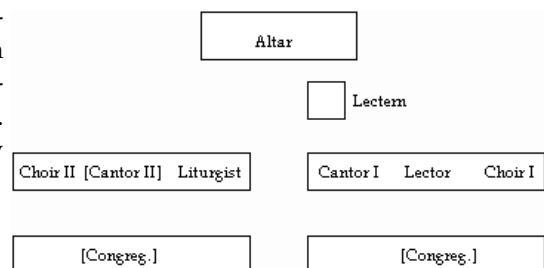
Considering the predominantly antiphonal manner of responsive singing in the Daily Offices (Choir I over against Choir II), it is desirable that an *over-against* come to expression in the spatial arrangement. The Prayer Offices are, in the rule, executed without the use of the altar.

Those participating in the Daily Offices can be arranged in the liturgical space as follows:

A. Where the choir area (the area between the altar and the nave) allows it, the congregation gathers in two halves which sit across from each other, facing each other.

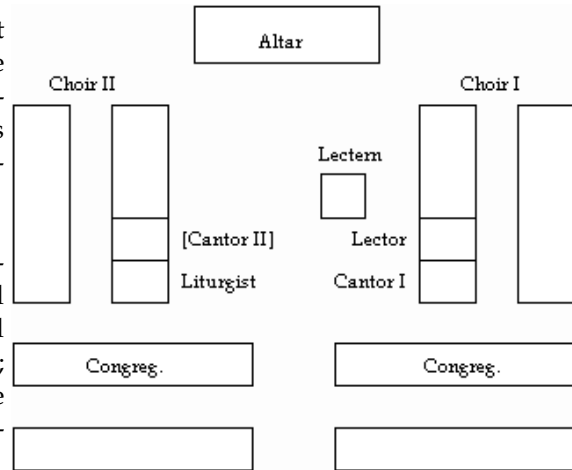


B. Where there is no sufficient choir area, the congregation sits in the nave (in the pews), the choir perhaps in the first rows. For antiphonal singing, choir and congregation are each divided into two groups by the center aisle. The liturgist and the cantor are located in the front row (liturgist -- left, cantor -- right).



C. Liturgist, lector, cantor, and choir (possibly also part of the congregation) sit in the choir area as in A.; the congregation sits in the nave. This arrangement is practical for churches with small choir areas, or in situations where one must take a large congregation into consideration, for example, on Christmas Eve.

The place of the lector can be determined by the placement of the lectern. The preceding should be applied appropriately for spaces without an altar. Liturgist and cantor perform their functions, in the rule, at their seats; for the Readings, the lector moves to the lectern or to the steps of the choir area or altar and turns to the congregation.



**Liturgical Posture**

All persons with a special function (liturgist, cantor, lector) stand during the parts executed by them. Otherwise they take the posture of the choir to which they belong, or the congregation with which they alternate. The lector moves to the lectern, if one is present, for his function; all others remain in their places.

If the Office is lead by a pastor, at the end (Benedicamus and Blessing), he can move to the altar or in front of the congregation. At major (festival) Offices, the pastor can move to the altar for the Prayers and perhaps the Opening Sentences.

For the Opening Sentences, Responsory, Office Hymn, Canticle, Benedicamus, and Blessing, and also for those portions of the Prayers where one does not kneel, all stand. For the Psalmody, Reading, Explanation, and other Hymns, all sit. According to circumstances, one kneels either during all of the Prayers (from the Kyrie to the Collects), or during the Responsive Prayers and the adjoining Collects, or only for the Silent Prayers and Collects. At Compline, one may kneel also for the Confiteor.