



**St. Mina Coptic Orthodox Church**  
**Pre-Service Training Seminars**



**Lecture 13:**

*THE AGPEYA*

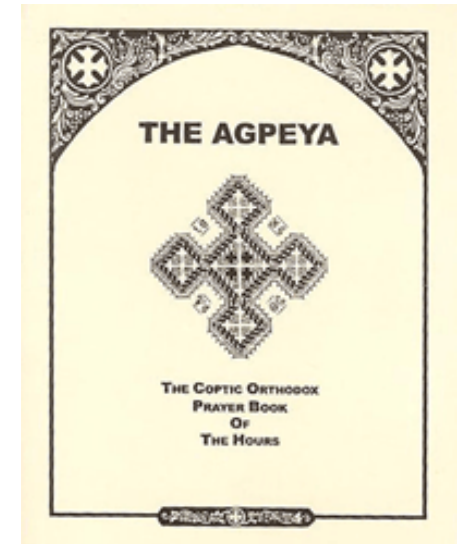
**“For God is not the author of  
confusion, but of peace”  
(1 Corinthians 14:33)**



## The Agpeya



- ❖ The word, *Agpeya*, is a Coptic word meaning “Book of Hours.” It is based on the Coptic root word, *ti agp*, which means “hour.”
- ❖ The *Agpeya* contains prayers for 7 different hours to be said throughout the day.
- ❖ ***“Seven times a day I praise You because of Your righteous judgments”*** (Psalm 119:164)
- ❖ The hours are chronologically laid out, each containing a theme corresponding to events in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ.





## Structure of each Hour



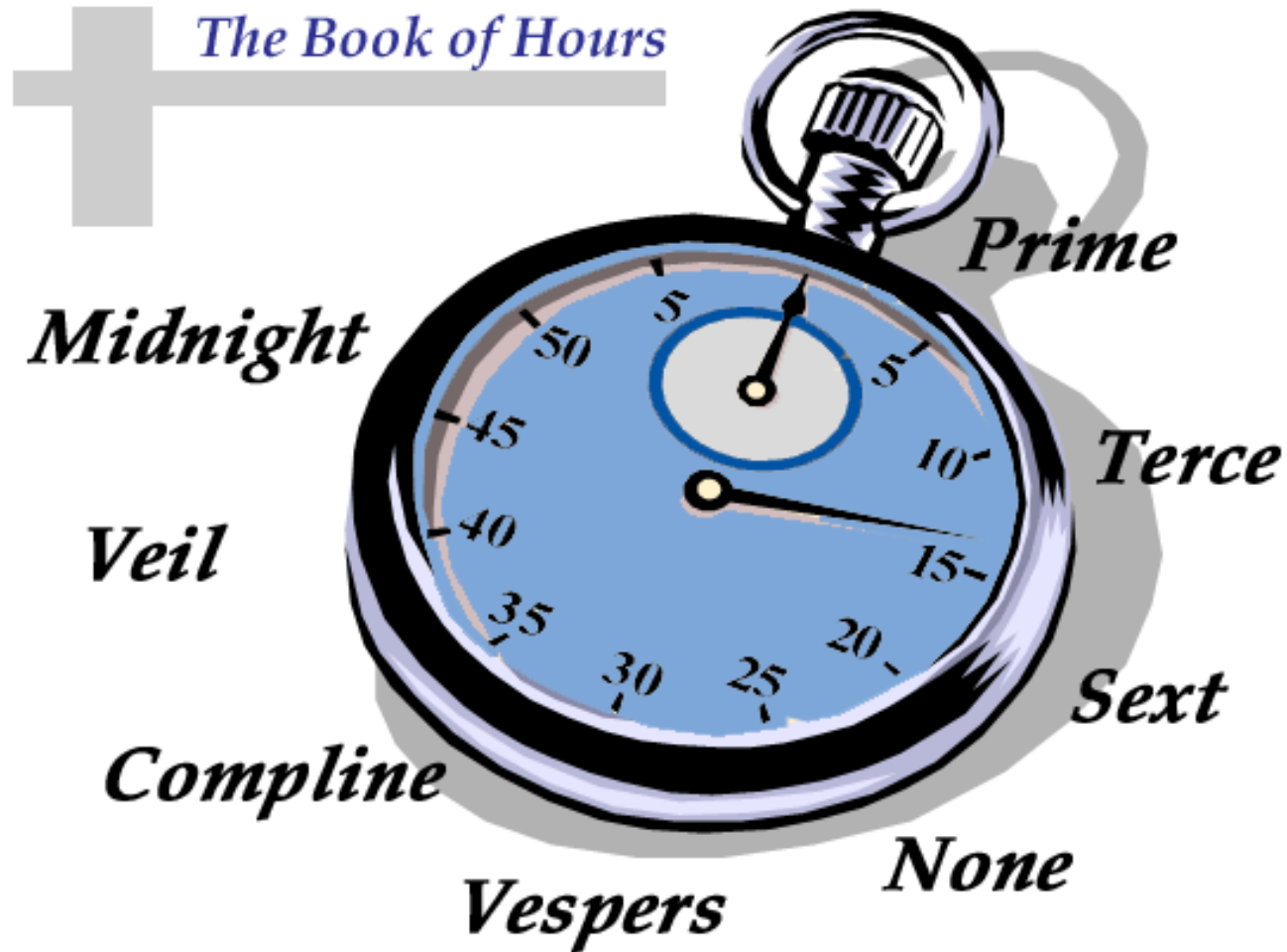
### ❖ Each hour consists of:

- Introduction:
  - The Lord's prayer,
  - the Prayer of Thanksgiving,
  - Psalm 50
- Psalms
- Holy Gospel
- Litanies
- Lord Have Mercy (41 times representing the 39 lashes Christ received before the crucifixion, plus one for the spear in His side, plus one for the crown of thorns)
- Orthodox Creed and other prayers
- Conclusion of the Hour and of Every Hour





# The Hours of the day





**6:00** 1<sup>st</sup> hour (Prime) Eternity, Incarnation, Resurrection.

**9:00** 3<sup>rd</sup> hour (Terce) Christ's trial by Pilate, Ascension, Holy Spirit

**12:00** 6<sup>th</sup> hour (Sext) Crucifixion



**15:00** 9<sup>th</sup> hour (None) Death on the cross, acceptance of right thief

**Sunset** 11<sup>th</sup> hour (Vespers) Taking down Christ's body from the cross.



**21:00** 12<sup>th</sup> hour (Compline) Burial of Christ

**24:00** Midnight Second coming



## Prime



- ❖ The prime is the very first prayer of the agpeya.
- ❖ This is prayed when we wake up in the morning.
- ❖ It reminds us of the Lord's incarnation, death and resurrection.
- ❖ In it we thank God for granting us a peaceful sleep and waking up to the new day.



## Terce



- ❖ This section reminds us of 3 events:
- ❖ Christ's trial with Pilate
- ❖ His ascension into the heavens.
- ❖ And the descent of the Holy Spirit on the disciples.



## Sext



- ❖ This prayer reminds us of Christ's crucifixion on the Cross.
- ❖ In it, we ask that Christ delivers us from every evil passion and that we remember His commandments.





## None



- ❖ The ninth hour commemorates Christ's death on the Cross and the repentance of the thief.
- ❖ In this section, we ask that God accepts our repentance as He did the thief.



## Vespers



- ❖ This sections commemorates taking Jesus' body down from the cross.
- ❖ Here we give thanks to God again and ask that we may be counted as those who labored in the Eleventh hour.





## Compline



- ❖ This section reminds us of Jesus' burial.
- ❖ Here we ask that God forgives us our sins and allows us a peaceful night's sleep.





## Midnight



- ❖ The midnight prayers are to remind us about the second coming of Jesus Christ. There are 3 sections for the 3 stages of Christ's prayer in the garden of Gethsemane.



## Veil



- ❖ The Veil is an extra prayer for the bishops and monks to allow them to examine their hearts.



## Praying the hours during the Liturgy



❖ The Psalms are read before offering the lamb as they are prophecies about the incarnation of the Lord Jesus for the salvation of the world.



❖ For this purpose, the priest must ensure that the basket containing the offertory bread and the decanter of wine is ready before praying the Psalms. Otherwise the Psalms shall be repeated again if the bread and wine were not present.





## Praying the hours during the Liturgy



- ❖ On Saturdays and Sundays and during non-fasting periods the church prays the Third and Sixth Hour prayers before beginning the mass.
- ❖ During periods of fasting, the church also reads the Ninth Hour.
- ❖ During Holy Lent and Jonah's fast the Eleventh & Twelfth Hour are also prayed. (In the monasteries, they also pray the Prayer of the Veil.)
- ❖ If any of the major or minor Lordly feasts or any of the Feasts of the Cross fall on a Wednesday, a Friday or during any of the fasts it is treated as though it is a Sunday, having the morning Liturgy and the reading of the Third and Sixth Hours only.



## The method of praying the hours

### Regular Days:



- ❖ If the priest is praying only the Third and Sixth Hour Psalms he starts by reading the Third Hour Psalms then follows with the Sixth Hour. He then reads the Gospel of the Third Hour and its parts, followed by “Holy God...”, The Lord’s Prayer, and, “Hail to you O Saint full of glory....”
- ❖ Then he prays the Gospel of the Sixth Hour and its parts, followed by, “We glorify you Mother of the true Light...”, The Creed, then “Keryalison” is said during the choosing of the Lamb.





## The method of praying the hours

### During Fast Periods:

- ❖ During fasting periods, when the Ninth Hour is also prayed, the church prays the Third Hour prayers completely separate, consisting of the Psalms, the Gospel, the Parts, “Keryalison” repeated forty-one times, “Holy Holy...”, The Lord’s Prayer and the Third Hour Absolution.
- ❖ The Sixth and Ninth Hour prayers are then prayed following the same structure as that of the Third and Sixth Hour prayers during a non-fasting period.





## The method of praying the hours

### During Feasts:



- ❖ On the feasts of the Nativity, Epiphany and Resurrection we offer the lamb without first praying the Psalms as the holy Liturgy is celebrated at night.
- ❖ The serving priest should read the following Psalms each hour;
  - In the Third Hour he should read, “May the Lord answer you...”, “I will exalt You...” and, “Oh clap your hands all you people...”.
  - In the Sixth Hour he should read, “Save me O God by Your name...”, “Lord You have been favorable to Your land...”, and, “The Lord reigns....”
  - In the Ninth Hour he should read, “Oh sing to the Lord a new song...”, “The Lord said to my Lord...”, and, “I believed, therefore I spoke...”.