

Praying Throughout The Day: A Book of Hours For Those With Addictions
Harriet Roberts (2007). Liguori Publications.

Available from Guest House Institute [<http://guesthouse.org/institute.php>]

This book is a delightful surprise! Different from most other recovery-oriented meditation or prayer books, this is a fourteen day “liturgy of the hours” that may be used in any number of ways. It is ideal for a yearly retreat, or to create a “space of recovery” around a person’s anniversary celebration, or any other time a recovery renewal is needed.

Taking its inspiration both from the monastic practice of the “liturgy of the hours” and from the recovery practice of “one day at a time,” the book’s contents are structured around Morning, MidDay, Evening, and Night Prayer. The basic scaffolding of Invitatory, Hymn, Antiphon, Psalm, repeated Antiphon, Reading, Response, and Concluding Prayer is used to flesh out a common theme of addiction and recovery that is the focus for that day. So..., four periods of prayer over the course of a day, each with a similar structure; organized around a common theme, central to recovery; and, each of the fourteen days is aligned with the Stations of the Cross and the piety surrounding Our Lord’s passion and death. For example, Day 1 is aligned with **Station 1: Jesus is Condemned to Die**, and its addiction theme is *Denial, Isolation & Betrayal*. All four periods of prayer that day focus on these issues.

This is contemporary piety and prayer at their best. The hymns are a well-chosen and ecumenical mix of traditional and modern. The readings from Scripture and from our ancestors in the faith (desert fathers & mothers, traditional and modern saints) are a fine selection for the themes they encourage. The prayers are both challenging and uplifting, composed for believers and in a modern idiom.

I found that using this book daily brought a kind of peace and anticipation to morning prayer. The familiar format of the liturgy of the hours is well adapted here to the needs of recovering persons and the structure makes it easily adaptable for those trained in the priesthood and religious life. I experienced a number of penetrating or transparent moments in which phrases or metaphors in the prayers or readings “struck home” with a message I needed to hear that day. Perhaps it was my receptivity. More likely, it was the prayerful way in which this collection was gathered and lovingly constructed to support the process of recovery.

Harriet Roberts has given all of us in recovery a great gift. Please send for this little prayer book and then prepare yourself to be invited to prayer. *O Lord, open my lips and my mouth will declare your praise!* This book is available through the Guest House Institute.