



STUDIES

IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS

HOLY WORDS: PRAYING THE LITURGY
OF THE HOURS WITH ST. PETER FABER

MATTHEW CORTESE, SJ

57/3 WINTER 2026

in the beginning...

Each of us has opened the pages of the Divine Office but I suggest that, after reading this latest issue of *STUDIES IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS*, we will likely not do so in quite the same way again. Here, in his article entitled “Holy Words: Praying the Liturgy of the Hours with St. Peter Faber,” Fr. Matthew Cortese (UEA), examines the engagement with the Divine Office of this first companion of St. Ignatius as described in Faber’s spiritual journal.

Here, Fr. Cortese highlights themes such as distraction, attention, preparation, posture, and location, all in the context of praying the office. Also, perhaps most importantly, he examines that interaction with the living Word of God that comes through this prayer. In so doing, the author offers insight into the experiences of Faber while revealing new approaches for us today. Indeed, with superb historical methodology and fine prose, Fr. Cortese illuminates the inner life of the saint and contends that these themes can form “a model of praying the liturgy of the hours today.” More explicitly, he invites us to seek the grace to “meet God . . . in the words of his Word” and thereby ever to grow in our union with the divine source of our being, to which end he has prepared a series of questions for our reflection.

Finally, we hope that our readership has received via email the link for the autumn 2025 edition of *STUDIES* in its new digital format. We are already beginning to work, with the Institute for Advanced Jesuit Studies at Boston College, on the 2025–2026 bound edition that we plan to send to each JCCU Jesuit community this summer, and we ourselves look forward to its publication.

In closing, as we approach the end of the liturgical year, please be assured of our prayers for the advent of our new-born king.

Michael L. Knox, SJ
General Editor

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
I. THE <i>BREVIARIUM ROMANUM</i> , CARDINAL QUIÑONEZ, AND THE FIRST COMPANIONS	5
II. DISTRACTION, ATTENTION, AND INTERIORIZATION	15
III. INTERIORIZATION AND THE HOLY WORDS.....	24
IV. CONCERNS: PRIVATIZATION, SCRUPULOSITY, AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WORDS	34
V. DIALOGUE WITH GOD: TUNING MIND TO VOICE	38

Oh God come to my aid,

who made us each in your image,

Oh God come to my aid,

Oh Lord make haste to help me.

Fill the spaces of my life with your Word,

Incline my body toward your praise,

Let my breath fill with your spirit,

Focus my mind on your musings,

Enlarge my heart with your love,

Oh Lord bless me,

Keep me from all Evil,

And bring me to everlasting life.

1. How do I relate to the Liturgy of the Hours?
2. I reflect upon my own prayer (the Office, the Mass, or personal prayer) in relation to Faber's "four things" (adapted from *Memoriale* 37):
 - Where do I pray?
 - To, for, and with whom do I pray?
 - How do I attend to given words and texts?
 - How would I describe my posture, my gestures, my body in space?
3. In what "holy words" have I encountered Christ?

Matthew Cortese (UEA) is a PhD candidate in liturgical studies at the University of Notre Dame writing on the development of the weekday lectionary in ordinary time. He holds degrees from the College of the Holy Cross, Yale Divinity School, Saint Louis University, Regis College, Toronto, and the University of Toronto.