



A Theological Study of the First, Third, Sixth, and Ninth Hour Prayers in the Eastern Orthodox Church Tradition

Andrew Lucas Tjong ⁽¹⁾ Yohanes Bambang Cahyo Wicaksono ⁽²⁾

Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Injili Indonesia Surabaya ⁽¹⁾

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Boston, United States of America ⁽²⁾

E-mail: altjong@gmail.com

Digital Object Identifier (DOI): <https://doi.org/10.33856/kerugma.v8i2.534>

Article history

Received	Revised	Accepted	Published
14 Desember 2024	23 September 2025	06 October 2025	11 September 2025

ABSTRACT

This article presents a theological study of the First, Third, Sixth, and Ninth Hours prayer in the tradition of the Eastern Orthodox Church. The research employs a literature-based method, drawing upon the Horologion as the liturgical text of the Orthodox Church and the writings of the Church Fathers. The study reveals that each prayer hour possesses its own distinctive theological meaning: the First Hour affirms Christ as the Light of Truth; the Third Hour centres on the work of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost; the Sixth Hour reflects upon Christ's suffering on the Cross while countering spiritual despondency; and the Ninth Hour recalls the death of Christ as the climax of divine love and sacrifice. Collectively, these prayer hours emphasize spiritual discipline, the sanctification of time, and the faithful's participation in the work of salvation. This study demonstrates that the canonical hours are not regarded merely as ritual observances, but as formative means of cultivating spirituality, union with Christ, and eschatological hope for eternal salvation.

Keywords: First Hour, Third Hour; Sixth Hour; Ninth Hour; Eastern Orthodox Church

Citation Style (APA): Tjong, A. L., & Wicaksono, Y. B. C. (2023). A Theological Study of the First, Third, Sixth, and Ninth Hour Prayers in the Eastern Orthodox Church Tradition. *Theological Journal Kerugma*, 8(2), 195–204. <https://doi.org/10.33856/kerugma.v8i2.534>

INTRODUCTION

The spirituality of the Early Church was deeply rooted in a life of prayer, which included the observance of fixed-hour prayers throughout the day (Basil the Great, 2013; Benedict of Nursia, 2016; Dix & Chadwick, 2013). The prayers consisting of Morning Prayer (Dawn and the First Hour), Third Hour, Sixth Hour, Ninth Hour, as well as Vespers, Compline, and Midnight Prayers have developed into an essential part of the daily worship of the Christian Church, particularly within the Eastern Orthodox Church, which continues to preserve these hours of prayer to this day. (Larin, 2023). The canonical hours are understood not merely as liturgical formalities, but as expressions of a deeply rooted spiritual discipline integral to the life of the Church (Ignat, 2019).

Nonetheless, in the Indonesian Christian context, theological exploration of the canonical hours of prayer within the Eastern Christian tradition, especially the Eastern Orthodox Church, remains scarce and underexplored. Scholarly discourse on Christian worship tends to be predominantly shaped by Western traditions, including Roman Catholicism and various Protestant denominations (Jagessar, 2022). Studies on Christian worship are often found

primarily in the form of comparative analyses between Eastern and Western Church traditions (Noegroho, 2024; Taft, 1986), historical investigations (Schmemmann, 2003) or contextual reconstructions aimed at adapting worship to contemporary settings (Martasudjita, 2022; Rusmanto et al., 2024). However, systematic theological reflections on the meaning of worship remain significantly limited (Bradshaw, 2008).

Theological studies on the canonical hours of prayer in the Eastern Orthodox tradition remain scarce in Indonesia. This study seeks to address this gap by exploring and articulating the theological meaning of these fixed-hour prayers, particularly the First, Third, Sixth, and Ninth Hours, as understood and practiced within the spirituality of Eastern Orthodoxy. A theological understanding of these canonical hours not only deepens the spiritual insight of Christian believers but also enriches interdenominational theological dialogue.

In light of this, the research question posed in this paper is: “What is the theological meaning of the First, Third, Sixth, and Ninth Hour prayers in the tradition of the Eastern Orthodox Church?” This study aims to explore and explain the theological foundations underlying the practice of these prayers and to highlight how they shape the spirituality of the faithful within the Orthodox tradition. Furthermore, it seeks to contribute to the broader theological discourse by offering insights that may benefit and inform various Christian denominations in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a literature-based approach (Creswell & Poth, 2016), with data drawn primarily from the *Horologion*, the official prayer book of the Eastern Orthodox Church (Larin, 2023), as well as from theological-dogmatic sources within the Eastern Orthodox tradition, particularly the writings of the Eastern Church Fathers (Meyendorff, 2024; Schmemmann, 2003).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The First, Third, Sixth, and Ninth Hour prayers, as integral components of the daily liturgical cycle of the Eastern Orthodox Church, each possess their own unique features and distinct characteristics. These differences are particularly evident in the hymns known as *Troparia*, and the specific concluding prayers appointed for each of the canonical hours (Larin, 2023).

First Hour

In the concluding prayer of the First Hour, the priest utters: “O Christ, Light of Truth, who enlightens and sanctifies every person who has come into the world: May the light of Your countenance shine upon us, that in it we may behold the Incomprehensible Light, and guide our steps in fulfilling all Your commandments” (Larin, 2023). Christ is proclaimed as the “Light of Truth,” a title that points to His resurrection from the dead, and He has “enlightened and sanctified every person.” This prayer expresses the hope that the light of Christ will illumine every believer, guiding them to live in accordance with God’s will by faithfully obeying all of Christ’s commandments.

Basil the Great (329–379) explains morning prayer by stating: “The first movement of the heart and mind must be consecrated to God. Therefore, in the morning, it is not fitting to plan or decide anything before we are first filled with joy by the remembrance of God; as it is written, ‘I remember God, and my heart rejoices.’ The body likewise ought not to begin its work before we obey this command: ‘At dawn, You hear my voice; at dawn I stand before You and wait expectantly.’” (Basil the Great, 2013). Morning prayer is intended to ensure that, before engaging in the activities of the day, the believer offers both heart and mind to God. This reflects the Eastern

Orthodox theological perspective that each day of the Christian life ought to begin with worship and surrender to God.

John Cassian (360–435), in the context of his teachings to Christian monks, instructed that they should rise early in the morning to offer their minds and hearts to God through prayer and psalmody before beginning any activity for the day. Furthermore, he emphasized that in the morning, the human person is “restored from darkness and awakened from the sleep of death into the light.” (Cassian, 1985). The First Hour prayer is understood in two main aspects. First, it serves as a form of spiritual discipline, emphasizing punctuality, spiritual vigilance, and the focusing of heart and mind. It is not merely a habit or routine, but a means of offering a “sacrifice” to God: namely, the human mind and heart. Second, it symbolizes the resurrection from death, as it marks the act of rising from sleep.

Third Hour

In the Third Hour prayer, there is a hymn known as the *Troparion* of the Third Hour, which proclaims: “Blessed are You, O Christ our God, who made the fishermen wise by sending down Your Holy Spirit upon them, and through Him, You drew the whole world into Your net. O Lover of mankind, glory to You.” (Larin, 2023). The Third Hour prayer affirms the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the faithful, first and foremost in the lives of the apostles, and subsequently in the lives of all believers across all times and places. It reveals that the activity of the Holy Spirit is boundless and extends throughout the entire world.

Basil the Great taught that the Third Hour holds profound theological significance, as it was at this hour that the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles gathered in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit, therefore, becomes an essential aspect of the rhythm of prayer, meant to permeate the entire life of the believer at all times, not merely in part, but in full. (Basil the Great, 2013).

John Cassian taught that at the Third Hour on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles as they were gathered in prayer. This event was the fulfilment of the spiritual promise foretold by the prophet Joel concerning the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the Third Hour is not regarded as an ordinary moment of prayer, but as a sacred time to remember, celebrate, and invoke the continual presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the faithful. (Cassian, 2000).

The theology embedded in the Third Hour prayer may be outlined as follows: First, the Third Hour affirms that the Holy Spirit is the divine Person who transforms and makes the faithful wise. This is reflected in the *Troparion* hymn, which proclaims that Christ made the fishermen (the apostles) wise through the Holy Spirit sent in His name. This indicates that true wisdom and the ability to carry out the divine mission originate from the power of the Holy Spirit, not from human ability alone. Second, this prayer commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, which occurred at the third hour of the day (Acts. 2). Both Basil the Great and John Cassian emphasize that this was the moment in which God's promise was fulfilled, namely, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, as foretold by the prophet Joel.

Thus, the Third Hour bears both historical and eschatological significance within God's plan of salvation. Third, the Third Hour proclaims the universality and ongoing nature of the Holy Spirit's work. The *Troparion* declares that through the Holy Spirit, Christ has “drawn the world into His net,” signifying that the Church's mission and the proclamation of the Gospel throughout the world take place in and through the power of the Holy Spirit, who is not limited by space or time. Fourth, this hour of prayer teaches that authentic spiritual life must be continually filled and guided by the Holy Spirit. Saint Basil the Great teaches that the rhythm of the believer's prayer

life, including at the third hour, serves as a means of remaining open to the ongoing work of the Spirit. This implies that the Holy Spirit is not limited to extraordinary moments, but must be present within the believer's daily life of prayer and faith. Fifth, the Third Hour is a moment of supplication for the continual presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the faithful. John Cassian underscores the importance of not only remembering the descent of the Spirit as a past event, but earnestly praying for the Holy Spirit's real and active presence in the lives of believers today. This highlights the ever-present need for spiritual renewal through the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit.

Sixth Hour

In the Sixth Hour prayer, there is a hymn known as the Troparion of the Sixth Hour, which proclaims: "O Christ our God, You have brought salvation in the midst of the earth. You stretched out Your immaculate hands upon the Cross. You gathered all nations who cry out to You: 'Glory to You, O Lord.'" In the liturgical hymn, the faithful also confess: "We... beseech You for the forgiveness of our sins, O Christ our God. In Your good will, by Your own choosing, You ascended the Cross in the flesh, so that in Your glory we, whom You have created, might be delivered from the bonds of the enemy. Therefore, we cry out to You in thanksgiving: You have filled all things with joy, O our Savior, for You have come to save the world." In the Closing Prayer of the Sixth Hour, the priest prays: "O God and Master of the angelic hosts, and Creator of all creation, in Your tender mercy and inexpressible love for humankind, You sent Your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, for the salvation of the human race. By His glorious Cross, He has torn up the record of our sins and triumphed over the ancestral fall and the power of darkness. Do likewise, O Lord, Lover of humankind: accept the thanksgiving and supplications of us sinners. Deliver us from every harmful and grievous transgression, and from every enemy, visible and invisible, who seeks to destroy us. Nail our flesh to the fear of You, and incline not our hearts to words or thoughts of evil, but bind our souls to the love of You, that, ever gazing upon You and being led by Your light, we may behold You, the unapproachable and unending Light. May we ever offer You unceasing repentance, O beginningless Father, together with Your only-begotten Son and Your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen." (Larin, 2023).

Basil the Great affirms that the Sixth Hour prayer is a significant moment in which human beings may re-offer their day to God, while also commemorating the suffering of Christ, which, according to the Gospel of Mark, began at the sixth hour as He hung upon the Cross. The Sixth Hour thus becomes a means of sanctifying time and uniting oneself with the suffering of Christ. It is not merely a spiritual obligation or a daily routine, but a form of participation in the divine mystery throughout the day. (Basil the Great, 2013).

John Cassian elaborates on the spiritual practices and teachings he received from the Egyptian monks, paying special attention to the spiritual experience often afflicting monks at midday, *acedia*, a state characterized by psychological weariness, inner laziness, and a paralyzing emptiness of spirit. The Sixth Hour prayer at midday is therefore not merely a routine, but a spiritual resistance against the temptation of *acedia*. (Cassian, 2000). Cassian observed how the desert monks used the Sixth Hour as a moment to renew their spirit through prayer, psalms, and meditation. The discipline of prayer thus serves as a safeguard for the soul against spiritual ruin caused by spiritual weariness. (Cassian, 1985)

The Sixth Hour Prayer in the tradition of the Eastern Orthodox Church represents a profound expression of the spirituality of the Cross, reflecting the pinnacle of soteriological theology, that human salvation and the salvation of the world culminate in the redemptive work of Christ through His suffering and death on the Cross. The

three main components of the prayer, Troparion, Liturgical Hymn, and the Priest's Closing Prayer, construct a complementary theological narrative: from the acknowledgment of Christ's work, the participation of the faithful in that work, to the plea for salvation involving the entire Triune God.

The *Troparion* of the Sixth Hour opens the prayer with a strong Christological declaration: Christ as God has brought salvation "to the midst of the earth" by stretching out His "immaculate" hands on the Cross. This imagery not only affirms the reality of the incarnation and suffering of Christ but also points to the universal and cosmic significance of the Cross as the convergence point of salvation. The statement that Christ "gathered all nations" echoes the theology of the Church's inclusivity and catholicity, while linking the Cross to the fulfillment of God's mission to save all humanity, as foretold in the Old Testament prophecies and realized in Pentecost.

The Liturgical Hymn following the *Troparion* expands the meaning of the Cross as an act of love originating from Christ's free will: "By Your own will, You ascended the Cross" affirms that the Cross was not a forced tragedy but a salvific act planned within the framework of divine love. The emphasis on petitioning for forgiveness and liberation from the "bonds of the enemy" implies that the Cross is not merely a symbol of suffering but also a weapon of victory over the powers of sin, the devil, and death. An existential transformation is highlighted: the faithful are not only forgiven but also transformed to live in joy and gratitude. This shows that the liturgy is not only a space for contemplation but also spiritual formation.

The priest's closing prayer culminates in a profound confession of the Triune God. It explicitly states that God the Father, through the sending of His Only Son, has accomplished human salvation, destroyed "the written debt of our sins," and freed the faithful from the power of darkness. The Cross is portrayed as an instrument of victory, not only forgiveness but also the renewal of all creation. This prayer reflects the spirituality of Eastern Orthodox Christianity, wherein the faithful ask that "our flesh be nailed with fear of You," meaning that the body is subdued in order to prioritize true spiritual life. The plea to be bound in love to God indicates the movement toward *theosis*, the union of human life with God. The climax of this prayer is the hope for eternal communion in the divine light that is "ineffable and unending," an eschatological vision uniting the themes of repentance, sanctification, and hope.

In their theological arguments, Basil the Great and John Cassian emphasize the importance of the Sixth Hour Prayer in several points: First, the Sixth Hour Prayer is an act of re-offering the day to God, as taught by Basil the Great. Midday becomes an important moment to remember that all human activity throughout the day should be directed back to God. This demonstrates a theology of sanctifying time, where the daily life of the faithful is inseparable from a relationship with God. Second, this prayer is also a moment of meditation on Christ's suffering, because according to the Gospel of Mark (Mk. 15:33), at the sixth hour (around midday), Jesus hung on the Cross, and darkness covered the whole earth. Thus, the Sixth Hour Prayer becomes a form of spiritual participation in Christ's suffering and invites the faithful to unite with His redemptive work. This reflects the theology of the Cross, where the faithful are called not only to remember but also to take part in the mystery of Christ's suffering and redemption.

Third, John Cassian teaches that the Sixth Hour Prayer is a spiritual resistance against *acedia*, that is, inner listlessness, spiritual emptiness, and weariness that often attacks at midday. In this context, prayer is not merely routine but a spiritual weapon to maintain the soul's zeal and focus so as not to succumb to emptiness and temptation. This shows an ascetical theology in which prayer is part of the spiritual discipline to combat spiritual decline and preserve the integrity of inner life. Fourth, the Sixth Hour Prayer contains the value of spiritual renewal. Through

prayer, psalms, and meditation at midday, the faithful are renewed in spirit and redirected toward the true purpose of life. This serves as a reminder that spiritual life requires rhythm and discipline in order not to be swept away by emptiness or worldly temptation. Fifth, this prayer is not merely an obligation or routine but active participation in the divine mystery occurring throughout the day. By praying at this hour, the faithful enter God's presence amid worldly time, making daily life a space of encounter with the Holy. This expresses the theology of God's presence in daily life, whereby the world and time are sanctified through prayer.

Ninth Hour

In the Ninth Hour Prayer, there is a hymn known as the *Troparion* of the Ninth Hour, which states: "When the thief saw the Creator of Life crucified, he said, 'If You are not God, who is crucified alongside us, causing the sun to lose its brightness and the earth to tremble? But You, who suffer for mankind, remember us, O Lord, when You come into Your Kingdom.'" In the Litany Hymn, the faithful proclaim: "Between the two criminals, Your Cross was raised, the scale of justice; for one fell into death due to the weight of blasphemy, while the other's sins were forgiven through knowledge of divine things. O Christ God, glory to You." In the Closing Prayer of the Ninth Hour, the priest prays: "O Sovereign Lord Jesus Christ, our God, who suffered for our sins and now guides us at this hour, just as You hung upon the life-giving wood and opened the way to paradise for the repentant thief, and by Your death destroyed death itself, be merciful to us sinners and Your unworthy servants. We have sinned and acted unjustly, and we are not worthy to lift our eyes to behold the heights of heaven, for we have forsaken the path of Your truth and walked according to our own desires.

Yet we beseech Your boundless goodness: Have mercy on us, O Lord, according to Your great compassion, and save us for the sake of Your holy name, for our days pass away in vanity. Deliver us from the hand of the enemy, forgive our sins, and cleanse our impure thoughts, that, by casting off the old man, we may clothe ourselves with the new man and live with You, our Sovereign and Savior. By obeying Your commandments, may we find eternal rest, the place prepared for those who rejoice. For You are the truth, the true joy, and the delight of those who love You, O Christ God, to whom we ascribe glory, together with Your eternal Father and Your Most Holy, All-Good, and Life-Giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen" (Larin, 2023).

Saint Basil the Great emphasized that the Ninth Hour is a profoundly significant time because it corresponds to the moment of Christ's hung and death on the cross (Matt. 27:46–50; Mk. 15:34–37). The prayer at this hour is regarded as a means to remember and commemorate the suffering and sacrifice of Jesus. The Ninth Hour Prayer becomes a contemplative moment and an expression of gratitude, wherein the faithful meditate on the love of Christ, which reaches its fullness in His passion and death. Basil further views this prayer as an integral part of inner transformation: through prayer, especially at critical moments such as the Ninth Hour, the believers are called to surrender their entire lives to God, just as Christ surrendered His life on the cross. (Basil the Great, 2013).

John Cassian observed that the Ninth Hour is often a time when monks experience intense spiritual trials, particularly physical fatigue and a temptation to cease their spiritual struggle. He noted that many monks awaited the Ninth Hour not out of eagerness to pray, but because it signalled mealtime or rest, moments that themselves could become temptations toward routine complacency and spiritual lethargy. However, precisely because of this temptation, Cassian emphasized the critical importance of maintaining prayer at the Ninth Hour as a spiritual discipline opposing the desires of the flesh and inner sloth. Prayer at this hour must be performed with full awareness as an act of devotion to God and communion with Christ, who died at this very hour. In this regard, Cassian strongly

underscores discipline: even when the body is weary and the mind tempted to give up, a monk must remain faithful in prayer. The Ninth Hour prayer also serves as a moment of repentance and humility, for it is at this hour Jesus surrendered His spirit and completed the work of salvation. Thus, for Cassian, this prayer symbolizes the total surrender of the human person to God (Cassian, 1985).

The theology present in the Ninth Hour Prayer can be summarized as follows: First, the Ninth Hour Prayer emphasizes the confession of Christ as God who suffers on the cross. In the Troparion, the thief crucified alongside Jesus acknowledges that only God has the power to shake the universe and earnestly petitions to be remembered in His Kingdom. This affirms that Christ's suffering is not a sign of weakness but rather the fulfillment of the divine mission for human salvation. Second, the prayer highlights the contrast between rejection and acceptance of the cross, symbolized by the two thieves. One thief falls into death because of his blasphemy, while the other receives forgiveness through his recognition of divine truth. Thus, the cross serves as the scale of justice, measuring humanity's response to God's grace, reflecting the perfect balance of divine justice and mercy. Third, the concluding prayer teaches that salvation is not earned by human effort but granted solely through God's mercy. The faithful confess their unworthiness to stand before God due to their abandonment of the path of righteousness and pursuit of their own will. Nevertheless, they plead for mercy grounded in the boundless grace of God. This underscores a theology of repentance and grace, affirming that salvation is given not on the basis of merit but by God's great compassion. Fourth, the Ninth Hour Prayer portrays the spiritual struggle to put off the "old self" and to clothe oneself with the "new self." The petition for the cleansing of impure thoughts and renewal in living according to Christ's will expresses a theology of sanctification and transformation, calling the faithful to holy living in conformity with Christ's example and commandments.

Fifth, the prayer embodies an eschatological hope, a longing for eternal rest and true joy with Christ at the end of time. The concluding supplication asks that the faithful may be granted a place in everlasting joy, a promise given to those who love and remain faithful to Christ. Sixth, the entire sequence of prayers affirms Christ as the centre of salvation, glorified together with the Father and the Holy Spirit as the Holy Trinity. This represents a robust Trinitarian theology, emphasizing that salvation and eternal life are the cooperative work of the Triune God. In their theological reflections, Basil the Great and John Cassian emphasize the significance of the Ninth Hour Prayer in several ways: First, the Ninth Hour Prayer calls the faithful to remember the death of Christ on the cross as the pinnacle of His love and sacrifice. According to Basil the Great, grounded in the Gospel (Matt. 27:46–50; Mk. 15:34–37), this hour becomes a special moment to commemorate Christ's suffering and to offer gratitude for the redemptive work He accomplished through His death.

This underscores a theology of total divine love and sacrifice for human salvation. Second, the prayer at this hour also serves as a moment of inner transformation for believers. Basil teaches that through prayer at sacred times such as the Ninth Hour, humans are called to surrender their entire lives to God, imitating Christ who surrendered His life. Thus, prayer during this hour is not merely commemorative but invites a total self-giving and living in union with Christ's salvific work. Third, John Cassian observes that the Ninth Hour is a moment of intense spiritual testing, especially due to physical fatigue and the temptation toward spiritual sloth. Many monks are tempted to forgo prayer in favour of rest or meals, yet Cassian stresses the importance of disciplined prayer as a spiritual resistance against the flesh and weariness. This highlights the theology of spiritual struggle and steadfastness in prayer, even amid difficulty. Fourth, the Ninth Hour Prayer is a time of repentance and humility, marking the moment when Christ surrendered His spirit and completed the work of salvation. This prayer

symbolizes the total surrender of humanity to God, reflecting a humble and contrite heart that mourns sin while simultaneously hoping for grace and salvation. Fifth, taken as a whole, the Ninth Hour Prayer affirms the essential role of prayer as a means of communion with Christ in His suffering and death. Prayer serves as a binding link between the faithful and the mystery of salvation, strengthening faith and directing life toward full self-surrender to God in every aspect of existence.

Theological Reflections on the First, Third, Sixth, and Ninth Hour Prayers

The First Hour Prayer emphasizes the role of Christ as the “Light of Truth” who illuminates and sanctifies humanity. In this prayer, believers are called to receive the light of Christ so that they may behold the infinite divine light and live obediently according to His commandments. Theologically, the First Hour symbolizes the transition from darkness to light, reflecting Christ’s resurrection from death. Basil the Great highlights the importance of beginning the day with prayer, offering one’s heart and mind to God before any activity, so that the entire day may be sanctified and filled with joy through remembrance of God. John Cassian adds that this morning prayer is also a spiritual discipline and a conscious offering of oneself to God, rather than a mere routine. Overall, the First Hour Prayer serves as a spiritual commencement, reminding the faithful to live in the light of Christ and to direct every step according to His will.

The Third Hour Prayer centers on the work of the Holy Spirit descending upon the apostles at Pentecost, traditionally believed to have occurred at the third hour. This prayer affirms that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person who imparts wisdom and strength to believers, enabling them to carry out God’s mission in the world. The Troparion of this hour expresses that through the Holy Spirit, Christ’s message is extended and cast wide across the world, underscoring the universal and ongoing nature of the Spirit’s work in the life of the Church. Basil the Great and John Cassian emphasize that the Third Hour Prayer is not only a remembrance of a historical event but also a vital moment to petition for the continual presence and action of the Holy Spirit within every believer. Thus, this hour invites reflection on the ongoing need for spiritual renewal and the essential importance of living under the Spirit’s guidance.

The Sixth Hour Prayer carries profound meaning connected to Christ’s suffering at about midday when He hung upon the cross. Through its prayers and hymns, the faithful are reminded of the salvific work accomplished through the cross, not merely as suffering but as a victory over sin and the powers of darkness. Basil the Great underscores this hour as a crucial time for sanctifying the day and uniting spiritually with Christ’s passion as a form of participation in the divine mystery. John Cassian adds an ascetical dimension, noting that the Sixth Hour is also a moment to combat the physical fatigue and spiritual weariness that often arise at midday, with prayer serving as a spiritual weapon to renew zeal and preserve inner life. The theology of this hour stresses salvation rooted in Christ’s voluntary suffering on the cross and calls believers to live in repentance, sanctification, and *theosis*, union with God. The Ninth Hour Prayer specifically focuses on the moment of Christ’s death on the cross, the culmination of His sacrifice and the concrete manifestation of God’s love for humanity.

The prayer includes an acknowledgment of Christ’s suffering as a demonstration of divine power and love, not weakness. The story of the two thieves crucified alongside Jesus symbolizes humanity’s varied responses to salvation: one rejects it, while the other receives forgiveness through recognition of divine truth. The prayer at this hour affirms a theology of grace and repentance, emphasizing that salvation is not earned by human effort but granted through God’s mercy. John Cassian reminds that the Ninth Hour is a time of great spiritual challenge, as

body and soul often feel weary, making the prayer a testament to discipline and fidelity in the spiritual struggle. Basil the Great asserts that through the Ninth Hour prayer, believers are called to total surrender to God, imitating Christ's self-giving on the cross. This hour also radiates eschatological hope for eternal life with God, the ultimate goal of the faithful's spiritual journey.

Contributions to Contemporary Theological Discourse

First, this study presents a systematic theological examination of the First, Third, Sixth, and Ninth Hour Prayers within the Eastern Orthodox tradition. This topic has been scarcely explored in the context of Indonesian theology, which has been predominantly shaped by Roman Catholic and Protestant perspectives. By introducing the rich heritage of Eastern spirituality, this work broadens the theological horizon and enriches the existing theological corpus in Indonesia.

Second, the study emphasizes that the Hours Prayers are not mere ritualistic routines devoid of meaning, but rather a sanctification of time spiritual practices deeply relevant for Christians navigating the complexities of the modern era. This contribution affirms that disciplined, regular prayer can serve as a vital means of spiritual formation in Indonesian society, which is increasingly vulnerable to spiritual fragmentation due to modernity and secularization.

Third, the study highlights that the Hours Prayers encapsulate core theological doctrines such as the Trinity, Christology, Pneumatology, Soteriology, and Eschatology. These prayers serve as a bridge, uniting theology, liturgy, and spirituality, providing a vital locus for the experience and reflection of the Christian faith.

Fourth, the Hours Prayers offer a pastoral-theological response to the phenomenon of *acedia* (spiritual weariness and languor), which is highly pertinent to contemporary theological discourse in Indonesia. This practice addresses issues of spiritual fatigue, stress, depression, and existential crises prevalent in postmodern life, offering a pathway to renewal and resilience.

CONCLUSION

The Prayers of the First, Third, Sixth, and Ninth Hours represent a deeply meaningful tradition in the life of Christian faith. These four prayer times serve not merely as temporal markers but as moments of spiritual reflection that invite the faithful to emulate and internalize the salvific work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Each Hour carries profound theological significance closely connected to the divine events and acts within God's plan of salvation for humanity.

The entire cycle of prayers at these Hours underscores the importance of spiritual discipline and the sanctification of time as integral to the journey of faith. By engaging in the prayers at each Hour, believers do not simply fulfill ritual obligations but live out the profound reality of salvation, which is actively present in daily life. This prayer practice reminds the faithful that salvation is not merely a historical event but a living reality continually experienced through prayer, sanctification, and an awareness of God's abiding presence.

The Prayers of the First, Third, Sixth, and Ninth Hours call every believer to deepen their personal relationship with God, heighten spiritual awareness, and embody God's love and grace in every aspect of life. These Hours serve as means for shaping the character of the faithful, conforming them ever more closely to Christ, and strengthening their hope in eternal salvation. The devotion to these Hours thus becomes a pathway to fortify faith, deepen theological understanding, and live a life imbued with meaning in the Lord.

REFERENCES

- Basil the Great. (2013). *The Rule of St. Basil in Latin and English: A Revised Critical Edition*. Liturgical Press.
- Benedict of Nursia. (2016). *The Rule of St. Benedict in English* (Liturgical Press (ed.)). Liturgical Press.
- Bradshaw, P. F. (2008). *Daily Prayer in the Early Church: A Study of the Origin and Early Development of the Divine Office*. Wipf and Stock Publishers.
- Cassian, J. (1985). *Conferences (Vol. 7)*. Paulist Press.
- Cassian, J. (2000). *The Institutes*. Paulist Press.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. Sage Publications.
- Dix, G., & Chadwick, H. (2013). *The Treatise on the Apostolic Tradition of St. Hippolytus of Rome, Bishop and Martyr*. Routledge.
- Ignat, A. (2019). Byzantine Hesychasm in the Life of the Orthodox Church. *International Journal of Theology, Philosophy and Science*, 3(5), 42–52. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.26520/ijtps.2019.3.5.42-52>
- Jagessar, M. (2022). Decolonial Challenges and Opportunities. *Liturgy*, 37(4), 28–34. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/0458063X.2022.2121096>
- Larin, V. (2023). *Praying in Time: The Hours & Days in Step with Orthodox Christian Tradition*. Wipf and Stock Publishers.
- Martasudjita, E. P. D. (2022). Inkulturasi dan Tata Perayaan Ekaristi 2020: Gambaran Berinkulturasi dalam Konteks Indonesia. *StudiaPhilosophica et Theologica*, 22(2), 159–180. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.35312/spet.v22i2.441>
- Meyendorff, J. (2024). *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*. Fordham University Press.
- Noegroho, S. A. (2024). Tata Liturgi yang Berubah dan Mengubah. *Jurnal Pendidikan Kristen Dan Ilmu Teologi Marturia*, 5(1), 49–61. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.63669/marturia.v5i1.54>
- Rusmanto, A., Gozaly, R., & Naftali, J. (2024). Signifikansi Tata Liturgi terhadap Keterlibatan Umat Menghadirkan Pembaharuan Hidup di Generasi Masa Kini. *ELEOS: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen*, 3(2), 154–165. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.53814/eleos.v3i2.80>
- Schmemmann, A. (2003). *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press.
- Taft, R. F. (1986). *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West: the Origins of the Divine Office and its Meaning for Today*. Liturgical Press.