



The **Breviary** and the **Lectionary** are two liturgical books used in the Catholic Church, but they serve different purposes and contain distinct content. Below, I explain how they differ:

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## 1. Primary Function

- **Breviary (or Liturgy of the Hours):**

It is a book used for the Church's daily liturgical prayer. Its purpose is to help the faithful, especially clergy and religious, sanctify the day through communal or personal prayer. The Breviary contains prayers, psalms, hymns, brief biblical readings, and texts from the Church Fathers, organized in a daily and weekly cycle.

- **Lectionary:**

It is a liturgical book containing the biblical readings selected for proclamation during Mass and other liturgical celebrations. Its primary function is to guide the proclamation of the Word of God in the liturgy, following a cycle of readings that spans several years.

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## 2. Content

- **Breviary:**

- **Psalms:** The core of the Breviary consists of the 150 psalms, distributed in a four-week cycle.
- **Brief biblical readings:** Short passages from the Bible that accompany the psalms.
- **Prayers:** Includes intercessory prayers, antiphons, and collects.
- **Texts from the Church Fathers and saints:** Spiritual readings that complement prayer.
- **Hymns:** Liturgical songs recited or sung at specific times of the day.
- **Canonical Hours:** It is divided into the "Hours" (Lauds, Vespers, Terce, Sext, None, Compline, and the Office of Readings).

- **Lectionary:**

- **Biblical readings:** Contains the complete texts of the biblical readings selected for Mass.
- **Liturgical cycles:** The readings are organized in cycles of three years (A, B, C) for Sundays and two years (I, II) for weekdays.
- **Gospels, Epistles, and Old Testament:** Includes passages from the Gospels, the letters of the apostles, and other books of the Old Testament.



- **Responsorial Psalm:** Contains the psalms proclaimed after the first reading.
  - **Alleluia and verses:** Includes the chants that precede the Gospel.
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### 3. Use in the Liturgy

- **Breviary:**

It is used outside of Mass, primarily for personal or communal prayer. It is a form of continuous prayer that accompanies the rhythm of the day, from morning to night. Priests, religious, and many laypeople use it as part of their spiritual life.

- **Lectionary:**

It is used exclusively during Mass and other liturgical celebrations. It is the book that guides the Liturgy of the Word, where the biblical readings and the Gospel are proclaimed. It is essential for the active participation of the faithful in the Mass.

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### 4. Temporal Structure

- **Breviary:**

It follows a daily and weekly cycle, with variations according to the liturgical season (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, etc.). The “Hours” are prayed at specific times of the day (for example, Lauds in the morning and Vespers in the evening).

- **Lectionary:**

It follows a three-year cycle for Sundays and a two-year cycle for weekdays. The readings are organized so that the faithful hear and meditate on a significant portion of the Bible throughout these cycles.

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### 5. Intended Audience

- **Breviary:**

It is primarily intended for priests, religious, and consecrated persons, although it can also be used by laypeople who wish to deepen their prayer life.

- **Lectionary:**

It is intended for the entire Christian community, as it is an integral part of the Mass, to which all the faithful are called to participate.



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## 6. Spiritual Significance

- **Breviary:**

Its goal is to sanctify the day through continuous prayer, uniting the Church in constant praise to God. It is a way to live out the command to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

- **Lectionary:**

Its goal is to nourish the faith of the faithful through the proclamation and meditation of the Word of God. It is a means for the community to hear and be transformed by the message of salvation.

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## Summary of Key Differences

Aspect	Breviary	Lectionary
<b>Function</b>	Daily liturgical prayer	Proclamation of the Word during Mass
<b>Content</b>	Psalms, hymns, prayers, readings	Complete biblical readings
<b>Use</b>	Outside Mass, in personal prayer	During Mass and liturgical celebrations
<b>Cycle</b>	Daily and weekly	Three years (Sundays), two years (weekdays)
<b>Intended Audience</b>	Clergy, religious, and laypeople	The entire Christian community

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## Conclusion

Both books, the Breviary and the Lectionary, are essential in the life of the Church, but they serve complementary functions. While the **Breviary** invites us to pray with the Word of God throughout the day, the **Lectionary** guides us in the proclamation and hearing of that same Word during Mass. Together, they help us live a deeper faith and a more intimate relationship with God.