In this article I will summarize some of the main ways the Gregorian psalm tones have been used with the English language and offer comments on the relative strengths of various approaches. I will use Psalm 34, a favorite psalm of St. Benedict in his Rule for Monasteries, in the Nova Vulgata for Latin and the Grail translation for English, to illustrate my points.

**GREGORIAN PSALMODY IN LATIN**

At the outset it is helpful to understand how Latin psalmody works, for this is the model which we are trying to approximate in English. Since the Gregorian psalm tones were developed for use with the Latin language, it is not surprising that they fit this language and its accent patterns admirably.

It is rare for Latin to have an accent on the final syllable of a line. Almost always the accent falls on the second-last or the third-last syllable. Accents throughout the line tend to fall on every second or every third syllable. Avoiding technical terminology, one can conveniently refer to the pattern of two syllables with a stress on the first syllable as 2, and three syllables with a stress on the first syllable as 3. “Dóminus” is 3; “Déus” is 2. “Dóminus Déus” is 32; “Déus Dóminus” is 23. Here are Latin psalm verses pointed for the psalm tone of Mode 1, with the numbers in parenthesis giving the accent patterns of the ends of the lines:

\[\text{Benedicam Dóminum in ómni témporte, } (23)\]
\[\text{sémper laus éius in óre méo. } (22)\]
\[\text{In Dómino gloríabitur ánima méa, } (32)\]
\[\text{áudiant mansuéti et laeténtur. } (22)\]
\[\text{Magníficáte Dóminum mácum, } (32)\]
\[\text{et exaltémus nómen éius in idípsum. } (22)\]
\[\text{Exquéívi Dóminum, et exaudívít me } (23 \text{ [from 221]})\]
\[\text{et ex ómnibus terróribus méís erípuit me. } (31)\]
The Latin Psalter goes for long stretches with nothing but 2s and 3s.¹ Almost all lines end with some combination of 2s and 3s. This is important because several of the cadences of the Gregorian tones are pointed according to the last two accents of the line.² For example, Mode 1 has two accents for the cadence at the half-way point (the “mediant cadence”):

![Mode 1](image1)

Mode 5 has two accents for the cadence at the end (the final cadence or “termination”):

![Mode 5](image2)

Any accent pattern fits well with these 2-accent cadences, whether 22 or 23 or 32 or 33:

![Any Pattern](image3)

Several important effects result. The reciting tone (A in the first example above, C in the second) is the modal center. The accents are a foil to this center. The fact that these foils fall on accents means that the foils receive a certain emphasis. This gives a wonderful balance between stability and variety: stability from the reciting tone, variety from the emphasized foils. It is precisely this which gives the Gregorian tones, when sung to a Latin text, their lyrical quality and aesthetic satisfaction.

There are exceptions to these accent patterns in Latin, but they are rather rare. On rare occasions a one-syllable word such as “me,” which in effect takes an accent, falls at the end of a line. An example is “erípuit mé” at Psalm 34:5, which we will use with the mediant cadence here for explanatory purposes. This accent pattern would be called 31. The conventional solution is to pretend that the accent falls on the last syllable of “erípuit,” what we might call a “shadow accent,” so that the text can be forced into a 22 pattern, like this:

![Shadow Accent](image4)

Sometimes Latin texts have more than two unaccented syllables between the accents, such as “me-mó-ri-am e-ó-rum” at Psalm 34:17. This accent pattern would be called 42. The conventional solution is to put a shadow accent between the two accents so that there are no more than two unaccented syllables in a row, like this:

![Shadow Accent Between Accents](image5)

As an aside, I might mention that this shadow accent solution has been used by Solesmes only since 1903. Until the end of the nineteenth century, Solesmes treated cases like this in a manner true to the text accents, with no shadow accent:
While this solution is preferable from a textual standpoint, it has not been used for nearly a century. (If you used it now, I suppose some might think you are making a mistake or do not know the rules of Latin psalm pointing.) It bears repeating that the above two exceptional accent patterns, 31 and 42, are uncommon in Latin. Predominating by far are the accent patterns 22, 23, 32, and 33.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The most important thing to say about the English language is that its accent patterns are very different from those of Latin. This is what makes it so difficult to employ the Gregorian tones convincingly in English. What is rare in Latin is quite common in English. For example, an accent on the last syllable of a line occurs in all of the first six lines of Psalm 34:

I will bless the Lord at all tîmes,
his praise always on my líps;
in the Lord my soul shall make its bóast.
The humble shall hear and be glád.
Glorify the Lord with mé.
Together let us raise his náme.

Two cases of these six have the accent pattern 31—“Lórd at all tîmes” and “héar and be glád.”

English also has cases of an unusually large number of unaccented syllables in a row, such as (to take an example not from the Psalter) “foundátion of the apóstles.” And there are many cases of two accents in a row, which is very rare in Latin, such as “divíne chárity.” In the example from Psalm 34 above, depending on how you treat the English language, “áll tîmes” is very close to being a case of two accents in a row. Because the Grail translation of the Psalter has been intentionally crafted with accents occurring regularly across each line, these two accentual difficulties do not occur that often. But they do at times.

One can readily see how the widely varying accent patterns of English make it difficult to employ the Gregorian tones. As noted above, the aesthetic perfection of Latin psalmody is the way in which the modal notes of the melody interact with the regularly recurring accents of the text. Use of the English language with the Gregorian tones will never quite have this sort of aesthetic perfection. The English language simply does not allow for it.

THE FIRST APPROACH: LITERAL GREGORIAN MELODIES

In the years immediately after Vatican II, Gregorian psalm tone melodies tended to be employed quite literally, without adjustments for the sake of the accent patterns of the English text. I suspect this is because the old Solesmes school of rhythmic interpretation was so widespread at that time that many people were accustomed to think only of the chant melody without much regard for the text. In the old Solesmes method, especially when its equalism was applied rigidly and without nuance, the Latin text had virtually no effect on the rhythmic interpretation. Adaptors probably felt obliged to preserve the original melody, or else they saw no aesthetic problem in doing so, even if it did not fit the English text very well.
In this approach, one way to get around the problem of the accent falling on the last syllable was to put a shadow accent on an earlier syllable. This shadow accent has the effect of giving strong emphasis to a syllable not calling for it—often, a weak preposition. Here is an example of this solution, treating “on” as if it is the final accent:

\[ \text{his praise always on my lips.} \]

At other times, a shadow accent was not needed because there was a true accent which, though not the final accent, could be treated as if it were the final accent. Here is an example, treating “make” as the final accent, even though the true final accent is on “boast”:

\[ \text{... my soul shall make its boast} \]

Because these two solutions have to be applied so frequently for English, they cannot help but grate on a singer with any sensitivity to the text. In the first case, with the accent on the preposition “of,” one of the primary rules of good English declamation is violated. In the second case, “boast” is incorrectly treated as if it is not accented. Good English declamation would accent the phrase this way: My soul shall make its boast.”

Another solution for the literalist is to preserve the notes of the Gregorian melody but to join two of the notes together and place them on the accent of the last syllable of the line. For example:

\[ \text{his praise always on my lips.} \]
\[ \text{... my soul shall make its boast.} \]

While this does not offend against good textual declamation, the two joined notes are a marked deviation from the musical effect of the original. And because accents on the last syllable occur frequently in English, this solution quickly becomes grating.

As previously noted about Latin texts, in rare cases of an accent on the final syllable with the pattern 31, the solution is to put a shadow accent on the second-last (unaccented) syllable—see “eripuit mé.” Since this solution is employed for the Latin text, it can be employed without further ado to the English text for the accent pattern 31, for example:

\[ \text{I will bless the Lord at all times,} \]

However, it must be noted that the accent pattern 31 occurs much more frequently in English than in Latin. What is an exception in Latin is quite common in English. This inevitably gives a different feel to the Gregorian tones in English. For those who think this is the best solution to the 31 cadence, as I do, one must live with the difference.

For the most part, this first approach, using literal Gregorian melodies, does not work. For cadences with the accent patterns 22, 23, 32, or 33, there is no problem. But in other cases, which predominate in English, violence
must be done to the English text. With the exception of the 31 cadence just treated, which follows from the Latin exception for the 31 cadence, the solutions undertaken to preserve the Gregorian melody are not satisfactory.

THE SECOND APPROACH:
ADAPTED GREGORIAN MELODIES

There is a growing tendency around the world to adapt the Gregorian melodies rather than to employ them literally. There are simply too many problems with the literalist approach, especially in the false treatment of English accents such as “always on my lips” and “my soul shall make its boast.” Adaptation takes the form of either adapting the manner in which the notes are applied to the English text or adapting the notes themselves of the Gregorian melody.

German Benedictines especially have mastered this approach, drawing on decades of experience and experimentation. The abbey of Münsterschwarzach has published the entire Liturgy of the Hours in German in traditional four-line notation, both the Roman and the Benedictine office, with exclusive use of Gregorian tones. Because the German language is quite similar to English in its accentuation, the work of the German Benedictines is valuable to English-speakers. Excellent work has also been done by Bruce Ford, and many of his solutions coincide with those of the German Benedictines. I refer the reader to his article posted on the CMAA website and hereby acknowledge the influence of this article on my own thinking. Because the German Benedictines are more thoroughgoing in their adaptations, I will primarily make use of their approach in what follows.

Let us take up the difficult case of the accent on the final syllable of the line, first of all in cases in which the second-last accent is two syllables earlier (such as máke its bóast). Both the German Benedictines and Bruce Ford have found a solution by not going to the last note of the melody until the final syllable, so that it gets its proper accent, as follows:

This solution adapts the conventional rules of pointing by placing two syllables on the second-last note of the melodic formula. The result is proper declamation of the English text. With this creative solution, many of the problems of English Gregorian psalmody are solved. The only possible difficulty is in laying out the text so that it is clear to the singer. No matter how the text is presented, the singer needs to be more attentive to it than to Latin psalmody, where the musical formula is applied consistently and without the need for exceptions. The Germans use brackets to indicate syllables sung to the same pitch: “my soul shall make its boast.”

For the problem of an accented final syllable at the midpoint of the psalm tone, there is the solution of the “mediatio abrupta” (“abrupt mediant”). One leaves the reciting note to go up for the accented syllable, without returning to the reciting note. The last note is omitted. The was used in some instances (but not many) in the very rare cases where the Latin Psalter has a Hebrew word whose accent is on the last syllable, such as Davíd or Ierusalém. It works like this, here with Mode 5:
The German Benedictines use this solution, and some people have used it in English. The problem is that the accent on the final syllable appears very often in English, more than in German, and much more than in Latin (where it is extremely rare). Such a punch on the last syllable of the line, especially since it appears so frequently in English, is rather inelegant. I maintain that it is an unacceptable solution in English for Mode 2 (F---G), mode 5 (C---D), and Mode 8 (C---D). But it can be used without objection, I think, in Mode 4 (A---G A B) with its graceful lead up to the highest pitch, and Mode 6 (A---A G) with its simple omission of the lower final note F. Of course the mediatio abrupta is possible only at the mediant cadence. It is no help at the final cadence (the termination) where one must always use all the notes of the melodic formula.

All the Gregorian psalm tones begin with an intonation, a melodic formula which is applied to the first two syllables of the psalm text. This intonation is used for the first line of a psalm of the Liturgy of the Hours, after the psalm antiphon, and it is used for the first line of every psalm verse after the antiphon in the Graduale Simplex. In some cases, such as Mode 1, the intonation consists of a single note punctum on the first syllable and a two-note pes on the second:

\[ \text{Be - ne - dicam Dominum...} \]

This melodic formula is applied to the first two syllables without respect to their accent pattern, even if this means (as it often does) that the two-note group (the pes) falls on an unaccented syllable:

\[ \text{turn a - side from evil...} \]

In this case, the light syllable “ne” receives two notes, but the following accented syllable “dí” has only one pitch (because it is on the reciting note).

The Germans generally believe that accents in German have greater weight than accents in Latin. Latin accents are light and rather equal to each other in intensity. German accents are heavier, they have more emotional impact, and they vary more in their intensity. For this reason, the German Benedictines adapt the intonation to eliminate the two-note pes, as follows:

\[ \text{Be - ne - dicam Dominum...} \]

Recognizing that opinions vary on this point, I believe that English is more like German than Latin, and English weak syllables do not bear multiple notes as well as Latin syllables do. The German adaptation of the intonation works well with English, for example:

\[ \text{Turn a - side from...} \]

This avoids an unnatural accentuation on the first syllable of “aside.”

For the most part, the German Benedictines retain the Gregorian melody with all its notes at the cadence. But they have developed a few simplified terminations for the sake of the vernacular text. Mode 2, for example, has only one termination in the Gregorian tone:
This works well with Latin, where the two-note pes falls on the final accent, since Latin virtually always has an unaccented syllable or two to follow on the final D. In cases where a given vernacular text has many instances of the last syllable with an accent, it is helpful to have a psalm tone formula in which the accent falls on the final note, whether the accent falls on the last syllable or a preceding syllable. Such melodic formulas do not exist in Gregorian psalmody, since there is no need for them in Latin, but here is an example from the German Benedictines of a final cadence in Mode 2 with such a formula:

Note that the formula ends with the sequence of notes C E D, and not E C D. Most simplifications done by English speakers have used the latter solution, no doubt because it more closely follows the note order in Latin. But the German Benedictines have rightly realized that the question is not only one of note order but also of the importance of the notes within the modal pattern. In the Gregorian original, the pitch C, falling on an accent, has prominence. To give it a similar prominence for use with a vernacular text, the pitch C is moved away from being the second-last note before the final accent. It is precisely by changing the order of notes from the original that the character of the original is more closely approximated.

Here is an example of a Mode 1 psalm tone, with adaptations taken over from the German Benedictines, pointed for singing with Psalm 34. Here I am following the German practice of underlining only the vowel, which looks less cluttered. One could easily underline the entire syllable if this is thought to be easier for the singer to recognize.

\[
\text{I will bless the Lord at all times,} \\
\text{his praise always on my lips;} \\
\text{in the Lord my soul shall make its boast.} \\
\text{The humble shall hear and be glad.} \\
\text{Glorify the Lord with me.} \\
\text{Together let us praise his name.} \\
\text{I sought the Lord and he answered me;} \\
\text{from all my terrors he set me free.}
\]

In my view, an approach such as this is the best solution for Gregorian psalmody in English. The German Benedictines have basically solved Gregorian vernacular psalmody. However, one must admit that there are significant difficulties and challenges. The pointing is complicated. English has accents on the final syllable more often than German, so this approach does not work quite as well for us as it does for German speakers. Although this approach is used for congregational singing of psalmody by German speakers (both Lutheran and Catholic), one may wonder whether English-speaking congregations will be able to follow all the exceptions and options, no matter how clearly the text is pointed. Perhaps we would have to reserve this approach
for rehearsed choirs (for example, for the verses of the entrance antiphon or responsorial psalm of Mass), and employ another approach when the entire congregation is to chant the English psalm text (for example, at the Liturgy of the Hours). Or perhaps monastic communities who gather several times a day to sing psalmody would be able to master this approach. But realistically, this approach may prove too difficult for parish choirs and monastic communities alike.

**THE THIRD APPROACH: SIMPLIFIED GREGORIAN MELODIES**

This simplified approach is already hinted at in the example of the adaptation of the Mode 2 cadence above. But where that was a rather rare exception for the German Benedictines, here it becomes the all-pervasive principle. Every musical formula without exception, both at the halfway point (the mediant cadence) and at the end (the final cadence at the termination) is simplified so that there is only one accent, and the note taking the accent is always the last note of the melodic formula. In the example I will present, this final accented note is preceded by one note at the mediant and two notes at the end. The pointing is quite straightforward. The final accent of the English text is simply assigned to the last note of the melody, just as is done for all the hundreds of psalm tones which have been composed for English since Vatican II. One simply points one syllable before the last accent at the mediant and two syllables before the accent at the end.

This third approach was developed for all eight modes by Fr. Bartholomew Sayles, osb, of Saint John’s Abbey, and Sister Cecile Gertken, osb, of Saint Benedict’s Monastery, both now deceased. It has been used in publications of The Liturgical Press. I have applied some very few adaptations to their work, drawing on the wisdom of the German Benedictines, but for the most part I have retained their work. Here is an example of Mode 5 with Psalm 34:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{I will bless the Lord at all times,} \\
&\text{his praise always on my lips;} \\
&\text{in the Lord my soul shall make its boast.} \\
&\text{The humble shall hear and be glad.} \\
&\text{Glorify the Lord with me.} \\
&\text{Together let us praise his name.} \\
&\text{I sought the Lord and he answered me;} \\
&\text{from all my terrors he set me free.}
\end{align*}
\]

The great advantage of this third approach is its simplicity. This makes it readily usable both for congregations and for choirs. The drawback, however, is the way in which the modal effect at the cadence necessarily deviates from the Latin. At the mediant cadence, the note for the last accent is the same as the reciting note (the double whole note)—C in the example above. One loses the full effect of the lyrical alternation between the recited note, the foil note on an accent, and the return to the reciting note for an unaccented syllable. One could retrieve some of this Latin lyricism in cases where the last English accent is not on the final syllable. One would point the text so as to move off the reciting note on the English accent, as in Latin, as follows: I sought the Lord and he answered me . . . .
The drawback to this is that the musical formula behaves differently from one line to the next, depending on the English accentuation, and the singer would have to be attentive. For this reason, I probably would not use this two-option approach with a congregation or a rehearsed choir.

THE FOURTH APPROACH: NEW MELODIES

Given all the various drawbacks to each of the approaches treated so far, one can see why many people prefer not to use Gregorian tones in any form with English. In this fourth approach, entirely new melodies are written, intentionally designed for the English language, just as the Gregorian tones were intended for the Latin language. Here I will present a post-Vatican II psalm tone which retains Gregorian modality. That is to say, though the melody is new and the principles of pointing are not derived from Latin, the melody uses the degrees of the modal scale so as to be characteristic of a given Gregorian mode. This fourth approach has been employed by Benedictines such as A. Gregory Murray and Laurence Bevenot. Here I will illustrate it with the Mode 1 psalm tone from Saint Meinrad’s Archabbey:

I will bless the Lord at all times,
his praise always on my lips;
in the Lord my soul shall make its boast.
The humble shall hear and be glad.

Glorify the Lord with me.
Together let us praise his name.
I sought the Lord and he answered me;
from all my terrors he set me free.

There is no intonation; one simply begins on the reciting tone at the outset. There are four measures of music (in fact, up to six measures in another version of this tone), and measures can be omitted if a strophe has two or three lines of text. With this adaptability, the psalm tone admirably matches the strophic structure of the Grail Psalter.

I suspect that many people, after heroically trying all the various ways to adapt and simplify the Gregorian tones, along with the attendant difficulties, would heave a sigh of relief when given a St. Meinrad tone. It simply works. It is convincing and aesthetically pleasing. It fits the English text perfectly. It is not true that this approach is post-Gregorian, much less anti-Gregorian, for the modality is entirely inspired by Gregorian modality. The Mode 1 sample given here uses the pitches of Gregorian Mode 1 and employs them in ways highly typical and characteristic of Gregorian melodies in Mode 1.

The biggest drawback to this fourth approach, of course, is that the melodies, however much they are inspired by the modality of the Gregorian tones, are not the Gregorian tones. Those wanting to preserve the Gregorian tones, of course, will not want to use the fourth approach. But if you wish to use the Gregorian tones, you will have to decide which compromises you wish to make and which drawbacks you are willing to live with. It is simply impossible to use Gregorian tones in English and retain all the characteristics of Latin psalmody. Each approach has its strengths, and each approach has its problems, to varying degrees in each case. It is possible to sing Gregorian tones in English, but there is a price.
Notes

1. This has nothing whatsoever to do with the alternation of two-note and three-note groups marked by the ictus in the Solesmes method, for the ictus did not necessarily fall on the textual accent. The reader should not confuse that melodic principle with the textual characteristic being discussed here.

2. The cadences of several psalm tones, such as the final cadence of Mode 1 in the first example, are pointed according to only one final accent. Sometimes this single final accent is preceded by one or two or three melodic notes which are assigned solely with reference to the final accent, irrespective of whether these three notes follow on accented or unaccented syllables. In the example on page one, there are two syllables (indicated by 2 1 above the staff) accented or unaccented syllables preceding the final accent. For clarity of explanation, I will henceforth refer only to two-accent cadences. The difficulties are similar whether the Latin melodic formula is one-accent or two-accent.

3. This is not quite identical to the shadow accent employed by Solesmes since 1903 in the case of too many unaccented syllables before the final accent, for in this case the shadow accent is being used for the final accent of the line, not the preceding accent.

4. Technically this joining together is called “synhaeresis.”


7. The pes is also called the podatus—the two terms are interchangeable.

Appendices

*Click on the appropriate title to open a pdf of each appendix.*

1. Psalm Tones from the German Benedictines

2. Simplified Gregorian Psalm Tones

“Gregorian chant in uniquely the Church’s own music. Chant is a living connection with our forebears in the faith, the traditional music of the Roman rite, a sign of communion with the universal Church, a bond of unity across cultures, a means for diverse communities to participate together in song, and a summons to contemplative participation in the Liturgy.”

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

*Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship* (2007), 72
Basic Chants for the Assembly

Columba Kelly, OSB

On May 9, 1964, Dom Eugène Cardine, secretary of Study Group XXV, presented a memo to the Consilium (the group charged with implementing the Second Vatican Council’s Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy Sacrosanctum Consilium [SC]). Cardine stated that SC 54 and 117 expressed a need for a simpler collection of Gregorian chants. The Kyriale Simplex appeared on January 30, 1965, but the Congregation of Rites failed to promote it. Abbot John Prou of the Abbey of Solesmes once remarked that it, along with the Graduale Simplex, “were among the best-kept secrets of the Second Vatican Council!” Article 75 of the USCCB document Sing to the Lord (2007) renews that conciliar request for a basic repertory of chants that can be sung by every worshiping community. In this article, I will propose some basic building blocks of simple chants—a Sanctus and a Gloria in both Latin and English—for use by any worshiping community, large or small. Then I will propose some guidelines based on the current Solesmes teaching on how to sing these chants.

Sanctus

One of the most important acclamations to be sung is that of the response to the Preface of the Eucharistic Prayer: the Sanctus. One of the most ancient and simple chants of the Sanctus is that found in Mass XVIII (see page twelve). It is a continuation of the melodic patterns used for the preface and forms an intimate link with it. Before singing the melody of this Sanctus, have your group speak the text together with great care for its diction and its meaning. Then sing the melodic setting as “sung speech” in the same rhythmic flow and word/phrase accentuation. In line with these suggestions is the following paragraph that was added to the end of the Preface to the Liber hymnarius of 1983: “The [performance instructions] given here flow from the perfect correspondence of a sacred text to a Gregorian melody. It is for this reason that singers who show respect for the Latin diction, by that very fact already possess the greater part of what is required to execute well a Gregorian piece.” Since English is the native tongue for many of us, it should be no problem to apply these principles to the setting of the English text modeled on the same melodic formula of the Sanctus. The linked MP3 file can help give your group a feel for chant as “sung speech.”

Gloria

The Gloria from Mass XV is the only truly congregational setting of this ancient hymn in the entire Kyriale collection (see page thirteen). The only exception would be the Ambrosian Gloria, borrowed from the Ambrosian Rite. Unlike the more through-composed settings of the Gloria found in the Kyriale, this setting is based on a psalm tone pattern and uses only the notes of the pentatonic scale, a scale common to every culture. The Amen, with its semitone interval, was a later addition to this Gloria. Try speaking the text as a group with careful attention to the flow of the words and their accentuation. To master this style of “sung speech” it might be good to start with the English language setting (see page fourteen) and then apply the same feel to the Latin setting of this Gloria. The linked MP3 should be of help in learning...
this style of singing chant.

In an address given in 2004, Abbot Philip DuMont of Solesmes told his Roman audience: “Why not ask Gregorian chant to reveal its secret in the languages and in the cultures of our time? That which was the fruit of one of the biggest cultural turnovers in the history of the Church—could it not help us to face the challenges of our time? And to lead finally all peoples to sing ‘the great deeds of God in our own tongues’ (Acts 2:11).”

Gloria (Mass XV), GT 760/7. Based on Source Mode E
It has the structure of a Mode IV psalm tone. It is the only congregational Gloria in the 
*Kyriale Romanum* that is proper to the Roman Rite.

To listen to the Gloria with Latin text, click here.
“At international and multicultural gatherings of different language groups, it is most appropriate to celebrate the Liturgy in Latin, ‘with the exception of the readings, the homily, and the prayer of the faithful.’ In addition, ‘selections of Gregorian chant should be sung’ at such gatherings, whenever possible.”

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship (2007), 72
Quoting Pope Benedict XVI, Sacramentum Caritatis (2007)
The Parish Book of Chant (PBC) is a handsome, inexpensive pew and choir book. It is chiefly the work of Richard Rice, director of the Canticum Novum Schola of Greater Washington, DC. (We can also thank him for *Communio*, his collection of 110 Latin communion chants from the *Roman Gradual* and the full text of the communion psalms—marvelous.) The notation uses the older, “classic” Solesmes markings. At the back of the book there is a seven-page tutorial on understanding the signs, melodies, style, rhythms, and modes.

For comparison, there is only the *Liber Cantualis* (LC), the 118-page 1978 publication from Solesmes, in Latin only, unlike the PBC. Both volumes succeed in providing a more than basic repertoire (beyond *Iubilate Deo*, 1974) for singing chant at Mass. And, minus the propers, both provide for singing the Mass in chant.

Of course, the propers are the issue in singing the Mass and not just singing at Mass. The renewed and restored Eucharistic liturgy demands antiphons and psalms/canticles, the essential liturgical prayer language of the Western rites. The PBC acknowledges this omission in its foreword. So the PBC contains chant settings of only the canticles of Zechariah, Mary, and Simeon, and only two psalms (*116V*, the shortest, and four verses of *50V*). There are seven antiphons from the graduals and one from the antiphonal.

The LC has seven ordinaries and two settings of the creed (I and III); the PBC, eleven ordinaries and four credos (all but II and V). Both volumes provide all the chants necessary for benediction. The PBC contains a complete Order of Mass for both the ordinary form (OF) of the Latin (Roman) Order of Mass and the extraordinary form (EF), in side-by-side Latin and English. These include the sung responses of the people and of the priest-celebrant. But where the LC has everything necessary to sing the OF Requiem Mass, the PBC enables the assembly to sing only the ordinary of the EF Requiem Mass as well as the *In Paradisum* and the *Chorus Angelorum*.

The PBC does not account for its omission of the required sequences, *Victimae Paschali Laudes* and *Veni Sancte Spiritus*, both present in the LC. It abridges the *Lauda Sion* according to postconciliar practice and provides the *Stabat Mater*. It does offer the solemn tones for the Marian canticles, something the LC did not consider important. The LC contains a complete setting of Compline, something the PBC did not consider important.

The PBC betters the LC by printing the EF Litany of the Saints at the Easter Vigil but mistakenly suggests that the responses can be used for the OF as well. This is not the case. The Trinity is not invoked in the OF Litany at the Vigil, and the OF does not use *Purce nobis, Domine*, and *Exaudi nos, Domine*.

The PBC abstains from using any ICEL or ICET texts, substituting the Douay-Rheims/Challoner-esque translation of the Order of Mass from the website *The Catholic Liturgical Library* (www.catholicliturgy.com). In fact, there is no mention of compliance with Canons 826 and 838 (unlike the LC).

There are two significant missed opportunities in the PBC—on page ten and again on page eighteen. The new *Missale Romanum* (2002) includes chant settings of the invitation to the prayer over the gifts and the invitation to
Communion; the sung *Oremus* and *Ecce Agnus Dei* would contribute to the noble goals the PBC sets for itself in its foreword.

It is curious to see Benedictine Father A. Gregory Murray’s 1958 threefold Alleluia (page 84) in square notation on a four-line staff as if it were Gregorian.

*The Parish Book of Chant* is well-suited for conservative Catholic settings. Like the *Liber Cantualis*, it moves the game pieces a little past the above-average “best practices” of the Church of 1960, a Church I know and love well. I question whether this is the book that will get us to the sung Mass envisioned by Second Vatican Council, something few average Catholics, alas, have ever experienced.


**RECORDING**

**Chant: Music for the Soul**

*Decca, 2008. ASN B0019D3DAQ. $16.98.*

This CD was produced by the monks of the Cistercian abbey Stift Heiligenkreuz (Holy Cross Abbey) shortly after the visit of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI in 2007 and released in April 2008. The recording very quickly became popular, first throughout Europe and now in the United States, certainly taking advantage of the 2007 *motu proprio Summorum pontificum* and its revitalization of things traditional in the Church.

The CD is a wonderful exposé on traditional monastic life (even if the monks were selected by the recording company by submitting an “audition” on YouTube), as well a living commentary on many aspects of chant practice. This musical invitation into the lives of the monks reminds us of the total giving of self to a life of prayer, work, and contemplation that is the life of a monk. Listening to the ancient tones of the music for the burial rites is a subtle call, reminding those of us in the frenetic world outside the monastic cloister of the importance of prayer, Christ-centered work, and time for contemplation, even if on a less intense scale than that of a monk.

With regard to chant practice, the recording is a mini-encyclopedia. First, we are reminded immediately that chant is not the music of professional musicians but the music of ordinary—but dedicated—souls. The singers have lovely but amateur voices. Not everything is perfectly tuned, but it doesn’t really matter: It is the music of deep prayer.

Second, we learn almost immediately that there is not a single chant tradition. Many of the melodies take ever so slight twists away from the more familiar melodies of the *Graduale Romanum*, reflecting uniquely Cistercian customs.

Third, and perhaps most important for musicians to note, the recording makes immediately clear that it is the text that carries the rhythm of the music in chant. On first hearing, the CD seems to be something of an aural picture of the Solesmes method. Particularly on the florid melodies, the notes are mostly sung in a somewhat equal-note fashion. They do not reflect any sensitivity to the currently fashionable practices of interpreting the rhythms of the melodies by study of various signs that appear in the earliest notation systems but were lost as the centuries progressed. However, on repeated hearings—with particular attention to the recitation of the psalm verses—it
becomes clear that, while the florid melodies may be a bit rigid, perhaps in order for the untrained monks to maintain their magnificent unison, the monks are singing texts that are dear to them and on which they are meditating as they pray. There is a gentle rhythmic nuance in the psalm verses that reflects a certain sensitivity to and intimacy with the texts.

Technically, the recording is very clean. The voices are clear, while the acoustical ambience of the abbey church is still evident. The ensemble is quite exceptional, and the choice of the burial chants for a large portion of the recording was well considered: all sublimely beautiful chants. This is a recording worth adding to your library and to your prayer life.

Reviewed by Dr. Edward Schaefer, associate dean for Academic and Student Affairs in the College of Fine Arts at the University of Florida and director of the Florida Schola Cantorum, which sings chant and the great polyphony treasure of the Church.

**MISSALE ROMANUM** (ROMAN MISSAL), 2002

Missale Romanum ex decreto Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratum auctoritate Pauli PP. VI promulgatum Ioannis Pauli PP. II cura recognitum.


Even though the third official edition of the Missale Romanum has already been honored in *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft* volume 45, in the context of this review one must take up the musical aspects in particular.

The greatest change, without doubt, in contrast to the predecessor editions, is in the realm of cantillation. Among the happiest aspects from the perspective of liturgical music is the fact that now it is finally clear and visible, optically and in terms of book production, that the more noble form of a liturgy (*forma nobilior*, cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 113) is the sung form. Finally such statements of the Council are not merely pious theory, but they are implemented in practice (and in book production). Numerous melodies stand right there “on the spot” within the liturgical formularies and are no longer banished, as earlier, to a rather lovelessly assembled appendix. For example, the notated form of a preface precedes in principle the text alone. This makes visible a preference for the sung rendition. Appropriately, introductions and indications for the use of chant have increased. Twenty-seven prefaces notated with music of the solemn tone (*tonus sollemnis*) are integrated into the relevant Mass formulary for solemnities, more important feasts, and particular occasions. A rubric refers to the location of the text alone in cases where this does not immediately follow the notated version.

The prefaces within the *Ordo missae* (518–567) are not notated, just as is the case for some other proper prefaces of various Mass formularies, which is a shame. The prefaces for Sundays of Advent and Lent, various feasts of saints, sacramental celebrations (e.g., ordination, marriage), Mass for the Dead, etc., are not set up for cantillation. And yet the simple tone (*tonus ferialis*) is reprinted and explained in Appendix 1 by means of the Second Preface of Advent. These principles of notation are not coherent. Why only the solemn tone? Are celebrants able to work out the simple tone by sight-reading the text without help of notation? Why is there a notated preface for the Dedication of a Church but none for sacramental celebrations? Why is there no notated preface from the Common of Saints (which one could also use for patronal celebrations)? Why is there no Preface for the Dead available in the simple tone? In view of the special effort to notate all those parts of the liturgy which call for cantillation, this is a regrettable inconsistency. The
practical consequence is that one will have to use two books for celebrations of lower rank, since the prefaces in full musical form are found only in the *Ordo Missae in Cantu* (OMC).

In the course of the church year, the processional antiphons for Palm Sunday and the introduction to the procession are notated, as are the solemn intercessions and “Ecce lignum” [“Behold the wood”] for Good Friday. According to the *Missale Romanum* 2002, the sequence “Stabat mater” can be sung after the hymn “Crux fidelis” (329). This innovation hardly derives from tradition, and it represents popular piety more than liturgical propriety. At the Easter Vigil the “Exsulter” is noted in its long and short form, and the intonations to the Gloria and the Alleluia are also noted. It is now expressly stated that the Alleluia should be sung three times at successively higher pitches. (The previous editions of the missal did not have this rubric, nor did the *Graduale Romanum* of 1974.) The introduction to the litany is notated but not the litany itself.

The prayer for blessing baptismal water is notated in the simple preface tone for when a baptism takes place. For the blessing of water without baptism, the prayer is in the prayer tone. One notes the subtle distinction: Musically, the blessing of water for baptism takes precedence over the blessing of holy water for the simple recalling of baptism. Here it is brought to expression aurally (preface tone—prayer tone) that baptism belongs to the full form of the Easter liturgy, and its lack is actually a deficiency.

The notation is quite comprehensive for the Order of Mass: Sign of the Cross, Greeting, Penitential Rite in three forms (interestingly the “Confiteor” appears only with text, but the introduction to it and the absolution after it have melodies); Kyrie of the “Missa mundi”; intonations for the Gloria, Vaticanos I, XI, VIII, IX, IV (in that order); two intonations to the Credo; preface dialogue in the solemn tone; Sanctus of the “Missa mundi” with reference to other melodies in the *Graduale Romanum*; acclamation after the institution narrative; “Per ipsum” [“Through him, with him, in him . . .”] (notated with all texts of the Eucharistic Prayer); “Pater noster” with introduction, embo-lism, and doxology; prayer for peace and greeting of peace; Agnus Dei of the “Missa mundi” with reference to other melodies in the Graduale; blessing formularies; and dismissal.

All four Roman Eucharistic Prayers, including the (Roman) interpolations, are entirely set up for cantillation. For the Roman Canon there is also a more solemn tone (tonus sollemnior) from “Quam oblationem” to “Supplices te rogamus” with richer ornamentation. This tone was already known at the time of the Council, and only now is it officially taken into a liturgical book.

Appendix 1 contains the *Cantus varii in Ordine Missae occur rentes* (1229–1248). Within the *Ordo missae* the whole-step formula is reprinted as the Tonus sollemnis. In the appendix are found the half-step formulas as Tonus simplex. What is “solemn” or “simple” certainly depends on how you define them. Here the missal follows the monastic customs of the nineteenth century whereby tones in minor are seen as “more solemn” than tones in major. In and of themselves, the half-step tones in the C mode would be “typically Roman,” whereas the whole-step tones in D mode are, according to the dominant understanding today, most probably Gallican. Nineteen various intonations for the Gloria from the Gradient Romanum and Graduale Simplex follow.

The tones for the prayers are explained with examples (1234ff); this also is a change from the 1970 Missale Romanum and the 1974 Graduale Romanum. The reading tones follow (1237ff), also explained with examples. There are two tones for the Old Testament and Acts of the Apostles, one tone for the epistle, and three tones for the Gospel. After five models for the general intercessions there are melodies for “Orate fraters—suscipiat” [“Pray, brothers and sisters—May the Lord accept the sacrifice”], alternative “Pater
noster” models, “Ecce Agnus Dei—Domine, non sum dignus” [“This is the
Lamb of God—Lord, I am not worthy”], the solemn final blessing, and the
Oratio super populum [Prayer over the people]. The solemn announcement
for Epiphany concludes this appendix.

In comparison to the 1975 Missale Romanum and the 1973 Ordo Cantus
Missae (OCM) the following innovations, in the sense that they were not
there before, are introduced in the 2002 Missale Romanum. For the greeting
of the opening rites, alternative half-step formulas are offered, but melodic
formulas for the three variants of the penitential rite are entirely lacking. Also
introduced is the half-step prayer tone with the drop of a third. In practice this
had stubbornly remained in use rather than the direct ending. The rubric con-
cerning the whole-tone prayer tone at the Oratio super oblata [Prayer over
the gifts] has been sharpened. Previously it said “aptius convenit” [“it is more
appropriate”] as a transition to the preface dialogue. Now it is prescribed:
“semper adhibetur cum oratione super oblata” [“it is always to be employed
with the prayer over the gifts”]. But who will be able to enforce that?

New for the reading tones is that the Tonus antiquus [ancient tone] of the
Matins reading is brought in. In contrast to the 1912 Antiphonale Romanum,
this is termed the Tonus sollemnis in the 2002 Missale Romanum. The 1975
Missale Romanum had contained one model for the Oratio universalis [Gen-
eral Intercessions] but now there are five. The cantillation of “Suscipiat” is
new.

The biggest innovation concerns cantillation of the Eucharistic Prayer. The
1975 Missale Romanum provided only the institution narrative and anamne-
sis. Now, as makes more sense, the entire Eucharistic Prayer can be solemnly
sung. The four classical Roman Eucharistic Prayers are expressly set up for
this. By way of exception, notation of the interpolations for Missae rituales
[ritual Masses] was clearly forgotten. The Eucharistic Prayers for Reconcili-
ation and the Eucharistic Prayers for Special Needs and Occasions are not
set up for cantillation, but a rubric in the Ordo missae (517) says that the cel-
eb rant can sing parts of the Eucharistic Prayer in all Masses. Also new is the
possibility of singing “Domine, non sum dignus” [“Lord, I am not worthy”]
with its invitation.

The Benedictio sollemnis [Solemn Blessing] is newly formed; in contrast
to the 1975 Missale Romanum, both variants have been changed for the better
according to the model in Ordo Missae in Cantu of 1995. The melodies for
“Ite missa est” [“The Mass is ended”] based on the Kyrie were not revived in
the 2002 Missale Romanum.

In contrast to the 1975 Missale Romanum, of course other chants are also
added which do not signify a change in principles with respect to singing
praxis but previously could only be found in other books. Among these are
the Sanctus and Agnus Dei of the “Missa mundi,” which now represent a sort
of “normal chant” in the missal. Among these also are the intonations for the
Gloria and Credo. For the former, the most prevalent ones stand within the
Ordo missae itself, and the more numerous remaining ones are in an ap-
pendix. “New” in the sense of previously available but not in the missal are
various processional chants. It is noteworthy that there is no notation for texts
similar to the preface such as, e.g. the nuptial blessing. Various ritual booklets
offer a substitute, but the price for this is alternation between several books.

Comparison with the 1975/1995 Ordo Missae in Cantu (OMC) from
Solesmes yields a differentiated picture. This book provided for extensive
cantillation of the Mass, but, strictly speaking, its use was only permitted for
the monasteries of the Solesmes congregation. OMC contains only Form B
of the penitential rite but also the notated prayers for the blessing of water
on Sundays. It is puzzling that these are lacking in the missal. In OMC all
the prefaces of the missal are available with notation and also all interpola-
tions in the Eucharistic Prayers, which for the first time in this publication are
set up for being entirely sung. Thus, the 2002 Missale Romanum takes over a practice of the Solesmes congregation and is able to make use of proven materials. In contrast to the practice of the Solesmes order, complete cantillation of the penitential rite and cantillation of the “Suscipiat” and the invitation to Communion are new. But OMC is by no means made obsolete by the 2002 Missale Romanum. Just as previously, one will need it as a complement, even though two missals on the altar is not exactly a feast for the eyes.

Cantillation of the missal has changed greatly in scope but not in form. Only a few small things are lacking for a one-hundred percent cantillated Ordo missae. The practice of cantillation formulated at the beginning of the twentieth century, going back to Guidetti’s Directorium chori of 1582, is maintained in principle. Substantial innovations were hardly to be expected. They were not so daring as to bring back medieval cantillation melodies. According to Roman tradition, the melodies appear in the missal without any added rhythmic signs. The music font was partially altered; the single note is no longer perfectly square but slightly rounded. The type size is sufficient, but barely so, for one with normal vision; short-sighted users, with or without glasses, will unfortunately have to bend over a bit more.

In its book production, the musical layout of the 2002 Missale Romanum takes seriously the theory of liturgical chant of the relevant documents. It thereby enhances the value of singing in worship. These innovations signal very clearly that singing is pars integralis [an integral part] and not an appendix or mere ornamentation to the liturgy. All in all, that is a wonderful development, even if many other wishes for a revised missal remain unfulfilled. A more detailed portrayal of the current state of affairs [in German] is found in Franz Karl Prassl, “Notation in der Editio typica tertia des Missale Romanum (2002),” Beiträge zur Gregorianik 34/35 (2003), 153–161.

Review by Franz Karl Prassl, professor at the University and Music University (Conservatory) of Graz, Austria, president of the European hymn society Internationale Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Hymnologie, who frequently presents on liturgical music topics and is widely published in the German-speaking world. Translated by Father Anthony Ruff, osb. Reprinted with permission of Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft. The original appeared in German in Jahrgang [year] 49, Heft [volume] 1/2 of Archiv Für Liturgiewissenschaft, pages 219–221.

Nova et Vetera

Submissions Welcome

Submissions to Custos are welcome. Please consider sharing an article with other pastoral musicians. For information on how to submit an article, please contact one of the editors by e-mail: Bridgid Kinney: bridgid.kinney@gmail.com; Joe Balistreri: jcbalistreri@gmail.com.

Chant Melodies for the Missal

ICEL has issued a report with information on the chant melodies for the forthcoming English translation of the Roman Missal. That report is found online at http://www.icelweb.org/ICELMusicIntroductionRev809.pdf.

New Resources on the Web

See the many useful handouts and reference materials about chant now available on the NPM Chant Section page at the NPM website. You’ll find them at: http://www.npm.org/Sections/Chant/index.htm.
Most Awful Surprise

Lest we assume that “the grass is greener” on the other side of the ocean, this excerpt may be of interest. It’s from an editorial about the chant situation in Germany, the homeland of Pope Benedict XVI, in Beiträge zur Gregorianik [“Articles on Gregorian Chant”], volume 46, 2008.

As you know, work is now underway on a new prayer book and hymnal for German-speaking congregations. Texts and musical pieces which might be included in the new Gotteslob [Praise of God] were tested this year in almost ninety “test parishes” in Germany and Austria. Chant Mass XI was among the pieces which were to be tested for their “usefulness to congregations.” The survey results were horrifying: The vast majority of the submissions reported a near total rejection of this Mass Ordinary, except for the Kyrie, and—much worse—a strong rejection of chant in general. Alongside massive rejection of the Latin language, certainly the highly controversial notation of the chants [in four-line square-note notation] played a role in this . . . . The most awful surprise of the survey results for me: The social group which most clearly rejected the chant Mass was precisely the church musicians! An editorial is certainly not the place to speculate about background and causes—the subject is too serious. But one must really wonder: If this report on the survey results from the congregations is accurate (and unfortunately there is hardly any doubt about this), who will still be singing Gregorian chant in another ten or twenty years? What has gone wrong that Gregorian chant finds ever decreasing acceptance in worship, despite the ever livelier interpretation of it? And [what about the fact that] obviously this is true not only for “normal” members of the congregation but rather precisely for those from whom one could have expected at least “toleration” of the Church’s very own music? This is a question that we too must face up to, we in our temple of the chant saints. I find these survey results, precisely in the anniversary year of the Graduale Romanum, most sobering. And with all the mood of celebration within our “family,” we must not forget to look at real life. Certainly “Gregorian chant” is much more than the chant Ordinaries printed in our congregational hymnal. But for most people this is Gregorian chant. And if these chants are rejected even by many church musicians, then all the claims of the Church that chant is, as always, the “No. 1” of church music, are waste paper. We may have researched the tiniest details of every manuscript, but if full-time and part-time church musicians have had Gregorian chant explained to them in their schooling but have not found joy in it, then all our research is nothing more than museum work. . . . Both training of church musicians and the new hymnal are topics which are important for the survival of Gregorian chant in practice. I think that it is important for all of us not to close our eyes to these topics in the future. A living chant tradition must be a concern close to all our hearts.

Translation by A. W. Ruff, osb

Coming in Custos 3, 2010

Review of the new chant book Antiphonale Monasticum from Solesmes.