

Since I had the great privilege and honor of adapting Fr. Columba's Missal Antiphons into modern notation and harmonizing them for the OCP publication (I have been a student of Fr. Columba's for many, many years) I feel that I am in a good position to answer some of the questions that have come up in this posting. First, the Antiphons are really too melismatic for a choir. They are best suited to a cantor or at most a very small schola. As those familiar with his work already know, the rhythm is based on Cardine's understanding of semiology and the importance of the oxytonic syllable. There are modal and melodic structure pitches and the rest of the notes are ornamental. It becomes difficult to perform this delineation of primary and secondary melodic notes with multiple singers. Because of this, Fr. Columba has composed for each setting a shortened "Congregation refrain" in the same mode and echoing the melodic shape of the Antiphon. This can be sung by the congregation between the strophes of the Psalm since they are easy to remember (they are very syllabic) . OCP has printed a pew edition with the melodies only, in modern notation. All of the square neume figures (e.g. podatus, torculus, porrectus, etc.) are identified in the modern notation by slurs (so that those familiar with Cardine will know which notes receive their proper full syllabic value. In the course of production, the OCP staff omitted the slurs from the pew edition, which gives the unfortunate idea that all notes are equal and potentially "hammered" in the same way. The director will have to refer to the square notes on the St. Meinrad's website or the six volume OCP accompaniment edition (with Psalms written out). The accompaniment edition thankfully retains the slurs. Fr. Columba has used the melodies and modes of the Antiphons from the Gradual where they remain the same as in the new Missal. New Antiphons were created for the new Missal Antiphon texts. OCP has decided to publish approximately 400 of these Antiphons and Psalms including all Sundays and major feasts (all optional texts from the Missal have also been set and will be published by OCP). The real genius of these settings (besides the fact that they respect all of the traditional idiomatic melodic modal nuances with regard to the given English text) is that they can easily be combined with the Latin Gradual (where the texts are in agreement, of course). They can be used in many different ways, from just having a cantor sing the Antiphon once, through singing the complete attached Psalm with Doxology (interspersed with the Congregational refrain and concluding with the repetition of the Antiphon. The OCP editions will be available by the end of the year. The original intent of OCP was to create an English Gradual, but ultimately they chose not to include the Offertory Antiphons since they do not exist in the current Missal.

Thanked by (3): Heath, JulieColl, M. Jackson Osborn.