

# PREFACE TO THE VATICAN EDITION

## OF THE ROMAN CHANT.

*The place of honour in this Solesmes Edition of the Vatican Official text is given to the Vatican Preface. Its wise counsels and general Principles of interpretation are embodied, elucidated and enlarged upon in the Rules given further on.*

Holy Mother the Church has received from God the charge of training the souls of the faithful in all holiness, and for this noble end has ever made a happy use of the help of the sacred Liturgy. Wherein — in order that men's minds may not be sundered by differences, but that, on the contrary, the unity which gives vigour and beauty to the mystical body of Christ might flourish unimpaired — she has been zealous to keep the traditions of our forefathers, ever trying diligently to discover and boldly to restore any which might have been forgotten in the course of the ages.

Now among those things which most nearly touch the sacred Liturgy, being as it were interwoven therein and giving it splendour and impressiveness, the first place must be assigned to the Sacred Chant. We have, indeed, all learnt from experience that it gives a certain breadth to divine worship and uplifts the mind in wondrous wise to heavenly things. Wherefore the Church has never ceased to recommend the use of the Chant, and has striven with the greatest assiduity and diligence to prevent its decline from its pristine dignity.

To this end liturgical music must possess those characteristics which make it preeminently sacred and adapted to the good of souls. It must surely emphasise above all else the dignity of divine worship, and at the same time be able to express pleasantly and truly the sentiments of the christian soul. It must also be catholic, answering to the needs of every people, country and age, and combine simplicity with artistic perfection.

All these characteristics, however, are nowhere to be found in a higher degree than in Gregorian Chant — *the special Chant of the Roman Church, who has received it alone by inheritance from the Fathers, has kept it carefully throughout the ages in her records, and commends it to the faithful as her own, ordering its exclusive use in certain parts of the Liturgy.* (Motu Proprio. Nov. 22. 1903. n. 3.)

Certainly in the course of time the Gregorian Chant incurred no small loss of purity. This was chiefly because the special rules of the Chant, as traditionally received from the Fathers, were either negligently overlooked or allowed to be altogether forgotten. Hence arose an evident decline in the spirit which is spoken of as "liturgical", and the "spirit of prayer", while at the same time the beauty and grace of the sacred melodies, if they did not wholly disappear, were certainly affected for the worse.

But the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius X. — may his enterprise be crowned with good fortune and success! — emulating herein the zealous endeavours of his predecessors, determined and took measures to prevent any further decadence in the Gregorian Chant. Wherefore, in his Motu Proprio, issued on November 22nd, 1903, he accurately and clearly laid down the principles (surely the first step of reform) whereon the ecclesiastical Chant is based and whereby it is controlled; he gathered together at the same time the principal regulations of the Church against the various abuses which had crept into the Chant in the

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course of time. And then appeared the Decree of the Congregation of Sacred Rites, issued on January 8th, 1904, wherein clearer directions were give for the restoration of the Gregorian Chant.

Nevertheless it remained for the Roman Church and the other Churches which follow her Rite, to provide themselves with books containing the true melodies of the Gregorian Chant. His Holiness, Pius X, had this in view when, in his *Motu Proprio*, promulgated on April 25th, 1904, he declared: the Gregorian melodies were to be restored in their integrity and identity, after the authority of the earliest manuscripts, taking account of the legitimate tradition of past ages, as well as of the actual use of the Liturgy of to-day.

Guided by these rules and standards, those who had taken the task in hand at the bidding of the Pope set to work to revise the books then in use. The first thing they had to do was to undertake a thorough and well considered examination of the primitive manuscripts. This procedure was clearly a wise one; for documents of this kind are not merely to be esteemed on account of their antiquity, which unites them so closely to the beginnings of the Gregorian Chant, but chiefly because they were written in the very ages in which the Chant was most flourishing. For although the more remote the origin of the melodies and the longer they have been in use amongst the ancients, the more worthy they might be of finding a place in the new edition which was in hand, nevertheless, what gives them the right of being included is their religious and artistic flavour, and their power of giving suitable expression to liturgical prayer.

Therefore, in studying the manuscripts, this was the primary object which was kept in view: not indeed to admit off-hand, on the sole ground of antiquity, whatever happened to be most ancient, but, since the restoration of the ecclesiastical Chant had to depend not only on paleographical considerations, but also was to draw upon history, musical and Gregorian art, and even upon experience and upon the rules of the sacred liturgy, it was necessary to have regard to all of these things at the same time; lest a piece, composed perhaps with the learning of antiquity, should fall short in some of the other conditions, and do injury to Catholic tradition by depriving many centuries of the right of contributing something good, or even better than itself, to the patrimony of the Church. For it is by no means to be admitted that what we call the Gregorian tradition may be confined within the space of a few years; but it embraces all those centuries which cultivated the art of the Gregorian Chant with more or less zeal and proficiency. *The Church*, says the Holy Father in the *Motu Proprio* already mentioned, *has cultivated and fostered the progress of the arts unceasingly, allowing for the use of religion all things good and beautiful discovered by man in the course of the ages, provided that liturgical rules be observed.*

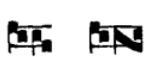
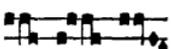
The work of the present edition has been carried out in accordance with these wise directions delivered by Our Most Holy Lord Pope Pius X.

The Church certainly gives freedom to all the learned to settle the age and condition of the Gregorian melodies, and to pass judgment upon their artistic skill. She only reserves to herself one right, to wit, that of supplying and prescribing to the Bishops and the faithful such a text of the sacred Chant as may contribute to the fitting splendour of divine worship and to the edification of souls, after being restored according to the traditional records.

Enough has already been said above to show how solidly based was the work so wisely undertaken of restoring the ancient and legitimate melodies of the Church to their integrity. But for the convenience of those who will be using the choir books edited in accordance with what has already been laid down, it is well to add here a few remarks about the proper notes and figures of the Gregorian Chant as well as about the right way of interpreting them.

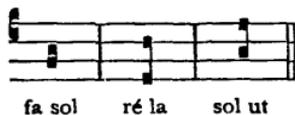
For the proper execution of the Chant, the manner of forming the notes and of linking them together, established by our forefathers and in constant and universal use in the Middle Ages, is of great importance and is recommended still

as the norm for modern Editors. The following tables give the principal forms of these notes or neums along with their names :

			
Punctum	Virga	Bivirga	Punctum inclinatum (Diamond)
			
Podatus or Pes	Clivis or Flexa	Epiphonus	Cephalicus
			
Scandicus	Salicus	Climacus	Ancus
			
Torculus	Porrectus	Torculus resupinus	Porrectus flexus
			
Pes subpunctis	Scandicus subpunctis	Scandicus flexus	Climacus resupinus
			
Strophicus	Pes strophicus	Clivis strophica or Clivis with an Oriscus	Torculus strophicus or Torculus with an Oriscus
			
Pressus	Other Pressus or apposed neums		Trigon
			
Quilisma		Longer or compound Neums	

To avoid all error and doubt in the interpretation of the above notation, the following observations are to be noted :

1. Of the two notes of the *Podatus*, the lower one must be sung before the upper note immediately above it.



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2. The heavy slanting line of the *Porrectus* stands for the two notes which it links together, so that the first note is given at the top of the line and the lower note at the lower end of the line :



3. The half-note, which terminates the *Cephalicus* and the *Epiphonus*, only occurs at the end of a syllable when the next syllable leads on to the combination of two vowels like a diphthong, as e. g. . . *AUTem, EMus, alleLUNA* : or to the juxtaposition of several consonants, e. g. *OMnis, SANctus*. For in such cases the nature of the syllables obliges the voice, in passing from one to the other, to flow or become "liquescent", so that, being confined in the mouth, it does not seem to end, but to lose half its force rather than its duration. (Cf. Guido. *Microlog.* Cf. XV.)

When, however, the nature of the syllables requires a sound which is not liquescent but emitted in full, the *Epiphonus* becomes a *Podatus*, the *Cephalicus* a *Clivis* :



It sometimes happens that two notes follow another higher note or *Virga* in the manner of a *Climacus*; they may then be liquescent, at any rate the last of them. In this case they are represented by two diamond shaped notes of smaller size ♩, or they are changed into a *Cephalicus* following below the *Virga*. This kind of neum, which is akin to the *Climacus*, is called an *Ancus*.

4. When several simple notes as in the *Strophicus* or the *Pressus* or the like are in apposition, that is to say, so written on the same line as to be near one another, they must be sustained for a length of time in proportion to their number. There is, however, this difference between the *Strophicus* and the *Pressus*, that the latter should be sung with more intensity, or even, if it be preferred, *tremolo*; the former more softly, unless the tonic accent of the corresponding syllable require a stronger impulse.

5. There is another kind of *tremolo* note, i. e., the *Quilisma*, which appears in the chant like a "melodic blossom". It is called "*nota volubilis*" and "*gradata*", a note with a trill and gradually ascending. If one has not learnt how to execute these *tremolo* or shaken notes, or, knowing how to render them, has nevertheless to sing with others, he should merely strike the preceding note with a sharper impulse so as to refine the sound of the *Quilisma* rather than quicken it.

6. The tailed note which marks the top of the *Climacus*, *Clivis* and *Porrectus*, is a distinguishing characteristic of these neumatic forms as they have been handed down by our forefathers. This particular note often receives a stronger impulse, not because it is tailed, but because it is not joined to any preceding note, and therefore it gets a direct vocal impulse. The little line which



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3. A brief pause or small division indicates a short sustaining of the voice, and permits, if necessary, the taking of a very short breath. Should the singer require to take breath at more frequent intervals, he may snatch one wherever the words or music allow an interstice, but he must never make any break in the words or neums themselves.

4. A double line closes either a piece of the Chant or one of its principal parts.

In books of Chant another rôle is also assigned to this double line : for it is used in addition to mark the place where, after the beginning, the whole choir takes up the singing, or where the chanting alternates and changes sides. But since this sort of sign incorporated in the midst of the musical text often does injury to the coherence of the Chant, it has been thought more fitting to replace it with an asterisk \*, as may be seen in the above example of the *Kyrie eleison*.

There, and in similar places, a single asterisk will be found, to show that one side of the choir is to be followed by the other side singing alone; but a double asterisk \*\* will be seen where the full choir ought to take up the Chant, so as to end, as is right, with the combined voices of the whole choir.

It is to be noted that B-flat, when it occurs, only holds good as far as the next natural (♮), or dividing line, or new word.

When these points have been thoroughly understood, those who take part in divine worship should also learn all the rules of the Chant and be diligent in their observance, but in such a way that their mind is ever in accord with their voice.

First of all, care should be taken that the words to be sung are clearly and thoroughly understood. (Benedict XIV). For the Chant ought not to weaken but to improve the sense of the words. (St Bernard. *Ep.* 312).

In all texts, whether of lessons, psalmody or chants, the accent and rhythm of the word are to be observed as far as possible, for thus it is, that the meaning of the text is best brought out. (*Instituta Patrum.*)

Moreover, great care must be taken not to spoil the sacred melodies by unevenness in the singing. No neum or note should ever be unduly shortened or prolonged. The singing must be uniform, and the singers should listen to one another, making their pauses well together. When the musical movement is slower, the pause must be lengthened. In order that all the voices may be one, which is most essential, each singer should attempt in all modesty to allow his own voice to become merged in the volume of sound of the choir as a whole. Neither are those to be imitated who hurry the Chant thoughtlessly or who drag out the syllables heavily. But every melody, whether it be sung slowly or quickly, must be executed with fluency, roundness and in a melodious manner. (Hucbald. Nicetas. *Instit. Patrum.*)

The above rules have been drawn from the holy Fathers, some of whom learnt this way of singing from the Angels, while others received it from the teaching of the Holy Spirit speaking to their hearts in contemplation. If we set ourselves to practice these principles with diligence, we too shall appreciate the subtle charm of the Chant, singing to God in our heart and spirit and mind. (*Instituta Patrum.*)

Moreover, those whose duty it is to sing in the Church of God must also be well instructed in the rubrics of their office. Wherefore the principal rules with reference to the Gradual are given below.

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## RUBRICS FOR THE CHANT OF THE MASS.

I. When the priest goes towards the altar, the cantors begin the Introit. On *Ferias* and *Simples* the Intonation is to be sung by one cantor as far as the sign \* : on other *Feasts* and *Sundays*, there should be two cantors : but on *Solemn Feasts* there should be four, if as many as four are available. The choir continues until the Psalm. The first part of the Verse of the Psalm as far as the asterisk, and the *Ÿ. Gloria Patri*, are sung by the cantors, the full choir taking up the rest of the verse. Afterwards, the Introit as far as the Psalm is repeated by the full choir.

If the priest and ministers have some way to go in the church before reaching the altar, there is no reason why several Verses of the Introit Psalm should not be sung after the Antiphon and Verse. In that case the Antiphon may be repeated after every Verse or two Verses. When the priest reaches the altar, the Psalm is if necessary interrupted at the end of a Verse, *Gloria Patri* is sung, and finally the Antiphon.

II. When the Antiphon is over, the choir sings the *Kyrie eleison* thrice, the *Christe eleison* thrice, and again the *Kyrie eleison* thrice, alternately with the cantors, or with the other half of the choir. But the last *Kyrie eleison* is divided into two or three parts, marked by a single or double asterisk. If there be only two parts, and hence only a single asterisk, the first part is sung by the cantors or by the first half of the choir, the second part by the full choir. If there are three parts, the first being marked by the simple asterisk, and the second by the double one, then, the first part is sung by the same side as in the former case : but the second part, which repeats the melody of the first part, is sung by the other half of the choir : and the third part is by both sides together. Sometimes there are even five parts : then the manner of dividing the alternations in the chanting is marked by the single or double dividing sign being several times inserted ; what has been said above sufficiently explains the execution.

III. The priest alone in a clear voice gives the Intonation of the *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, and then *Et in terra pax hominibus*, etc., is continued by the choir divided into two parts, which answer each other, or else the full choir sings in alternation with the prechantors. Then follows the response of the choir to the *Dominus vobiscum*.

IV. After the Epistle or Lesson one or two cantors give the Intonation of the Responsory, which is called the Gradual, as far as the sign \*, and all, or at any rate the cantors chosen, conclude the chant with due care. Two sing the Verse of the Gradual, and, after the final asterisk, the full choir finishes it ; or else, if the responsorial method is preferred, the full choir repeats the first part of the Responsory after the Verse is finished by the cantors or cantor.

If *Alleluia*, *Alleluia* is to be said with the Verse, the first *Alleluia* is sung by one or two voices as far as the asterisk \* : and then the choir repeats the *Alleluia*, continuing with the neum or jubilus which prolongs the syllable *a*. The cantors next sing the Verse, which is finished by the full choir, as before, beginning at the asterisk. When the Verse is finished, the cantor or cantors repeat the *Alleluia*, and the full choir sings only the closing neum.

After *Septuagesima*, the *Alleluia* and the following Verse are left out, and the Tract is sung, its Versicles being chanted alternately by the two sides of the choir answering each other, or else by the cantors and the full choir.

In *Paschal Time*, the Gradual is omitted and in its place the *Alleluia*, *Alleluia* is sung with its Verse as above. Then one *Alleluia* immediately follows, which

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must be begun by one or two cantors until the neum is reached, when it is not repeated, but finished by the full choir. The Verse and one *Alleluia* are sung at the end, in the manner above described.

The Sequences are sung alternately, either by the cantors and the choir, and or else by the alternate sides of the choir.

V. When the Gospel is finished, the priest gives the Intonation of the *Credo* (if it is to be sung), the choir continuing with the *Patrem omnipotentem*, the rest, according to custom, being sung either in full choir or alternately.

VI. The Offertory is begun by one, two or four cantors, in the same way as the Introit, and is finished by the full choir.

After the Offertory Antiphon the choir may sing to the ancient Gregorian chants those Verses which it was once customary to sing at this place.

If the Offertory Antiphon is taken from a Psalm, other Verses of the same Psalm may be sung. In that case the Antiphon may be repeated after every Verse or two Verses. When the Offertory is over, the Psalm ends with *Gloria Patri*, and the Antiphon is repeated.

If the Antiphon is not taken from a Psalm, some Psalm suitable to the feast may be chosen. After the Offertory Antiphon some other Latin piece may be sung suitable for this part of the Mass; which, however, must not be prolonged after the Secret.

VII. When the Preface is finished, the choir goes on with *Sanctus* and *Benedictus*. If these are sung to Gregorian chant they must be given without a break; if not, *Benedictus* may follow the Consecration. During the Consecration all singing must cease, and (even if there is a custom to the contrary) the organ or other instrument is silent. It is preferable that there should be silence from the Consecration until *Pater noster*.

VIII. After the Response at the *Pax Domini*, the *Agnus Dei* is sung thrice: either by the full choir, the Intonation being given by one, two or four cantors each time: or alternately, but in such a way as to have the *Dona nobis pacem*, or the word *sempiternam* in the Mass of the Dead, sung by the full choir.

After the Communion, the full choir sings the Antiphon which is thus named, the Intonation being sung by one, two or four cantors as in the case of the Introit.

The Communion Antiphon is sung while the priest is consuming the Blessed Sacrament. When there are other communicants, the Antiphon is begun when the priest distributes Communion. If the Antiphon is taken from a Psalm, other Verses of the same Psalm may be sung. In that case the Antiphon may be repeated after every Verse or two Verses; and when the Communion is ended *Gloria Patri* followed by the Antiphon is sung.

If the Antiphon is not taken from a Psalm, some Psalm suitable to the feast and to this part of the Mass may be chosen.

After the Communion Antiphon, especially if the Communion takes a long time, some other Latin piece suitable to the occasion may be sung.

IX. The priest or the deacon sings the *Ite Missa est*, or the *Benedicamus Domino*, and the choir answers with the *Deo gratias* in the same tone.

In the Mass of the Dead, the choir answers *Amen* to the *Requiescant in pace*.

X. It is possible that for a good reason some piece assigned to cantors or choir cannot be sung as noted in the liturgical books; for instance, the singers are too few, or not sufficiently skilful, or the chant or the rite is too long. In that case the only alternative allowed is that the whole piece should be recited *recto tono* (on one note), or sung to a Psalm tone; this may be accompanied by the organ.