

Latin Pronunciation

Since the singing of the psalms of the Office is a divine work—the Church and Christ praising God—it is essential that the language used should promote unity in the voicing of that praise. “The mother tongue of worshipping Roman Catholics is Latin when liturgical worship is concerned. No man cares to speak his mother tongue in a foreign accent. Respect, then, the Roman pronunciation.” (Dom Dominic Johner, “A New School of Gregorian Chant.” New York, Pustet 1914, pp. 95-98). For further legislation on the pronunciation of Latin see “*Latin According to Roman Usage*”, published by The St. Gregory Guild, Inc. 1705 Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia, Pa.

The following rules are based on the actual pronunciation of Latin in the Province of Rome:

A—always open as in *Father*.

E—as in *Red* but more resonant, more like a in *Fare* (never with a second sound as in *May*).

I and Y—as *ee* in *Feet* (never as *i* in *Tin*).

O—as in *For*, not as in *Note*.

U—as in *Boot*, not as in *But*.

AE and OE—as simple E above.

Otherwise two consecutive vowels are pronounced separately, e.g., EI, OU, AU, EO, II.

Latin consonants which call for special attention are:

C before e, ae, oe, i is pronounced like ch in *Church*.

C before a, o, u is pronounced like c in *Cat*.

G before a, o, u is pronounced like g in *Get*.

G before e, i is pronounced like g in *Gentle*.

H is silent as in *Thomas*, except in *Mihi* and *Nihil* where it has the sound of a somewhat softened K.

J (sometimes written as I) gets the sound of the English Y but forms only one sound with the following vowel.

Y in Latin gets the sound of I.

CH is always pronounced K (even before e and i).

GN gets the sound of ny as in the English *Canyon*

PH is always pronounced F.

Th is always pronounced T.

SC before e and i gets the sound of SH.

CC before e and i gets the sound T plus CH. (Ecce.)

TI before any vowel is TSI.

XC before e and i is pronounced like K plus SH (e.g. excelsis)

Z is pronounced with the DZ sound in the English word *Stands*.