

AN AMERICAN REQUIEM



Our nation's first cathedral in Baltimore

An American Expression of our Roman Rite

A Funeral Guide for helping Catholic pastors, choirmasters and families
in America honor our beloved dead

AN AMERICAN REQUIEM: AN AMERICAN EXPRESSION OF OUR ROMAN RITE

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,

And let perpetual light shine upon them.

And may the souls of all the faithful departed,

through the mercy of God,

Rest in Peace.

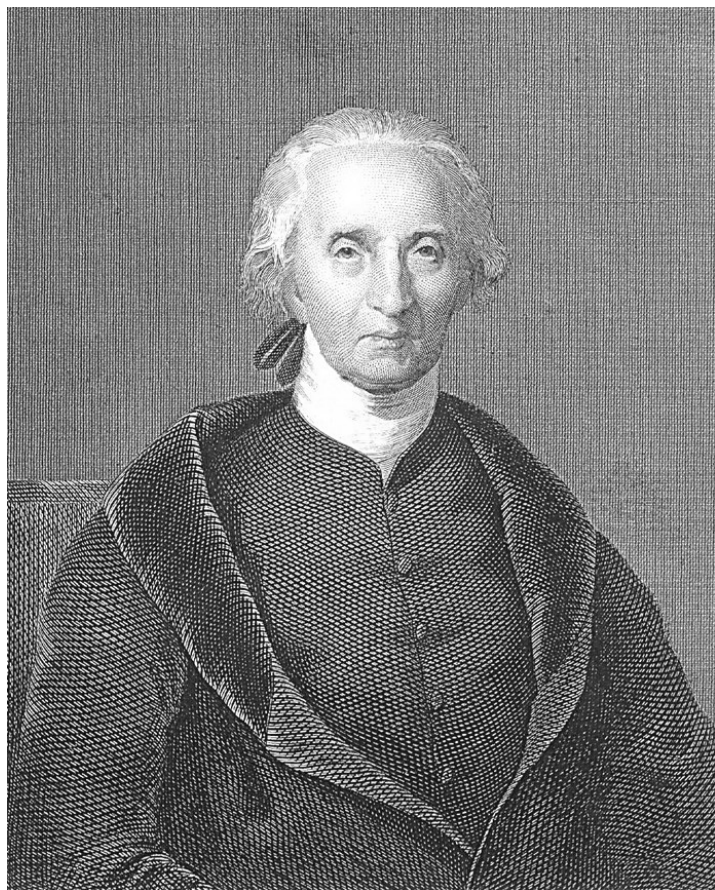
Amen.



Grave of Father Thomas Merton
at Gethsemane, Kentucky

"This is what I think about the Latin and the chant: they are masterpieces, which offer us an irreplaceable monastic and Christian experience. They have a force, an energy, a depth without equal ... As you know, I have many friends in the world who are artists, poets, authors, editors, etc. Now they are well able to appreciate our chant and even our Latin. But they are all, without exception, scandalized and grieved when I tell them that probably this Office, this Mass will no longer be here in ten years. And that is the worst. The monks cannot understand this treasure they possess, and they throw it out to look for something else, when seculars, who for the most part are not even Christians, are able to love this incomparable art."

— Thomas Merton wrote this in a letter to Dom Ignace Gillet, who was the Abbot General of the Cistercians of the Strict Observance (1964)



Requiescat in Pace

Charles Carroll of Carrollton

Praying for the Dead

The Carrolls were among the early founders of Maryland, but as Catholic subjects to the English Crown they were unable to participate in the political life of the colony. This was a time when Catholicism was illegal, and no Catholic churches were allowed to be built on British soil, so their Catholicism was lived out in private chapels on their estates, which they opened up to the poor Catholics in the community who would not have otherwise had a place to freely worship. Charles Carroll was the only Catholic signer of the Declaration of Independence. He was the best educated of all the Signers. As a Catholic he was forbidden education in Protestant lands so he had no choice but to go to Europe for education. Charles Carroll was also the wealthiest of all the Signers and had the most to lose. But as a Catholic his family had known religious persecution at the hands of the British Crown for generations, so when the opportunity arose to form a new republic, he signed up.

Called THE FIRST CITIZEN, he was also the last of the Founding Fathers to die (at 95). His funeral rites occurred in 1832 at the nation's first cathedral, which he had helped to build, and which the revolution had made possible. After the Requiem Mass was offered, his body was taken home through the constant rain to Doughoregan Manor in Ellicott City, Maryland. There he was buried in the floor of the family chapel between the altar and the pew where he long knelt in devout prayer. At his death, the whole nation mourned THE LAST OF THE ROMANS.

And yet still in the month of November many generations hence his descendants and others can gather in that same chapel and have offered a Mass for the eternal salvation of Charles Carroll of Carrollton, and for the deceased members of his family, and for all the faithful departed. As heroic as his Catholicism was, no matter how great a man, no matter how profoundly moral a man he was, we still pray for the repose of his soul, because we are Catholics.

This is, in many ways, such an American story, and yet it is the story of a family whose ties and history go beyond our nation all the way back to the beginning of our Church. As American Catholics, we can make great citizens, and we love our nation, but we love first our Lord, and want to be able to express our ancient Faith in this new land. We are united to our non-Catholic neighbors in so many ways, and our history, as English speakers, is not just "American" but also broader in the English speaking world (even though we, like Charles Carroll, may not all be ethnically English). So we share a patrimony that is not just American, but is also European in its origin, and universal in its scope.

Still, there are things that distinguish us from our neighbors. As Catholics we have a shared history and understanding that others may not have. To that end, we hope that what follows helps us, as Catholics in America, to find our true voice, to worship in an authentically Catholic way, to remember our beloved dead, and to pray for them, and all the faithful departed. We also hope this helps parishes form parochial norms that are more in line with our Roman rite and Tradition. And of course, ultimately we want to find our redemption in the saving blood of the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.



Doughoregan Manor in Ellicott, Maryland

Table of Contents

HELPFUL EXPECTATIONS	page V
PRAYING FOR THE DEAD: A PASTOR'S PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE	page 6
LOOKING AT THE PROPER	page 11
OPTIONAL PRELUDES	page 13

THE INTROIT	page 15
THE GRADUAL	page 19
THE OFFERTORY	page 22
THE COMMUNIO	page 25
ON SOLOS AND COMMUNION HYMNS	page 27
THE CLOSING RITES	page 28
THE SUBVENITE	page 29
THE IN PARADISUM	page 32
THE RECESSIONAL	page 34

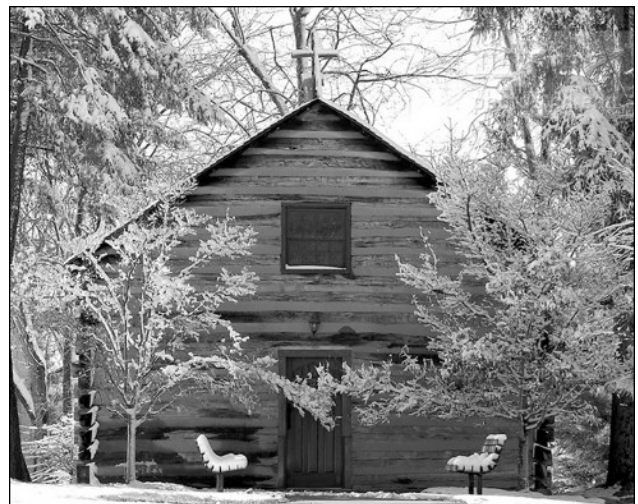
AUXILIARY MUSIC FROM THE REQUIEM	page 35
----------------------------------	---------

THE DIES IRAE	page 36
THE PIE JESU	page 37
THE LIBERA ME	page 38
WHAT THE MODES TELL US	page 39

TASTEFUL & APPROPRIATE HYMN OPTIONS	page 43
-------------------------------------	---------

Table of Contents (Continued)

FINDING A BALANCE BETWEEN PRESUMPTION & DESPAIR	page 47
A WORD ABOUT PARTICIPATION	page 49
<hr/>	
MUSIC FOR A CHILD'S FUNERAL MASS	page 50
MUSIC FOR A FUNERAL MASS IN SPANISH	page 52
<hr/>	
LITURGICAL PLANNING AT A GLANCE	page 53
A LAST WORD ON EULOGIES	page 54
ASHES TO ASHES, DUST TO DUST	page 55
AT THE GRAVE	page 57
<hr/>	
ONE FINAL CAUTION	page 58
A DEACON'S PERSPECTIVE	page 60



The old Log Chapel on the campus of Notre Dame University marks the historic center of the old missions to the region's Native Americans, and covers the grave of Father Stephen Badin.

HELPFUL EXPECTATIONS

With this document we sincerely hope to help others restore the liturgy, and to see a path in their own parochial setting to incrementally put the proper pieces of the liturgy back into place. Not every parish is exactly the same. Each parish has its own strengths and challenges. This document (written by a priest) is based on his own experience serving in three different parishes as either a parochial vicar or as a pastor. Ours is a peculiar parish in that we know what the propers are, and in that we actually sing them. We are proud of that. Experienced pastors and choirmasters with PhD's may certainly disagree with even the premise of singing the propers, but the expectations of the Church are clear. So if you want to embrace the liturgical documents of the Church, and really sing the Mass, we hope this will be helpful.

NUNC DIMITTIS

Lord, now let your servant go in peace;
your word has been fulfilled;
my own eyes have seen the salvation
which you have prepared in the sight of every people;
a light to reveal you to the nations
and the glory of your people, Israel.

Canticle of Simeon

Luke 2:29-32



St. Roch Cemetery in New Orleans

PRAYING FOR THE DEAD: A PASTOR'S PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

This was lecture prepared for parish musicians for a one day workshop on the Essential Music for the Funeral Rite. It was written by the pastor of Our Lady of the Mountains parish in Jasper, Georgia in September of A.D. MMXV

An anthropologist once explained that he could judge the culture of a people by how they cared for their dead. Well, if burial rites are an essential telltale of the cultural health of our society, then as a priest I must tell you that does not bode well for our present age. Why? Because most people today are un-churched, so when death happens, they improvise. They have the cremated remains delivered to them in a plastic bag or a cardboard box and then a handful of people stand around trying to say something “meaningful” before they scatter the ashes on a dirty river all the while trying not to let those same ashes blow back on their clothes. This (or a variant upon this) has almost become the norm today.

St. Mary's in Aiken, SC



The family might call the priest at the last moment, because maybe they start to feel just a little bit of guilt, because after all their parents were Catholic, but then again they might not, and if they do call the priest, his part in their plans may be very, very limited. For when Buddha votive sculptures decorate our homes, and folks do yoga instead of praying, respect for the body has been more and more lost. If we have lost our Christian hope then we feel no obligation to reverently put our deceased loved ones to rest to await the day of resurrection .

Sadly, this cultural loss has seeped into our Catholic thinking as well. A pastor once shared with me his frustration when he buried a highly ranked general. The priest was frustrated because the Catholic part of the funeral rite was so trivial, barnacled over by sentiment and sentimental music, whereas the military part of the funeral rite was, by comparison, so dignified. This priest knew that Catholic funeral rite was by nature filled with gravitas, and so it should be dignified, yet the rite was being lost, primarily through someone's ideas of their favorite hymns and longwinded or even jokey eulogies too painful to endure. Sadly the idea that this is "my" Mass (as opposed to "the" Mass) has not helped things either. If it is "my" Mass, then I can dictate my favorite music no matter if it is my wedding or my funeral. Yet weddings and funerals are vastly different things, and they necessarily require music that is proper to each. Imagine that!

Indeed, we have lost much. When we lose respect for the dignity of the body, when we lose our religion, and when our culture becomes shallow or pop, then we also lose our ritual. Sometimes, with that loss, we try to improvise and make up some sort of pseudo-rituals, but that is almost always too painful to observe, and embarrassing in hindsight.

The reality is we human beings need ritual, especially at the time of mourning, when words fail us. Have you noticed that when the media goes to the house of a grieving parent to interview them a day after their child was shot, those interviews are often bewilderingly incoherent. Let's leave these good people alone! The parent feels an obligation to speak, but his or her words are usually non-sensible at best. Or have you ever observed folks trying to comfort the grieving with platitudes that just fall flat. The grieving person instinctively knows that death is not God's will, and that death does not always mean that their loved one is automatically in a better place, and yet over and over again, folks who feel like they have to say just that. We want something to do and to say. What we need to do and say are prayers!

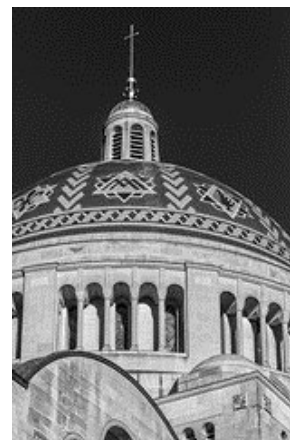
The point of our funeral ritual is to help express meaning when our ordinary words fail us. We need ritual, and we need to let the Catholic funeral be the powerful thing that it is. We have to let its ritual and words wash over us and carry us through, and allow us to mourn. These complex series of prayers that have become the funeral rite are important. Their words, their meaning, their placement and their purpose work together to demonstrate the paradox of grief and hope that we as Catholics feel when we bury our beloved dead. And these prayers should not be always joyful. Burying a teenager killed in an automobile accident, or a young parent who has died of cancer, or a loved one who has committed suicide, or a soldier sent home to us in a box – these are not joyful events. So our prayers and music should sustain us with faith given the reality of death.

Sadly in our times, our Catholic ritual has become more and more underappreciated of late, and is consequently being lost. There are multiple reasons for this. Here in the American South, the funeral home employees are kind enough people, but they are almost always Protestants and lack any liturgical sense. Consequently the events surrounding the dead sometimes feel like they are dictated to us by non-Catholics who give the Catholics some time to do “their thing.” Funeral home employees are also often Free Masons (proudly wearing their pin upon their lapel), so their sense of ritual isn’t always Christian. Even if these employees want to help, it is doubtful they know how Catholics worship. Often times they treat Catholics like everyone else. The priest or parish may not be the family’s starting point, and planning is hard to redirect once it is set into motion. Moreover, even our own Church fails to respect or protect of our ritual for the most part, as clergy and choirmasters are too often ignorant of their tradition. There are many challenges to overcome in all of this.

Just consider the differences between Catholic and Protestant notions of death. We Catholics here in the south are so well integrated into what was once a predominantly Protestant part of the world, so non-Catholic ideas about death and funerals begin to influence us. The most profound difference between Catholic and Protestant thoughts about the dead is that the founders of Protestantism rejected the tradition of praying for the dead, whereas we Catholics continued to pray for the dead, so as to assist our beloved dead with our prayers. In this priest’s opinion, this essential difference seems to be at the core of our present challenges to right our rite.

Too many Catholic liturgists likewise presume that our beloved dead are all already in heaven, so they slowly began to turn a funeral rite into a celebration. They wanted priests to always wear white vestments to deny the reality that Christians mourn (even as everyone in the congregation still quite naturally wears black). The funeral home directors are also influencing this thinking by calling the funeral a “Celebration of Life.”

A deacon recently came back from a funeral of a life-long colleague and friend shaking his head, saying the whole experience was more akin to a retirement party than it was a funeral. But a funeral should not be a “graduation” party. Moreover, this is *not* a *Mass of the Resurrection*. Jesus rose from the dead. The rest of us will *sleep* until he comes to raise us from our sleep. We should not presume that everyone who dies is in heaven. The reality is we will be judged, and even the blessed may need purification. So our funerals should be solemn. They should be prayerful. We should respect the reality that death is tragic, and yet as people of faith, we also have hope in Christ Jesus who has overcome death. And certainly we can give thanks to God for the life of our loved one, but that should not prevent us for praying for them when they die either.



Now, so that we are clear, Catholics still pray for the dead. The official Catechism of the Catholic Church that came out in the last decade of the twentieth century surprised some folks by reminding us of that fact. But we should not have forgotten. After all every “Hail Mary” a Catholic prays ends with the words “pray for us sinners, now and in the hour of our death.” And every anaphora (or Eucharistic Prayer) we hear day after day includes a prayer for those “servants who have gone before us with the sign of faith and who rest in the sleep of peace. (Eucharistic Prayer I)” Because we still remember “our brothers and sisters who have fallen asleep in the hope of the resurrection, and all who have died in [God’s] mercy. (Eucharist Prayer II)” And we still ask the Lord to give them “kind admittance into [His] kingdom. (Eucharistic Prayer III)” And this is not new. St. Paul remembered the deceased Onesiphorous praying that he would find mercy on Judgment Day (II Timothy 1:16-18). The Christian funeral epitaphs of the catacombs in Rome are certainly evidence enough of this early Christian practice. Saint Perpetua prayed for her deceased brother (himself a pagan) around A.D. 203. St. Augustine prayed for the repose of his saintly mother’s soul until his own death in A.D. 430. Protestants who deny our tradition may dismiss these countless and ongoing examples throughout the ages, but we Catholics should not. We are charged to remember!

So we have briefly explored our predicament. We are cognizant of the differences we have, and what makes us unique. We better understand why our funeral rites should become more Catholic. But given all of that, how can we restore a ritual that has been all but lost in our times? Where should we begin rediscovering this more sublime theology and prayer? We propose that we begin with the essential prayers and texts of the ritual, so as to try to appreciate why they are there, and what is their purpose.

Too often, we see the music of the Roman Rite as optional. We understand that Gregorian Chant is valuable, and should be preserved, but we have no experience with chant. No one in our parish knows how to read it or how to sing it. We have lost so much. Maybe even our own pastor would rather us not rock the boat. Let's just keep the peace, and keep doing what we're doing. Maybe he is comfortable with just leaving things as is. Maybe our own choir members would balk (or even rebel). There are many reasons not to change, but there are some better reasons to try to change bit by bit, little by little, so as to rediscover our tradition.

The thing we need to tell ourselves is that the chant is integral to the Mass. It is proper to the Mass. Chant is an essential part of the Mass. Things that are essential are the very attributes that make a thing what it is. Proper is proper to the formulary of the funeral Mass (or the *Missa Defunctorum*). These chants form it into what it is. The Requiem Mass should begin with the words of the Introit *Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine* (in Latin) or *Grant them eternal rest, O Lord* (in English). So then, what are these proper prayers that we are meant to sing in the liturgy of the funeral rite? Let us take a look at them individually, shall we?

Just consider that in the *Order of Christian Funerals*, when we read in the General Instruction, we see that music is “integral to the funeral rites” and that “efforts should be made to develop and expand the parish’s repertoire for use at funerals.” That is what we are about today. Moreover, the General Instruction encourages organists, other instrumentalists, cantors and even choirs to be able to assist families at this time. But how can we if we don’t know how? Let’s learn! About the music, we go on to read that the music should be simple and beautiful so as to reflect the reverential rites. Again and again the General Instruction asserts that preference should be given in singing the acclamations, the responsorial Psalm, the entrance and communion songs and especially the song of farewell. But do we? Clearly, we need to acquaint ourselves with this music so we can do just that.



Rev. Father Charles A. Byrd, S.T.L.

*Our Lady of the Mountains
Jasper, Georgia*

LOOKING AT THE PROPER

Regaining our Catholic Theology by considering the whole funeral liturgy

Early in our Church's history the Requiem Mass was long established but there were slight variants or differences between regions or religious orders. With the Council of Trent a more clear standardization occurred, but even after that, there was some ongoing organic development. For example not every composer set every proper into their polyphonic Requiem. Perhaps they left a section for chant, or perhaps they ignored it and instead opted to set to musical composition some part of the Divine Office, especially as Requiem Masses began to be composed as concert music. The point is it was set, but it might continue to have some variations in practice. I read somewhere that there are over 2000 different musical compositions of the Requiem Mass, though I am only familiar with a handful. Still, one example of this post-Trent organic textual development is the *Pie Jesu*, which is a relatively new text that comes from the *Dies Irae* (which is itself only about 800 years old). So the Requiem is set, but it is also living and evolving over time.

Even officially, with the reforms after Vatican II we see the *Dies Irae* move from the Mass of the Dead in the ordinary form and move instead to the Liturgy of the Hours for the last days of the liturgical year (stressing the end of times). Moreover, if you sit down with chant books, the Missal and the Order of Christian Funerals, you find curious inconsistencies. Therefore we have to allow the tradition, our skill sets, and our parochial resources help us discern what we can and cannot do at our parish. So when we assess these texts/chants/music, we should keep in mind that there is some flexibility here (even in languages of Latin or English), but there is also tradition. And tradition should guide us here. Practically speaking, we will let our emphasis be the Novus Ordo, and using as much as possible the official books that our priests have at hand to introduce us to the official music of the rite.

So again, just so we're clear, our emphasis will be on the ordinary form of the funeral liturgy, and our primary resources will be the official books from the period of time after the Second Vatican Council, including the *Order of Christian Funerals*, the *Graduale Romanum*, the *Graduale Simplex*, and the *Liber Cantualis*. We will also consider vernacular options and hymnody.



The Cathedral in old St. Augustine



“All I ask is that you remember me at the altar of God.”

Saint Monica (d. 387)

Not infrequently our people may wander off from the Church and essentially stop living as Catholics for years (like St. Augustine). Then someone gets terminally ill or dies (like St. Monica) and they need a funeral. But in all this time, the survivors have not been praying or worshipping as Catholics. They may have gone to non-Catholic funerals, or seen some funeral on television, and that is what they want. As faithful Catholics, we also will have to help these people who have long separated themselves from their tradition, but we don't help them by letting them reinvent our funeral rites. They need these prayers more than anyone.

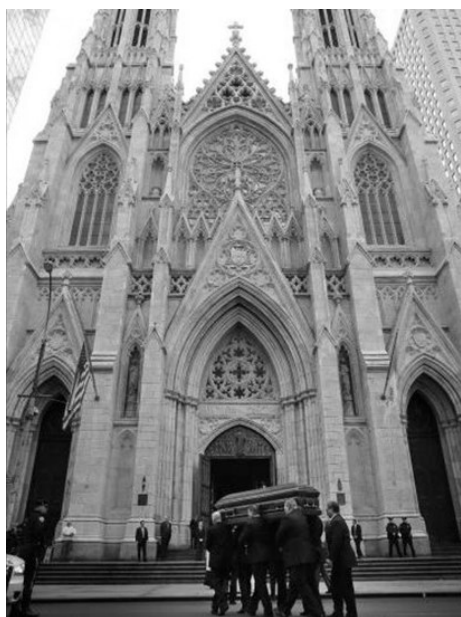
OPTIONAL PRELUDES

A prelude is NOT a proper, but it is a place where one could have the cantor or schola sing the *Dies Irae*. If you're expecting a lot of people to come in, especially if there will be non-Catholics, having a solo or song may keep the congregation quiet. Many non-Catholics may otherwise chat before the Mass, so this could help them adjust to our more quiet and prayerful expectations. Now and then families can't decide so they pick too many hymns or even bad hymns. In that case this can become a place to get some of those hymns that they insist upon out of the way, so as to leave room from the *propers* in the actual Requiem Mass.

THIS COULD BE A PLACE FOR A LITURGICAL CHANT OF SOME KIND:

Again, this is NOT required, and strictly speaking, instrumentals (music without words) have been by tradition discouraged for Requiem Masses, so a sung prelude would be more in keeping with our tradition. The *Dies Irae* might work here, certainly, and there will be more about the *Dies Irae* in the appendix of auxiliary music that falls towards the back of this document.

The Order of Christian Funerals gives as its last psalm for the procession to the church to be Psalm 122, with the refrain *I rejoiced when I heard them say: let us go to the house of the Lord*. As the casket is coming into the church from the funeral home, it might make a logical chant to greet the people with this psalm at their arrival (that is if you can find that chant in your choir closet). This of course assumes you have the competent cantor and resources to do this.



Cardinal Egan's funeral

A WORD ABOUT HYMNS

Frankly very often, with funerals, hymns turn into solos, as 1) most of the family is mourning, and not really wanting to sing, and 2) not all the people in the room know the hymns, and 3) the crowd might be sparse, and spread out so a hearty singing of hymns just isn't really possible. Here, for example, the family isn't in the church, they have no way of holding their hymnal, they likely may not even hear the hymn, and so REALLY ... letting the cantor sing the *propers* just makes sense on so many levels. There will be more about hymns in the appendix of auxiliary music at the end of this schema.

AN AMERICAN REQUIEM: AN AMERICAN EXPRESSION OF OUR ROMAN RITE

If you have your cantor sing a prelude of some kind, it needs to draw to a close before the priest begins the liturgy in the narthex. The pall bearers reverently carry the pall to place over the casket, reminding the family of the deceased's baptismal promises to live out their Catholic faith until death. Once the pall has been placed, the procession can begin towards the sanctuary, at which time the Requiem chant should begin.



The caisson of President Kennedy

THE INTROIT

Looking at the official music books from the Liturgical Reforms of the Second Vatican Council, and looking at the Order of Christian Funerals, we begin at the beginning.

WHY SHOULD OUR PARISH SING THIS REQUIEM CHANT?

The present *Roman Missal* (that is of the *Novus Ordo*, or the ordinary form) specifies this Introit chant by name. It is included in all three of the official chant books published in line with the reforms of Vatican II: the *Graduale Romanum* (p. 688), the *Graduale Simplex* (p. 401), and the *Liber Cantualis*. It is frequently published in Latin and/or English in most Catholic hymnals & pew missals, including the *St. Michael Hymnal* (# 732), and the *Lumen Christi Missal* (# 295). It is also included in the *Parish Book of Chant* (# 156). While other options for entrance chants are also given by the new Missal, including the *Ego Sum* and the *Ragamus te*, this Requiem chant is so ubiquitous to our tradition that it gives its name to the Requiem Mass itself.

Please note that other options will be recommended for an introit for children later on in this document.

Introits give our masses their names. The first line of this opening chant is *Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis* and this is the Requiem Mass. Why shouldn't we want to sing a Requiem chant at a Requiem Mass? This chant is a consistent part of the funeral liturgy from century to century and from resource to resource. It is specified in both the extraordinary and the ordinary forms of the Mass for the Dead. Theologically speaking, it is not just an opening song or a favorite hymn – it is a prayer! And this is the proper for this Mass. It is *supposed* to be sung. It is an essential musical part of the formulary of the Funeral Rite. Moreover, we should not imagine that the family will be deprived of a hymn. The family is processing in with the casket. They can't sing. They are mourning, but they are also walking, so having the cantor sing the Requiem chant (in Latin or in English) should be our noble and first option.

HELP US TO OVERCOME SOME OF OUR PREJUDICES, PLEASE.

Okay, great composers like Morales and Victoria of Spain, Palestrina of Rome, Byrd and Rutter from England, Faure to Duruflé of France, and Mozart and so many others from so many places and times have written beautiful compositions to the timeless text of this prayer from this Mass. But the chant form is older by far, and it is doable with only a can-

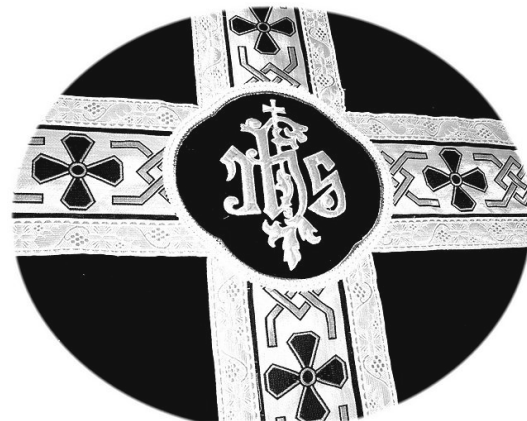
tor. Your parish can do this! Moreover, the chant isn't scary or dark or sinister. The tone is one of hope. Your Catholic ancestors might never have imagined a funeral could even be possible without hearing this prayer. And this is NOT suppressed. The late pontiff, St. John Paul II, had this chanted at his own funeral Mass in this century. So be open to your tradition! Embrace it! Be proud of it!

As a priest, I began some years ago personally chanting this when I came before the casket. I knew it was supposed to be sung. Even if the singers were prepared only to sing some modern hymn of questionable artistic tastes. I knew that the Requiem was essential, so I sang it as a kind of "announcement prelude." Sadly the disposable books that we had in the pews when I first arrived probably didn't even have a Requiem in it, so I pasted the chant in my own book. In time our parish was blessed to find people who wanted to sing propers, and now, it has become ubiquitous for our funerals (as it should be). Still, I mention this because that is how important I thought it was (and think it is) to the Funeral Mass. Even if you have to sing it as a prelude for a while until you can get it at the right place, I firmly believe that it should be sung, and, properly speaking, and according to the rite, it should ultimately be sung as the music that accompanies the casket into the church. If priests sing it, cantors or choirmasters will likely ask about it, and maybe soon volunteer to chant it in time. Then you've reintroduced the tradition.

I would argue that if your parish doesn't sing any of the propers, this might be the first one you add, again, because it is a prayer for the dead. Our people need to hear these prayers.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE THEOLOGICAL INSIGHTS WE MIGHT TAKE FROM THIS CHANT?

It is borrowed (in part) from the apocryphal books of Ezra (which are pre-Christian texts) II or IV Ezra 2:34-35. These books of Ezra were included in an appendix in our Vulgate, which codified and preserved them, while not exactly endorsing them as scripture precisely. Part of this Introit text also comes from Isaiah 58:11 (Douay): *And the Lord will give thee rest continually, and will fill thy soul with brightness, and deliver thy bones, and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a fountain of water whose waters shall not fail.*



AN AMERICAN REQUIEM: AN AMERICAN EXPRESSION OF OUR ROMAN RITE

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS HERE FOLLOW:

*Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.
Te decet hymnus Deus, in Sion,
et tibi reddetur votum in Ierusalem.*

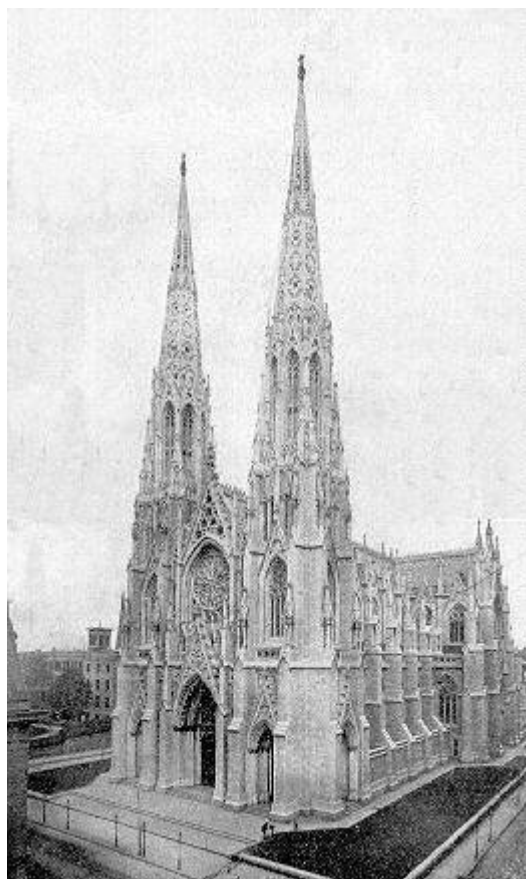
*Exaudi orationem meam;
ad te omnis caro veniet.
Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.*

Grant them eternal rest, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.
A hymn becomes you, O God, in Zion,
and to you shall a vow be repaid in Jerusalem.

Hear my prayer;
to you shall all flesh come.
Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.



*Funeral 1921 procession for a native American
at the California Mission of San Gabriel*



St. Patrick Cathedral in Manhattan

The musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art. The main reason for this pre-eminence is that, as a combination of sacred music and words, it forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy.

SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL CONSTITUTION ON THE SACRED LITURGY
SACROSANCTUM CONCILIUM 112

THE GRADUAL

Looking at the Responsorial Psalms that are given to us as an option for the Funeral Mass, we find further consolation in the words of holy scripture.

CHOOSING PSALMS THAT WORK WITH OUR CHANTS:

Before the destruction of the Temple, we know that Levites had trumpets and men and women took part in the great singing in Jerusalem, but with the destruction of the Temple, that tradition was lost. The Jewish historian, Josephus, tells us that instrumentalists hired for Jewish funeral processions in Apostolic times were excessive, and that the solemnities could last a month. Evidently their funeral rites were splendid affairs. For example when King Josiah died many singers sang lamentations, and we're told all Judah and Jerusalem mourned. Singing is something that the Jews did very early and it is a remarkable thing that we have that liturgical music (or at least the texts) written down in antiquity, and preserved until today. The Greeks had their architecture and sculpture, and the Romans had their engineering and law, but the Israelites had their Psalms.

As Catholics our chant emerges from these Temple liturgies, and was taught to us by the Apostles and that first generation of Jewish Christians, but the persecution of the Church informed how we worshiped, and so there was a subdued restraint to our interpretation of this ancient tradition. Eventually called "Gregorian Chant" after St. Gregory the Great, who helped to codify our music, our chant is however, very organic in that it has evolved and developed over the centuries.

At the beginning of the III century (even before St. Gregory), Tertullian describes our Sunday liturgy that includes the singing of psalms. During times of persecution, perhaps a single cantor might have carried the musical part of our liturgy, but once the persecutions ceased, the Church's art developed (along with the schola cantorum). So it seems that much of our more ancient chants go back to the same time when our larger basilicas were being built by Constantine and his imperial issue.

It is important to remember that the developing chant tradition within the Roman Rite was at first an oral tradition. This began to change as Western musicians begin to devise ways to write music down in notation. There are supposedly five different chant books in Rome from the XI to the XIII century that form the textual basis of what we know about the ancient chant repertoire of our rite.



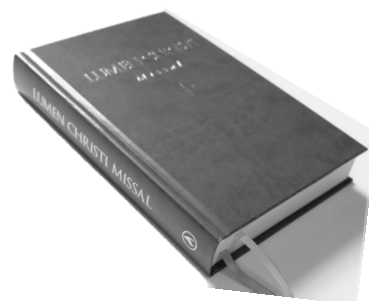
But not all of that music therein was Roman. Some of it was from Gaul. Charlemagne's court and the work of his scribes of the Carolingian Renaissance helped to spread Roman chant throughout western Europe, but they also added to it, improved upon it and influenced it with Gallican sensibilities. The Roman texts and Gallican melodies blended into something that was both old and new. But once musical notation is developed and eventually standardized and became universally accepted, this musical development slowed down a bit. But not long. Soon organum led to polyphony, and chant begins to decline again. Classicists later tried to "correct" the Latin and monks forgot how to sing all the melismas. It wasn't until the mid XIX century when the monks at Solmenes began to restore chant.

All of this rudimentary break-neck run through centuries of musical development is meant just to try to help our reader understand why the Church is always going back to the sources at times of reform, and for us the "sources" in music is Gregorian Chant, and the chanting of the Psalms.

As such, we would argue (together with the Church) that Responsorial Psalms that are composed in a simple and dignified way are more in conformity with our tradition as Catholics. Responsorial Psalms are meant to sound like chant. Consequently, when our parishes look for musical renderings of these Psalms, they should look for versions that have the same feel or sound as what we call Gregorian Chant. The more like chant it sounds, the more suitable it is for the Temple. Both popes St. Pius X and St. John Paul II said that new compositions were okay, but the closer they sounded to chant, the more likely suitable they would be for the Mass.

As our funeral rites here in this parish are celebrated in the Novus Ordo (or the ordinary form of the Mass), we generally opt for the combination of Responsorial Psalms and Gospel Acclamations here. Of course we are aware that in both the ordinary and the extraordinary forms of the Mass, we are still officially able to sing the Gradual, but for now our people are still accustomed to the more parochial practice.

Happily we have found examples from our own parish books that we find particularly dignified. There are many other options, but again, when discerning one option from another, let us as musicians and clergy always keep in mind our tradition. So here our families have a choice. These choices give our families something to choose from. Our *Lumen Christi Missal* provides three good options here, but most families (not surprisingly) always choose the first option.

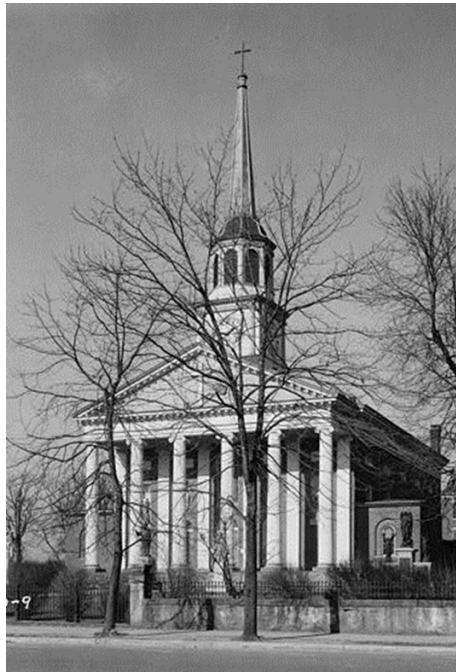


AN AMERICAN REQUIEM: AN AMERICAN EXPRESSION OF OUR ROMAN RITE

THESE CHOICES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- *The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want* from the *Lumen Christi Missal* - Mass for the Dead (#296)
- *To you O Lord, I lift my soul* from the *Lumen Christi Missal* - Mass for the Dead (#297 p. 991)
- *The Lord is my light and my salvation* from the *Lumen Christi Missal* - Mass for the Dead (#298 p. 991)
- If the family is keen on doing this in Latin, then the gradual can be found in the *Graduale Romanum* (p. 689)

The sequence called the *Dies Irae* is suppressed now in the ordinary form, though it would have gone here a century ago (and still does in the extraordinary form). One can learn more about the *Dies Irae* in our appendix on auxiliary music that follows towards the end of this document.



The old Cathedral in Bardstown, Kentucky

THE OFFERTORY

The Offertory might be the last of the propers a parish would add. This might be a place otherwise where solos are sung, or where a hymn might be sung. Still, the Offertory forms a constituent part of the formulary of the Mass, and ideally should be a part of the Requiem Mass. If your pastor paces well the liturgy, then you certainly can and should be able to sing a proper here (in its entirety or in part). Depending upon the pacing in your parish, it may also be a place for a subsequent solo or hymn.

WHY SHOULD OUR PARISH HEAR THIS OFFERTORY CHANT?

The best reason is that it is part of the formulary of the Mass. Just as we wouldn't replace a biblical reading with a modern poem, so likewise we should want to keep the formulary of the music integral to the rite. It was never suppressed, and many of the greatest composers of western music have set this prayer to music (including Morales, Palestrina, Victoria, Faure, Mozart, and others). Broadly speaking, offertory chants stand apart from the Introits and Communion chants we associate them with. Offertory chants were mentioned by St. Augustine, so we know they go back to the V century in North Africa (and likely Rome). Offertory compositions tended to become more sumptuous, ornate and melismatic than the Introit and Communion chants. They were written for better than average singers. They are not always included in ancient (or even present day) chant books, and sometimes the organ just eclipsed this chant all together. But perhaps because of the penitential nature of the Requiem Mass (when instrumental music was frowned upon), the offertory for this Mass did not disappear.

Moreover, the *Domine Jesu* is a really, really beautiful chant, though we know some families will insist on an English alternative, we still think that doing what the books prescribe for the liturgy is good liturgical practice.

WHY MIGHT WE BE MORE INCLINED TO BE MORE FLEXIBLE WITH THE OFFERTORY?

Again, the Offertory in general tends to be the more flexible or optional of the propers. That is not necessarily a good thing, but it just is. The Latin chant text is the *Domine Jesu*, and it can be found in the *Graduale Romanum* (p. 693), the *Liber Cantualis* (#57 p. 58), and the *Parish Book of Chant* (#161 p. 160). Still, few hymnals will include this chant. Consequently, this chant may not be as well-known as some other parts of the Requiem (likely because it may often get eclipsed by an *Ave Maria*, or another motet, solo or instrumental piece — though again traditionally instrumental music was discouraged at Requiem Masses due to its penitential nature).

Moreover some modern books give us so many options here – so many in fact that it seems hardly possible to call it a proper anymore if there are indeed that many options. For example the *Graduale Simplex* gives us three other Latin options here (pp. 410-412), the *By Flowing Waters* (#513-520) gives us these in English besides, and likewise our *Lumen Christi Missal* - Mass for the Dead gives us different English texts here with a *De Profundis* (#299 p. 992). Moreover, instruction 144 of the Order of Christian Funerals also indicates three psalms for the offertory. So all we can say is this is our most flexible of the propers for the funeral rite. For example a different Offertory was sung at Pope John Paul II's funeral.

HELP US TO OVERCOME SOME OF OUR PREJUDICES, PLEASE.

Well, what you need to know is you can do this! You need only invest in a handful of books to have the necessary tools (five or so copies of the *Liber Cantualis* and five or so copies of the *Lumen Christi Missal* would give you enough books to have a cantor or a schola of five learn this music). Ideally, chant is supposed to be a cappella, but one can also find examples that can be done with accompaniment to help our cantors or choristers at least in the beginning.

And if you need to remind your people about our Church's teaching on purgation, this is a text you can use to do just that. According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, the origin of this Latin Offertory of the *Domine Jesu* was initially a prayer recited for those who were about to die. That may be so but the text alludes to a deep lake or a dark place of Tartarus which reminds the listeners of the reality of purgatory.

WHAT ABOUT SOME OTHER OPTIONS?

Well, you already have alternatives really (both in Latin and in English) as indicated above, so choose from those ideally. Like we have said, an *Ave Maria* is often sung here. A *Nunc Dimittis* (maybe Geoffrey Burgo's) might work here? The thing is to find something that is beautiful, but also simple enough for a soloist, and suitable to your particular soloist. Certainly, if your cantor is not a virtuoso, and if a family would be happy for a hymn, this might also be a place to put one of those.



AN AMERICAN REQUIEM: AN AMERICAN EXPRESSION OF OUR ROMAN RITE

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS HERE FOLLOW:

*Domine Iesu Christe, Rex gloriæ,
libera animas omnium fidelium defunctorum
de pœnis inferni et de profundo lacu.
Libera eas de ore leonis,
ne absorbeat eas tartarus,
ne cadant in obscurum;
sed signifer sanctus Michael
repræsentet eas in lucem sanctam,
quam olim Abrahæ promisisti et semini eius.*

*Hostias et preces tibi, Domine,
laudis offerimus;
tu suscipe pro animabus illis,
quarum hodie memoriam facimus.
Fac eas, Domine, de morte transire ad vitam.
Quam olim Abrahæ promisisti et semini eius.*



The Cathedral in Philadelphia

Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory, free the souls of all the faithful departed
from infernal punishment and the deep pit. Free them from the mouth of the lion;
do not let Tartarus swallow them, nor let them fall into darkness;
but may the standard-bearer Saint Michael, lead them into the holy light
which you once promised to Abraham and his seed.

O Lord, we offer You sacrifices and prayers of praise;
accept them on behalf of those souls whom we remember today.
Let them, O Lord, pass over from death to life,
as you once promised to Abraham and his seed.

THE COMMUNIO

The Communion chant is one of the easiest propers to add to a Mass and no one even notices. The General Instructions for the Mass is that it should begin right as the presiding priest communicates. Your parish should have no problem adding this chant (in either Latin or English) to get in a proper, and again, this is a beautiful prayer for the dead.

WHY SHOULD OUR PARISH SING THIS OFFERTORY CHANT?

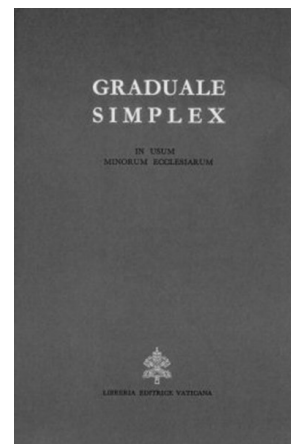
The Communion Antiphon is an easy proper to add, as this falls at a time in the Mass when people are busy going to communion, and they can't sing anything anyway. Here our first and most logical choice would be the *Lux Aeterna*, although for those who hate even hearing a peep of Latin, there are other good English options besides. Again, the *Lux Aeterna* is just such a beautiful prayer for the repose of the soul of our beloved dead.

The Latin chant can be found in the *Graduale Romanum* (p. 695), the *Graduale Simplex* (#58 p. 59), and the *Liber Cantualis* (#58). It is also in the *Parish Book of Chant* (#163p. 163). This is also included in many parish pew resources like the *St. Michael Hymnal* (#628). Some of the great composers of the world (like Morales, Victoria, Byrd, Mozart, Faure and Rutter) have set this text to some of the most consoling and beautiful music ever written. And this proper chant is NOT suppressed. The *Lux Aeterna* was sung at the funerals of both St. Pope John Paul II and Cardinal George of Chicago.

Finally, your parish cantors can do this! Again you need only invest in a handful of books to have the necessary .

ARE THERE ALTERNATIVES TO THE LUX AETERNA?

Yes. The *Ego Sum* is one option. It is one of the two Latin options to the *Lux Aeterna* that can be found in the *Graduale Simplex* (#61 p. 61). And if you want to sing a proper, but you may not be ready for the Latin, there are options in the vernacular. The *Lumen Christi Missal* has one (#300, p. 992), as does the *By Flowing Waters* gradual. Still, if you are going to teach your cantor or schola only one Communion proper, the *Lux Aeterna* should be it.



AN AMERICAN REQUIEM: AN AMERICAN EXPRESSION OF OUR ROMAN RITE

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS (OF THE LUX AETERNA) HERE FOLLOW:

*Lux æterna luceat eis, Domine,
cum sanctis tuis in æternum,
quia pius es.*

*Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine;
et lux perpetua luceat eis;
cum Sanctis tuis in æternum,
quia pius es.*

May everlasting light shine upon them, O Lord,
with your Saints forever,
for you are kind.

Grant them eternal rest, O Lord,
and may everlasting light shine upon them.
with your Saints forever,
for you are merciful.

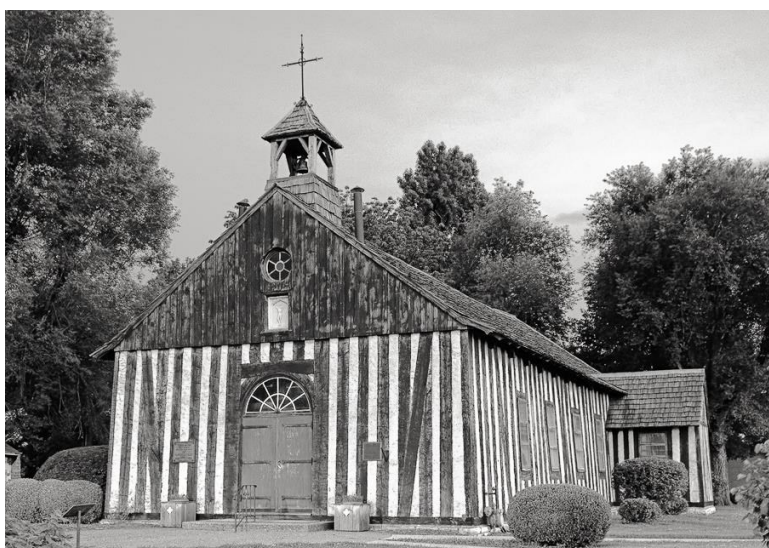


A POSSIBLE SOLO

Depending upon how talented your cantor or soloist is, and how long you expect Communion to go based on those you expect to be present, a solo could be added here (either before or after the hymn). This is NOT a proper BUT if you want to sing something that is traditionally associated with Requiem Masses, you might sing a Pie Jesu or a Libera Me. We will include information on these in the appendix towards the end of this document that covers auxiliary music for the Requiem Mass. Other options might be an Ave Maria, or a Miserere. Much will depend upon the talent of your singer and organist here. Also keep in mind that if the family chooses a hymn with many verses, that may limit what solo options may be offered here.

A POST COMMUNION HYMN

Hymns are NOT proper, and they are not really anticipated by the official books of old, but American Catholics have a rich tradition of hymnody, and our modern books recommend a post communion hymn as part of our worship experience. Certainly most folks would want to suggest at least one or two beloved hymns, and this would be a place for one of these. Hymns after Communion can follow the proper chant, as now more people are sitting and personally able to open their hymnals. We might recommend giving some better options from which the family might choose here. We are including some good options in the appendix towards the end of this document on auxiliary music to the funeral rite.



Holy Family Catholic Church in Cahokia

CLOSING RITES

According to the current rituals, after Communion time in the new rite the priest will now sprinkle and/or incense the casket before the Final Commendation. As the priest has already sprinkled the casket at the beginning of the Mass, he may elect only to incense the casket here. These closing rites seem to take the place of the Absolutions in the extraordinary form of the ritual. For this action, our books designate the Subvenite chant to accompany the incensing followed by the Final Commendation and then the In Paradisum.

SO THEN WE SHOULD LEARN TWO CHANTS?

Evidently yes. Allow us to explain. This incensing the casket goes back to the earliest Christian centuries, and is one of the most beautiful moments in the funeral Mass. Our modern ritual books, like the present *Order of Christian Funerals* (#174) indicate the *Subvenite* should be sung as the priest incenses the casket. Instruction 145-147 speaks of the Final Commendation and a Song of Farewell, and here there seems to be some imprecision or ambiguity. Is the *Subvenite* the so-called Song of Farewell that comes prior to the Final Commendation, or is the *In Paradisum* the so-called Song of Farewell that comes after the Final Commendation? Some of this confusion might be explained by our parish resources that might include an *In Paradisum*, but not include a *Subvenite*, so many are just presuming these are both two options, as opposed to two “required” parts of the

Mass. But then when you look at the *Order of Christian Funerals*, it indicates that *both* are used. First the *Subvenite* accompanies the incensing of the casket, and then the *In Paradisum* is sung as the casket is leaving the church or cathedral. That then will be our presumption and recommendation here. So setting aside which is or is not the Song of Farewell, both seem to be clearly indicated based on the actual *Order of Christian Funerals*, so we should ideally sing both as part of the present formulary of this Mass.



Conewago Chapel in Pennsylvania

THE INCENSING OF THE CASKET AND THE SUBVENITE

Perhaps because Americans are so accustomed to singing a closing hymn, the Subvenite seems to have been eclipsed. At some funerals, for example, a hymn accompanies the incensing of the casket, but our liturgical books indicate a specific text here. Why the confusion? Well, consider that the Parish Book of Chant recommends the Subvenite as a chant to be sung prior to the Requiem Mass as something like a prelude as the casket is being brought into the narthex but before the priest begins the funeral liturgy at the door. In a sense this is how that chant was used in the days before funeral homes, when a casket would be brought into the church and some part of the Office of the Dead would be prayed prior to the Requiem Mass. One of the prayers that accompany this moment in the Extraordinary Form is the Libera Me, so one can find this in polyphonic settings of the Requiem Mass, but our present liturgy has different books with different prayers or chants indicated. So our present ritual books indicate that the Subvenite is the music to accompany the incensing of the caskets. So out of obedience, we will go with that.

WHY SHOULD OUR PARISH CANTORS LEARN HOW TO SING A SUBVENITE?

Well, the best answers are 1) it is a beautiful prayer for the deceased that is part of the modern formulary of the Mass, and 2) it is not long, and only about 4 minutes, which is just long enough for the priest to incense the casket, and 3) and it is easy to learn (once you find the right resources) in either Latin or English. Moreover this is a part of that heritage of inestimable value that we need to preserve as Catholics. For example the *Subvenite* was sung at President Kennedy's funeral at St. Matthew's Cathedral in D.C. This belongs to our tradition!

HELP US TO OVERCOME SOME OF OUR CONFUSION AND PREJUDICES, PLEASE.

Well, for one, you might not have ever heard of the *Subvenite*. Not every hymnal will include a *Subvenite*, so sometimes the *In Paradisum* is chanted here, but according to the books, it should be the *Subvenite*. The old *Worship III Hymnal* (#175) has a quite nice *Subvenite* in English. The *Parish Book of Chant* has one too (#155 p. 151). Once you find the version you like in Latin and English, your parish need only buy a handful of resources and your cantors are set to sing. The chant version is very, very easy to sing, so it isn't like you need a virtuoso to sing chant. It is meant to be "doable" in every parish in the world.



Trappist Caskets

Moreover these days it is easy enough to find alternatives online in both Latin and English for both chants. Father Samuel Weber always has great things online that he is usually very generous about sharing with folks, so even if you can't find a *Subvenite* in your hymnal, you can likely find one.

WHAT ABOUT THE PRIEST'S PART?

Well technically speaking the priest should begin the *Subvenite*, but remember our priests haven't heard this chanted ever in their world either, so we propose our cantors sing the whole thing themselves for a few years, at least until it can become something our clergy are familiar with (and therefore possibly comfortable with) intoning it. Remember, the choristers or cantors have the music in front of them while the priest would have to intone it more or less from memory. Besides it is better to hear it than to expect every priest to be comfortable intoning it. Moreover, because we may chant it in Latin or in English, this may help us avoid confusion there too. Otherwise father might intone in the wrong language. There are good reasons to leave this all to the cantors.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE THEOLOGICAL INSIGHTS WE MIGHT TAKE FROM THIS CHANT?

The *Subvenite* is a profoundly beautiful chant. It invokes the prayers of the saints and angels to help present the soul of the beloved dead to God, and escort them to the bosom of Abraham (or heaven).



St. Mary's Church and the Carroll residence in Annapolis

AN AMERICAN REQUIEM: AN AMERICAN EXPRESSION OF OUR ROMAN RITE

TEXTS AND "TRANSLATIONS" HERE FOLLOW:

*Subvenite Sancti Dei
Occurrite Angeli Domini
Suscipientes animam ejus
Offerentes eam
In conspectu Altissimi.
Suscipiat te Christus
Qui vocavit te et in sinum
Abrahae Angeli deducant te.
Suscipientes animam ejus
Offerentes eam
In conspectu Altissimi.
Requiem aeternam
Dona ei Domine
et lux perpetua luceat ei.*

Saints of God, come to his/her aid! Come to meet him/her, angels of the Lord! Receive his/her soul and present him/her to God the Most High.

May Christ, Who called you, take you to Himself; may angels lead you to Abraham's side. Receive his/her soul and present him/her to God the Most High.

Give him/her eternal rest, O Lord, and may Your light shine upon him/her forever. Receive his/her soul and present him/her to God the Most High.



Babe Ruth's Funeral in NYC

THE FINAL COMMENDATION AND THE IN PARADISUM

After the Subvenite is sung as the priest incenses the casket, a final prayer of commendation will be prayed by the priest where he invites those present to accompany the procession out into the churchyard to bury the deceased (or in our case, load up in cars to depart for the cemetery). After the prayer of commendation, the priest will reverence the altar and come down to the foot of the altar. At this point the In Paradisum is chanted. It is worth noting that our present liturgical books indicate the In Paradisum should accompany the casket's being taken from the church, and on to the cemetery. If you priest paces himself, he might pause at the casket and await the end of this chant, and then turn and leave as the final hymn begins. That would allow the parish to pray this beautiful chant for the deceased, but still get in that closing hymn!

WHY SHOULD OUR CANTORS SING THE IN PARADISUM?

This is NOT suppressed. The present Roman Missal (that is of the Novus Ordo, or the Ordinary Form) specifies this chant by name. It can be found in the *Liber Cantualis* (#59-60), the *Graduale Simplex* (p. 425), the *Parish Book of Chants* (p. 166), and others. It can also be found in the *St. Michael Hymnal* in both Latin and English (#581), as well as in the *Vatican II Hymnal* (#265-266). You can find it in English in the *By Flowing Waters* (#542-543). The point is it is ubiquitous. This leaves us with few excuses not to know it. Of course, we would advocate for the chant version (in Latin or English). We are aware of an embarrassing version set to the melody of *Danny Boy*, but the best comment to make here is simply “uh .. no.” The chant version is easy, but of course every great composer who has ever tackled a Requiem Mass sets this to music, and beautifully so. Still most parish funerals don't have a choir or orchestra, which is why chant is so suitable for our liturgies.

HELP US TO OVERCOME SOME OF OUR CONFUSION AND PREJUDICES, PLEASE.

First of all, the *In Paradisum* is sometimes one chant of two parts, and sometimes it is presented as two parts which are normally chanted together. The first part is the *In Paradisum*, and the second part is the *Chorus Angelorum*. In your hymnals, like the *St. Michael Hymnal*, this may look like one chant, whereas in the official chant books like the *Liber Cantualis*, it will show two separate chants. Still our practice is to sing these together, as is often done, and even then this is an ever so brief chant.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE THEOLOGICAL INSIGHTS WE MIGHT TAKE FROM THIS CHANT?

This is a sublimely beautiful chant. It is so deeply consoling to hear these words sung as we go to bury our beloved. Anyone who hates chant and thinks it is all boring or depressing is simply not paying attention to this beautiful, beautiful music. Anyone who insists that this music from the “Middle Ages” is dark or scary is again speaking out of ignorance. Your people will love these words if you start to let them hear them!

WHAT ARE SOME CULTURAL REFERENCES REGARDING THIS CHANT?

Well, besides the many beautiful polyphonic settings of this music, it is also associated with some very notable people. For example the *In Paradisum* was sung at the funerals of President Kennedy, Princess Grace of Monaco, and baroness Margaret Thatcher.

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS HERE FOLLOW:

*In paradisum deducant te Angeli:
in tuo adventu suscipiant te Martyres,
et perducant te in civitatem sanctam Ierusalem.*

*Chorus Angelorum te suscipiat,
et cum Lazaro quondam paupere
æternam habeas requiem.*

May the angels lead you into paradise;
may the martyrs receive you at your arrival
and lead you to the holy city Jerusalem.

May choirs of angels receive you and with Lazarus,
once (a) poor (man), may you have eternal rest."



*Bishop Shanley lying in state
in the National Shrine*

THE RECESSIONAL

If the priest has paced himself, the brief In Paradisum concludes as he genuflects and begins his recessional. The family usually takes a while to move out of the pews and down the aisle. This is a good place for a hymn, but again, the cantor needs to know the hymn well, because he or she may be the only person singing if the family is walking out with the casket.

A HEARTY HYMN CAN GO HERE CERTAINLY.

We have already discussed hymns earlier. Again, in the following appendix we volunteer our “white list” of better options in the hopes that it might help your choirmaster and families choose better options.



A boy mourns his father, the President.

St. Louis Cathedral in New Orleans



Auxiliary Music from the Requiem

What follows are more pieces of music often associated with the Requiem Mass. This may be confusing, but just know that some of these chants may have been suppressed, or they may have been a part of the Office of the Dead. Nevertheless they become part of the *musical* tradition of the Requiem, and can help a careful choirmaster make good choices when choosing solos. These pieces of music are not always easy to sing either, so you would need a finer singer to do some of these justice. Moreover, we shall also include some suggested hymns.

THE DIES IRAE

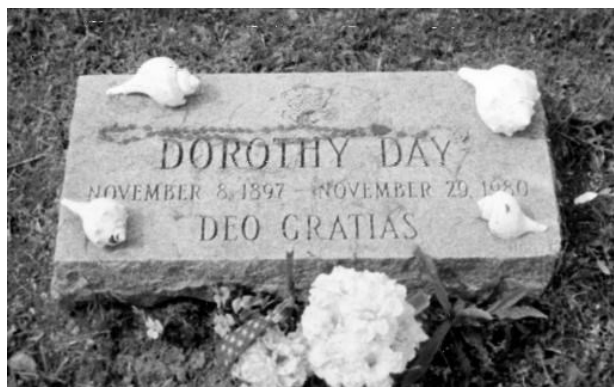
The Dies Irae is a suppressed sequence from the Requiem Mass. It used to be sung prior to the Gospel, but it is no longer a part of the funeral liturgy in the ordinary form.

WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THIS CHANT?

Well, the *Dies Irae* is a medieval masterpiece of hymnody (likely composed by the Franciscan Thomas de Celano in the 1200's). It was not originally liturgical, but composed more for private devotion. Our oldest copy of it is from around 1254. It is a long poem about Judgment Day, and the title translates "Day of Wrath."

Certainly the text of the *Dies Irae* is sobering, but the peaceful chant version is hardly terrifying. Later composers may have set the text to very dramatic melodies (like Verdi) and that may have prejudiced those who revised our liturgy in the last century against it, discouraging them from retaining the sequence that used to be sung before the Gospel. As it was not ancient (*only eight centuries old*), it was suppressed as a sequence. But keep in mind that these reforms suppressed a lot of long and "recently added" sequences. So they were at least being consistent. Still, our world could stand to reflect more on the *Dies Irae* if you ask us. Folks these days walk around fearless of God or judgment, and they are not the better for this nonchalance. So if you have a parishioner who wants to hear the *Dies Irae*, it could possibly be done as a prelude (that is if your cantor can handle it).

Keep in mind that while the sequence was suppressed in the ordinary form of the Requiem Mass, it is retained in the extraordinary form. Moreover even in the Novus Ordo, the *Dies Irae* did not disappear from our Church's liturgy. It still remains a part of the Divine Office, perhaps reasoning that clergy and religious would keep it alive, and at least *they* would reflect upon Judgment Day. Certainly Catholic musicians should value this text and its many wonderful settings. But one almost needs a schola or choir to sing this well, and most funerals haven't that luxury these days. Sung in Latin, it would remind those who know the text of judgment, but those unfamiliar with the music or language would just hear music.



Dorothy Day promoted Gregorian chant in the Catholic Worker community, and sought to help poor parishes to form chant choirs. She claimed the entire Catholic social teaching was fundamentally based on the liturgy.

THE PIE JESU

Pronounced “pee aye yay zoo” (not “pie Jesus”), the Pie Jesu is not so much a chant as it is a solo that comes from the Dies Irae.

WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THIS CHANT?

This is not exactly a proper, but it emerges from what used to be a proper. The *Pie Jesu* is an example of organic development within the Mass. The *Pie Jesu* consists of the final words of the *Dies Irae*. While the *Dies Irae* is a piece of music that stresses the wrath of Judgment Day, its last lines isolated into the *Pie Jesu* are usually so filled with hope. These last lines may have been added to the *Dies Irae* later, and even before it was separated from the *Dies Irae*, composers like the Spaniard de Morales were treating this last strophe as almost different from the rest of the *Dies Irae*. So while “new,” there are some lovely compositions of this (by Faure and Rutter). Still, these may require outstanding soloists who are not always easy to find for a weekday funeral. If you have one, this would certainly be suitable for communion time. A *Pie Jesu* was sung at the funeral of President Kennedy and of Cardinal George of Chicago.

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS HERE FOLLOW:

*Pie Jesu Domine, dona eis requiem.
Dona eis requiem sempiternam.*

Merciful Lord Jesus, grant them rest;
grant them eternal rest.



Old St. Mary's Cathedral
in San Francisco

THE LIBERA ME

This is a prayer that the priest prayed over the casket at the end of the Requiem Mass in the old rite (or the extraordinary form of our liturgy). It was put to music by some composers, and it could make a great solo if you had the talent in your parish.

WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THIS CHANT?

The *Libera Me* was actually a prayer said beside the coffin immediately after the Requiem Mass, as the priest was exiting, and prior to the burial. As a prayer it is quite old. It appears in some IX century manuscripts. Some of the composers who have put this to music are Byrd, Tallis, Victoria, Faure, Mozart, & Durufle. Because it normally went towards the end of the funeral Mass, it would be logical to put it towards the end of our present day funeral Mass, for example as a solo after communion. But again, you have to have the vocalist, choir (and sometimes orchestra) who can really pull this off depending upon which version you are using. It is a beautiful, beautiful prayer.

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS HERE FOLLOW:

*Libera me, Domine, de morte æterna,
in die illa tremenda: Quando coeli movendi sunt et terra.
Dum veneris iudicare sæculum per ignem.
Tremens factus sum ego, et timeo,
dum discussio venerit, atque ventura ira.
Quando coeli movendi sunt et terra.
Dies illa, dies iræ, calamitatis et miseræ,
dies magna et amara valde.
Dum veneris iudicare sæculum per ignem.
Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine: et lux perpetua luceat eis.*

Deliver me, O Lord, from death eternal on that fearful day,
when the heavens and the earth shall be moved,
when thou shalt come to judge the world by fire.
I am made to tremble, and I fear, till the judgment be upon us,
and the coming wrath, when the heavens and the earth
shall be moved. That day, day of wrath, calamity, and misery,
day of great and exceeding bitterness,
when thou shalt come to judge the world by fire.
Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord:
and let light perpetual shine upon them.



St. Martin Catholic Church
in Louisville

WHAT THE MODES TELL US

A choirmaster gives us insights into the psychology (if you will) of the chants from the Requiem Mass.

Oftentimes one hears the complaint from those who are resistant to the notion of chant at a funeral Mass that it is “dirge-like” and sad music. This thinking is misguided and based more in bias than experience. Indeed, if one is to consider the word “dirge” itself, it becomes clear that it has taken on a rather negative connotation, quite undeservedly. Our English word “dirge” comes to us from the Latin “dirige” which happens to be the first word of the first antiphon for Matins in The Office of the Dead, a series of prayers that are sung or recited for the repose of the soul of the deceased. “Dirige Domine, Deus Meus, in conspectu tuo viam meam”, which translates, “Direct, O Lord, my God, my way in Thy sight”. Another way to translate this phrase might be “Make Thy way plain before my face, O God.” Over time, the word “Dirige” came to refer to the entire Office of The Dead, the long exercise of prayer beginning at the sickbed with psalms and litanies accompanying the soul unto the final moments of life and culminating at the moment of departure in the beautiful and pathetic farewell, that begins, “Go forth, Christian soul, from this world, in the name of the Almighty Father who created thee,” and ends with petitions that God would receive his servant in his goodly habitation of light. It is clear that the funeral “dirge” in its original sense is nothing short of sublime prayer directed to God for the sake of the soul of the deceased and for those left behind to mourn. With these prayers we implore God to direct (dirige) our prayers to the benefit of those in need and to help us to acknowledge His ways even in the suffering of this world. With this understanding in place, we can now begin to appreciate the very nature of the proper texts for the Funeral Mass, and more importantly, the music to which these texts are set.

The music of Gregorian Chant resides in a system of musical scales known as “modes”. There are eight of them, and they each possess their own characteristics. Without veering into the realm of music theorists, suffice it to say that each Mode, or series of pitches within a certain scale, has a unique “sound”. In some ways, it is similar to our understanding of the “minor” and “major” in our Western-Music ears (as opposed to the sound of music from the East or the Orient). Interestingly, the modes for the chants of the Funeral or Requiem Mass, are very much in keeping with our understanding of the Dirige Domine of the Office for the Dead as we have learned it above. Conveying a mixture of seriousness, sadness, piety and tearful joy, the chants work to reckon the emotions of the bereaved with the work (indeed the obligation!) of praying for our dead. Take for example the Introit, “Requiem aeternam” which is a Mode VI chant. Tearfully

and piously we beg God to grant an eternal rest to our beloved, imploring God that this rest be in the light of God's perpetual glory. It is interesting to note that the three most melismatic (most highly decorated musically speaking) are the words "eis" (referring to the deceased) and "at eis" (again, "upon the deceased") and the word "Domine" (Lord). Certainly, we can surmise from these words which are delicately caressed by the way we linger over them musically, that the deceased is the center of our prayer at this moment.

De profundis, which can be sung as the Tract during Lent or as the Offertory, is a text that at first reading strikes one as incredibly sad and mournful: "Out of the depths have I cried to you, O Lord." For indeed, in our mourning of the dead we do cry out from the deepest part of our being and we might feel that we are close to despair. We are also, in our charity, crying out on behalf of the deceased, who can no longer do this for himself. Interestingly, this chant is not set in one of the modes that are sometimes associated with heartrending sadness; instead, it is set in what is known as the "happiest" of modes, Mode VIII. Why this seeming contradiction? The answer resides in a close reading of Psalm 129, the psalm from which this text is taken. The psalmist seems to understand that calling out to God from our suffering and sinfulness allows God's mercy to show forth. God is loving and forgiving and is not inclined to pay heed to our iniquities and punish us the way we deserve. For this reason, we sing this text full of joyful hope for ourselves and for our loved one.

The Offertory (when not using *De profundis*) "Domine Jesu Christie" is an especially interesting text and melody. This is one of the funeral propers that does not come directly from Scripture, but instead comes to us in the form of a composed prayer. It is set in Mode II which suggests a text of a very serious nature. It's almost as if we need to be reminded by this point in the liturgy that we have before us more work to do. Perhaps our thoughts have begun to turn inward, and we are more focused on ourselves and our own sadness. Remember, the offertory comes after the homily, and the homilist may very well have stirred up memories or feelings that we thought we had quite successfully suppressed until this moment. So the offertory with its severe admonitions to "deliver the souls of all the departed faithful from the sufferings of hell . . . from the deep pit . . . from the mouth of the lion . . . may they not be swallowed up by hell . . . fall into darkness" . . . this offertory seems to shake us out of our pitiful self-absorption and say, "Wake up! This is serious stuff. You must pray!" The chant melody has us sing expressively "infernus" (inferno, hell), leonis (lion) and obscurum (darkness), so as not to allow us to feign ignorance about the realities of eternal separation from God. But not to leave us mired in despair, the text has us call upon the great standard-bearer, Saint Michael,

and to invoke the covenant made with the patriarch, Abraham. Here we see the longest and most melismatic passage within the text. It is over the words “*semini eius*” which translates “his descendants”. The many notes that we sing on this phrase suggest the great number of the descendants of Abraham. As we beseech the Lord to receive the soul of our deceased and to make him pass from death into life we are reminded of God’s loving promise to Abraham and his descendants forever. Beautiful!

We have come now to the Communion, the final chant of the Funeral Mass in which we hear mention of “light”. You see, quite subtly throughout the texts of the rite we have been reminded over and over of the baptism of the departed. Recall these words from the Rite of Baptism: “Parents and godparents, this light is entrusted to you to be kept burning brightly. This child of yours has been enlightened by Christ. He (she) is to walk always as a child of the light. May he (she) keep the flame of faith alive in his (her) heart. When the Lord comes, may he (she) go out to meet him with all the saints in the heavenly kingdom. The introit, gradual, alleluia with its versicle, the offertory, and finally the communion each refer to the “perpetual light” or “eternal light” of salvation. That same salvation that comes to us through our baptism and in the resurrection of Christ Jesus. The candle that we receive at our baptism (or that our parents and Godparents receive for us) is lit from the Easter candle itself, and that light shines forth even at our death. The communion, which is set in the “happy” mode VIII, not only reminds us of the “light” of baptism, but also recalls that we shall bask in this light in the “company of the saints”. Look again at the text from the Rite of Baptism above. One cannot fail to see the connection. What joyful and happy thoughts these are! It’s as if a mini-Easter is wrapped up inside every Requiem, for indeed, for the faithful, it is!

Finally, we shall look at those chants that are sometimes referred to as the “Chants for the Last Farewell.” The “*Subvenite*” is a text that pleads with the saints and angels to come to the assistance of the departed soul. It is a heartfelt and harmonious chant that is sung in the most tender of all the modes: Mode IV. Certainly the image of our beloved being led by the angels to rest in the bosom of Abraham is most reassuring and comforting. How can we bear not hearing these words sung at a funeral?!

“*In paradisum*” and “*Chorus angelorum*” are often paired as one chant. One might hear these texts at the incensation of the casket or as the body is being carried from the church. Interestingly, the chants, though sung as one, are in two different modes: Mode VII and Mode VIII. These two modes are closely related, but distinct enough as to prove tantalizing as to why they are chosen for these texts. Mode VII is often referred to as the

“angelic” mode because it usually receives those texts in which angels are the main actors. Consider if you will, “Viri Galilae”, the Mode VII introit for the Ascension of the Lord. Here the text is the voice of the angel querying the disciples, “Men of Galilee, why are you gazing in astonishment at the sky . . . ?” The angel is clearly about some very important work here as it is his duty to reassure the disciples that their Lord and friend will return in the same manner as they have seen him depart. So, too, with the “In paradisum” we are witnessing the work of angels. Here it is their job to escort the soul of the departed into the paradise where the martyrs await. It is worth noting the similarity in mood between the “Viri Galilae” and “In Paradisum”. In both instances, not only are the angels going about their work, but they are also a comforting presence for those who have been left behind. This is the nature of Mode VII.

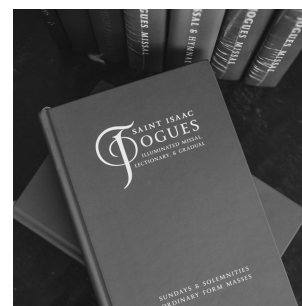
The mystery of why “Chorus angelorum” which is also about the work of angels should suddenly shift to Mode VIII when we were so enjoying the comfort of our Mode VII is really not much of a mystery when one comes to understand the nature of Mode VIII. We’ve already seen how this mode is characterized by “happiness” as in the Communio, “Lux aeterna” and the Tract, “De profundis”, but we have failed to experience the mode’s other characteristic, that of completeness or perfection and finality. How fitting is it know that we have completed our work for the time being as pray-ers for the dead. The Mass has ended. We have beseeched the angels, the martyrs, the saints, and the patriarchs of old to come to our assistance. We have humbly laid our grief before the Lord, and begged that he might make some good come of it. We have done the work appointed unto us in praying for those united to us in baptism. And now, confident in our pray-ers, the final words we hear chanted are those of Christ himself:

I am the resurrection and life. He who believes in me, even though he is dead, shall live.

Bridget Scott

Director of Liturgical Music

Our Lady of the Mountains Catholic Church



You can't sing the propers without the resources. You need to know where to find this music online or in your choir closet. Our parishes need to invest so that our choristers can be obedient to the Church. We hope this schema helps you build up your parish repertoire. There are so many great resources now.

TASTEFUL & APPROPRIATE HYMN OPTIONS

This list is here to help the choirmaster steer the families of their parish towards tasteful and appropriate options in hymns. Some of these hymns work better in different places in the funeral liturgy, so the choirmaster will need to consider that when placing these hymns into the above schema. We have used our parish hymnal (the St. Michael Hymnal), but other suitable or decent Catholic hymnals might be available that would have these or perhaps even more options. Our parish long ago liberated ourselves from disposable hymnals with ever changing repertoires, so what follows are our attempt to identify certain “classics” for a noble Catholic funeral.

Hymns are a part of our American experience, but not all are Catholic, and some of those broadly Christian hymns do a better job than others in expressing our Catholic theology. Families may have a favorite hymn or two, but we want to discourage too many hymns in the liturgy so as to make space for our essential Catholic propers that make a Requiem Mass what it is supposed to be. Moreover we should endeavor whenever possible to steer our people towards better hymns that reflect better Catholic teaching and that are more suitable for Catholic funerals. Not everyone’s favorite hymn will work for a funeral. Most hymnals have a topical index in the back indicating what that hymnal publisher recommends for funerals, but even they are not always the best hymns. So what follows is our short list of hymns that may help your parish recommend more dignified options to your families.



We have found this to be quite challenging really, when a family is in grief, to try to help them choose wisely. Most Catholics just don’t know that much about the repertoire of hymns, so they’re just apt to pick what they sang at the last Catholic funeral they went to, and again, those hymns may be awful. The best thing to do is try to build up trust with people over time, and win small victories. And keep in mind, some hymns are great, and even some Protestant hymns are great, but we still want to preserve our rite from too many non-liturgical elements.

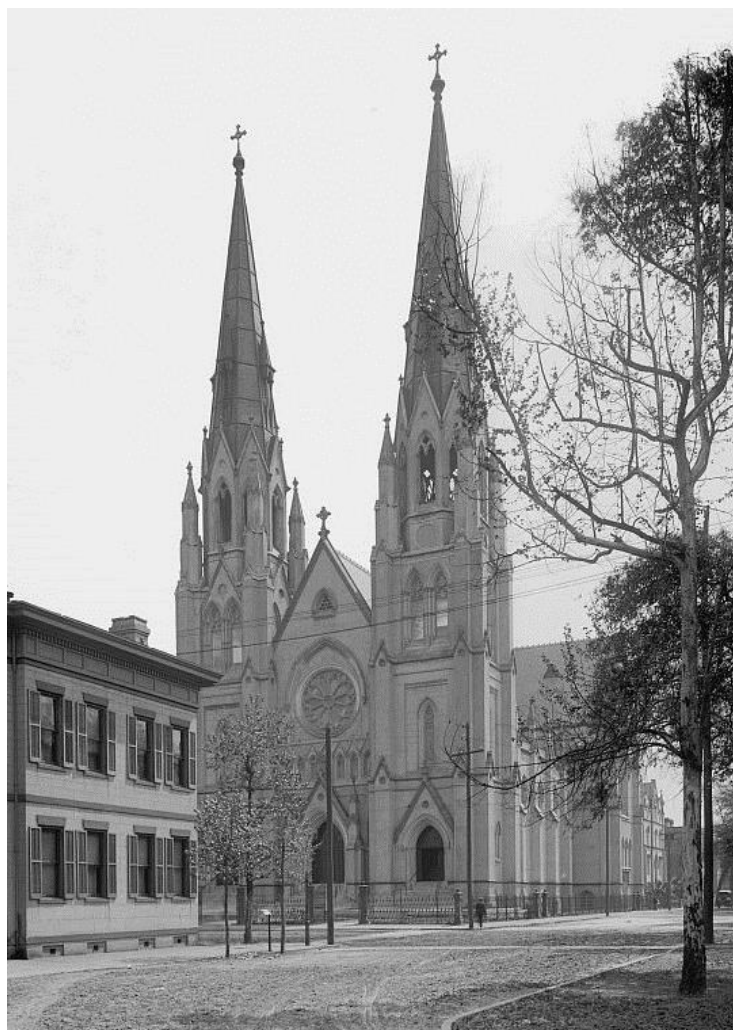
Remember, we’re trying to bring dignity back to the rite of Christian funerals and remove some of the Protestant sentimentality that comes through some of those hymns. And remember above all we want to pray for the dead, and Protestant hymns won’t communicate that reality to our people, or to our Lord. Certainly, the best step forward is to reduce the number of hymns so as to make room for the proper chants!

You might consider encouraging your families to pick out three or four hymns from which the organist or cantor may choose one or two based on their own abilities and voices. If we can book a more competent soloist, for example, he or she might want to sing something more beautiful, but if all we have is an organist and more of a cantor than soloist, then they will likely lean more on hymns. Moreover, some of these hymns have the same melodies, and some of these hymns work better for communion hymns whereas others work better for closing hymns, so it might be wise to trust our musicians here. Choirmasters will need to steer families, as kindly as possible, towards better choices. We hope this list helps.

- *Abide With Me* (EVENTIDE) from the *St. Michael Hymnal* (#402): lovely words for hopeful life after death.
- *Adoro Te Devote* (ADORO TE DEVOTE) from the *St. Michael Hymnal* (#408): very traditional Latin standard for Communion
- *Ave Maria* (CHANT MODE 1) from the *St. Michael Hymnal* (#441)
- *Ave Verum* (CHANT MODE VI) from the *St. Michael Hymnal* (#444): a very traditional Latin standard for Communion
- *All You Who Seek a Comfort Sure* (KINGSFOLD) from the *St. Michael Hymnal* (#422); & the *Vatican II Hymnal* (#345): this beautiful hymn is for those seeking comfort and consolation in the sacred heart of Jesus.
- *Be Still My Soul* (FINLANDIA) from the *St. Michael Hymnal* (#451): this was sung at President Regan's Funeral. Its last lines include this text: "when friends depart, and all is darkness in this vale of tears, then shalt thou better know his love, his heart, who comes to soothe thy sorrows and thy fears."
- *Be Thou My Vision* (SLANE) from the *St. Michael Hymnal* (#452): this is a 1500 year old poem written by the Irish poet St. Dallán Forgaill, and it would work great for Irish families.
- *Eternal Father Strong to Save* from the *St. Michael Hymnal* (#518): this Navy hymn was FDR's favorite, it was sung as part of the funeral rites of both President John F. Kennedy and his wife Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis.
- *Faith of our Fathers* (ST. CATHERINE) from the *St. Michael Hymnal* (#520); & the *Vatican II Hymnal* (#208):
- *God of Our Fathers* (NATIONAL HYMN) from the *St. Michael Hymnal* (#538): this hymn speaks of the God who brings those who keep the true religion through the battle and darkness into never ending day. It was used in the funeral procession of General Schwarzkopf, and was also part of President Lyndon B. Johnson.
- *Hearken, Shepherd of the Sheep* from the *Vatican II Hymnal* (#264): This is an easy vernacular arrangement of *De Profundis Exclamantes*.
- *How Firm a Foundation* from the *St. Michael Hymnal* (#567): This was a favorite hymn during the American Civil War on both sides. It was sung at the funerals of General Robert E. Lee, and Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson.

- *I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say Come Unto Me & Rest* (KINGSFOLD) from the *St. Michael Hymnal* (#572): this is a XIX century Scottish hymn that alludes to finding rest in Christ. The *Order of Christian Funerals* lists this as a suitable hymn for funerals.
- *I Know That My Redeemer Lives* (DUNEDIN) from the *St. Michael Hymnal* (#573); & the *Vatican II Hymnal* (#355):
- *Jerusalem, My Happy Home* (LAND OF REST) from the *St. Michael Hymnal* (#587): This hymn set to an American folk melody speaks of the restful Promise Land of heaven. The *Order of Christian Funerals* recommends this as a suitable hymn for a funeral.
- *Lead Kindly Light* (SANDON) from the *St. Michael Hymnal* (#607); & the *Vatican II Hymnal* (#298): : this beautiful hymn by Cardinal Newman was played at the funeral procession of President Eisenhower. It acknowledges that God has led us through the mistakes of our youth, and asks the Lord to lead us on the “angles” of those who have gone before us in death.
- *Lord of All Hopefulness* (SLANE) from the *St. Michael Hymnal* (#622)
- *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling* from the *St. Michael Hymnal* (#627); & the *Vatican II Hymnal* (#276): : the beautiful text of this hymn makes it perfect for funerals. It was sung at Baroness Margaret Thatcher’s Funeral.
- *Merciful Savior* (OLD 124TH) from the *St. Michael Hymnal* (#633): this is a funeral hymn that prays for God’s mercy upon his servants who have past beyond life’s cares. The *Order of Christian Funerals* recommends this as a suitable hymn for a funeral.
- *My Shepherd Will Supply My Need* (RESIGNATION CMD) from the *St. Michael Hymnal* (#634)
- *Nearer My God to Thee* (BETHANY) from the *St. Michael Hymnal* (#637): this hymn was played as they cleared the dead from the battlefield of Gettysburg, as the Titanic sank, and at the funeral of presidents
- *O God Beyond All Praising* from the *St. Michael Hymnal* (#659): this was sung at the funeral of Princess Diana, and it was the closing hymn at the funeral of Cardinal George of Chicago. It speaks of our responsibility to make a sacrifice of praise to God even in our sorrow.
- *O God Our Help in Ages Past* (ST. ANNE) from the *St. Michael Hymnal* (#661): There are many verses, but this hymn is otherwise a beautiful option for a funeral, as it speaks of the enduring aid of God, who survives us all. This was sung at the funeral of Winston Churchill, and played at the funeral of President Lyndon B. Johnson. The *Order of Christian Funerals* recommends this as a suitable hymn for a funeral.
- *Praise to the Holiest in the Height* (NEWMAN CM) from the *St. Michael Hymnal* (#719); & the *Vatican II Hymnal* (#287)
- *Shepherd of Souls* (ST. AGNES) from the *St. Michael Hymnal* (#745)
- *Song of Farewell* (OLD HUNDREDTH LM) from the *St. Michael Hymnal* (#755): a perfect recessional hymn if you had the Subvenite already sung in Latin

- *Soul of My Savior* (ANIMA CHRISTI) from the *St. Michael Hymnal* (#759)
- *The King of Love My Shepherd Is* (ST. COLUMBA) from the *St. Michael Hymnal* (#784); & the *Vatican II Hymnal* (#268): this hymn is set to the familiar Irish melody “St. Columba” and it was sung at the funeral of Princess Diana and at the funeral of Cardinal Egan of New York City. The *Order of Christian Funerals* also recommends this as a suitable hymn for a funeral.
- *Ultima* (ULTIMA) from the *St. Michael Hymnal* (#807): This chant is part of the Benedictine tradition. The monks sing it on feast days at the end of meals, but also at funerals. Many of our monasteries were founded from mother houses in German speaking lands, so it is often sung in Latin, German and English. It is a prayer that Mary will lead us home to her Divine Son.



The Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Savannah

Please note that the extraordinary form forbade using “alleluia” in the Requiem as it was a word of joy. Being consistent with our tradition, we would suggest avoiding Easter hymns for funerals.

Still, we know that hymnody is an issue that poses certain challenges. Catholics who never went to Mass for years will often times expect parishes to go into full swing for their loved one when they pass, and then presume to demand four or five Baptist hymns for this supposed “serious Catholic” we never saw in the pews. So, we know how that feels. We want our people’s funerals to not be one long cliché. Of course not every parish has the same hymn options available to them, but we have tried to choose classics. We hope this list helps your parish pastors, choirmasters and families make better choices, and ones more suitable to the noble rites of our Church.

FINDING THAT BALANCE BETWEEN PRESUMPTION & DESPAIR

On one hand, too many of us presume all the dead are in heaven. This is more or less the Protestant/Masonic milieu that was mentioned in the beginning of this schema. On the other hand, there are many in our society who have a very hopeless view of death, and some are even fascinated with it. A quick perusal of the entertainment options available on the on-demand video providers most people have on their television these days reveals a plethora of horror movies and television series about zombies, vampires, and apocalyptic pandemics. You go to any town in the country and they have ghost tours. Halloween is huge in this country (mostly for adults). The pop-culture of the United States today is obsessed with death, but hardly prepared for it. Looking objectively at this culture, we see the breakdown of the family, countless abortions, and the loss of faith. Euthanasia is more and more seen as a right, and in most places in the west, children are rare. Western culture is in decline, as folks imagine that they have little to nothing to live or die for. As sad as all that is, it is paralleled by loss of respect for human life, and a corresponding decline of respect for our deceased. We more discard (or even recycle) our dead than we bury then in anticipation of the afterlife. We human beings ourselves have become disposable. This macabre obsession with death is symptomatic of deep spiritual problems that lie at the foundation of our age.

As Catholics living through this period of time, we must resist these prevailing winds of our day, and stand strong in our ancient faith that God loves us, that we are called to eternity, that there will be a bodily resurrection and judgment day at the end of time, and that we have a responsibility to pray daily for ourselves and for those we love (living and deceased). To that end we hope this document helps many American parishes to establish a dignified parochial practice of singing this Requiem Mass. We want the Roman Rite to be our normative parochial practice. And yet we are in America, and we know our resources and we know our expectations and we know our hymn tradition and we enjoy worshipping in our vernacular, so this has been an attempt to recognize those good things, and help us integrate them. If our efforts to save the funeral rites of the Latin tradition bring some success, we will have done our part to stand against, on the one hand, the overly presumptive notion that all dead people go immediately to “a better place,” and on the other hand, that death is the end of us as individuals, and there is no hope to personally survive this moment in which we live. As Catholics, we should not accept the spirit of our age, but should rather hold fast to that Kingdom that will never end, for ages upon ages.

So, to be clear, the Requiem Mass will not save us. Christ will save us. But the Requiem Mass is one long series of ancient prayers that should never cease to be a part of our Catholic tradition. If we lose these prayers, then we lose much more than just music. Indeed, we may well just lose our faith.



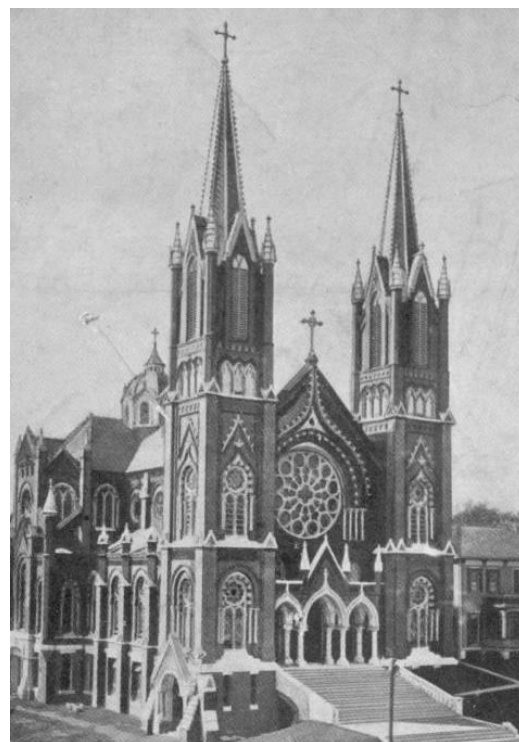
A WORD ABOUT PARTICIPATION

Occasionally one will encounter a cleric, choirmaster or liturgist who will reject our tradition by insisting that everyone must be able to participate by singing everything. Chances are these folks don't know the traditions they are rejecting (so we hope this document helps them begin to know and appreciate our liturgical heritage more). Now and then their motivations may be well meaning, or even pastorally sound given certain circumstances. But there are far too many who use this "ideal of participation" too cavalierly, and thus with that excuse they dismiss 1900 years of culture. It is a vain generation that has no respect for their own tradition and the great composers from our Catholic past. The Requiem is not meant to be a concert. We are meant to pray it. This is liturgical music. To reject it as worthless, while choosing some amateurish modern composition so that mourners can sing at a funeral (as if mourners even *want* to sing at a funeral) is hardly sound pastoral practice.

We firmly believe that it is salutatory for these prayers to be sung by cantor or schola. Mourners need to hear these prayers. They deserve to be able to hear these prayers. If they have never heard them before, it is because too many liturgists and choristers have not kept these prayers alive. We hope to remedy that loss of our patrimony.

And if we're worried about the mourners not singing, then let the priest chant the dialogue prayers and intone the Lord's Prayer. That way there are plenty of things for our mourners to sing without rejecting the proper formula of the funeral Mass. But keep in mind, praying for the dead is very much participating in the Mass.

So by providing both Latin and English options for these propers, and by leaving an opportunity for two hymns, and a potential well-placed solo, we show in this schema that it is possible to have an American expression of our Roman Rite, one that respects the present liturgical books, our long tradition of prayer, and yet makes room for our hymn tradition. We hope this schema helps other parishes restore dignity and solemnity to their funerals too.



The Joseph Parish in Macon

MUSIC FOR A CHILD'S FUNERAL MASS

In the extraordinary form of the Mass, when children died, the priests would pray a votive Mass to the angels. They would wear a white stole, and the emphasis of the Mass would be to give consolation to the parents and family. Our ordinary form of the funeral Mass has beautiful prayers for funeral masses for children, but on those sad occasions, perhaps a slightly different musical approach is wise. Based on the precedent from the extraordinary form, then, we suggest the following music for a child's funeral. Our idea is to leave certain chants in place, but to offer other chant options that most choirs would have in their closet. These chants are borrowed from the feasts of the archangels or guardian angles, or from the feasts of the nativity of saints, and other various places. The idea here is let the music be more consoling for the families (as there is less need to pray for a little one, and more need to console the survivors).



OUR SUGGESTIONS:

- For stillborns, borrow the introit from The Nativity of St. John the Baptist
- Another option is to borrow the introit from the First Sunday of Advent
- Another option is the introit from Holy Family
- If it is Eastertide, borrow the introit from the Second Sunday of Easter
- Borrow the Responsorial Psalm either from Holy Innocents, or from the feast of the Archangels, or from the Common of Holy Men & Women
- Consider the Gradual from Holy Family as an option
- Borrow the Offertory from All Saints or from the Common of Martyrs
- Borrow the Communion chant from the Guardian Angels or from the feast of the Archangels, or from the Nativity of John the Baptist.
- Subvenite (as normal)
- In Paradisum (as normal)

AN AMERICAN REQUIEM: AN AMERICAN EXPRESSION OF OUR ROMAN RITE



Few things are more sad than the funeral of children, but families burying their children deserve particular attention. We hope these options help you in your efforts to serve God's people.

MUSIC FOR A FUNERAL MASS IN SPANISH

Here we have some work to do. There is not, to our knowledge, a vernacular option for the propers currently available in Spanish, though if and when one does become available, we would be pleased to review it (and likely invest in it) for our parish. In our parish, the cantors who are more likely to be able to read music are less likely to be able to read or sing in Spanish, so this limits our options practically speaking (even if we did have propers available in Spanish). Certainly there is nothing stopping us from singing the propers in Latin. Still, we are going to recommend some hymn choices below that may help your parishes. Of course, not all of these may be available in your hymnals. We have the *St. Michael Hymnal* in our pews, so our congregations can sing those hymns.

- *Cerca de Ti, Señor* (BETHANY) from the *St. Michael Hymnal* #467.
- *Es el Señor, mi Buen Pastor* (BROTHER JAMES' AIR) from the *St. Michael Hymnal* #516.
- *Oh, Dios de Mi Alma* (SLANE) from the *St. Michael Hymnal* #694.
- *Piedad, Oh Santo Dios, Piedad* (WINDHAM LM) from the *St. Michael Hymnal* #713.

We also have the *Oramos Cantando* for our Spanish Coro, so they could sing from those (even if our congregation will not be able to follow along). A lot of the hymns mentioned earlier would be translated in this hymnal, but we don't have a book for every member in the congregation, but just the cantor or coro (choir).

- *Cantico de Despedida* (a Song of Farewell) from the *Oramos Cantando Hymnal* #796.
- *Al Paraíso Te Lleven los Angeles* (In Paradisum in Spanish) from the *Oramos Cantando Hymnal* #798.
- *Jesus, Recuérdame* (TAIZE) from the *Oramos Cantando Hymnal* #706. There is not much to this but a verse that repeats over and over again.
- *Perdón, Oh Dios Mío* from the *Oramos Cantando Hymnal* #405
- *Mi Dios y mi todo* from the *Oramos Cantando Hymnal* #572
- *Escúchanos señor* from the *Oramos Cantando Hymnal* #402



San Xavier Mission in Tucson

LITURGICAL PLANNING AT A GLANCE

We propose this as an ideal. If you are like us, it may take your parish months if not years to learn the chants to find this ideal. You may have to slowly implement this idea bit by bit. But this is the ideal based on our reading of the Roman Rite.

- Procession of clergy and family
 - Requiem chant (Latin)
 - Requiem chant (English)
 - Introit chant (suitable for children)
- First Reading (Lector?)
- Responsorial Psalm
- Second Reading (Lector?)
- Gospel Acclamation (Alleluia or Lenten)
- Gospel Reading (chosen and proclaimed by priest)
- Homily (please provide biographical information or insights to the homilist)
- Mass Setting (Latin, English or Spanish)
- Offertory
 - Domine Jesu (Latin)
 - Offertory chant (English)
 - Offertory chant (suitable for children)
 - Possible Solo (see below) †
- Communion
 - Lux Aeterna (Latin)
 - Lux Aeterna (English)
 - Communion chant (suitable for children)
- Post Communion hymn or Possible Solo (see below) †
- Incensing the casket
 - Subvenite (Latin)
 - Subvenite (English)
- Song of Farewell
 - In Paradisum (Latin)
 - In Paradisum (English)
- Closing Hymn



† Possible solo: depending on the musician's skills, a solo might be integrated into the liturgy at either the offertory or communion

A LAST WORD ON EULOGIES

Nothing spoils a funeral like a eulogy. I know one priest who, in frustration, just delivers the church over for eulogies prior to the Mass, and then once it is all over, he comes and starts the liturgy. We feel his frustration. There are innumerable examples of disasters with eulogies. We've seen a Pentecostal get up and try to "save" all his Catholic family. We've seen people too distraught in tears to be understood. We've seen folks essentially dismiss religion all together. We've watched family feuds play out in awkward moments. We've seen people read pages of pages of boring facts very quickly so that it felt like a filibuster on speed. We've seen Masses double in length as non-practicing Catholics get up on the ambo and talk way too long, (even though they *promised* to be brief). Eulogies in Mass are just awful.

Let us keep in mind that for centuries priests were forbidden to even preach a homily at a Requiem Mass. The Church was so concerned that a priest might try to canonize the deceased that they forbade even the priest from preaching. The point of the Requiem Mass to pray for the deceased. Prayer is essential. While our modern rite allows a homily, this is all the more reason for us to exclude the eulogies that are, in so many ways, an attempt at beatification. What our parish has found to work best is leaving eulogies for the reception after the interment back in the parish hall. They can show videos, lay out pictures, sing favorite songs, eat a great meal, be gathered as a family, and talk about the deceased in a far more casual setting (with a microphone) until everyone is happy. Like a rehearsal dinner for a wedding, these receptions are places where these familial dramas can unfold in a more casual setting.



Cathedral gates and portico in Mobile

ASHES TO ASHES, DUST TO DUST

Our experience here in our part of the American South where Catholics have long been a minority living among non-Catholics has meant that many Catholics are buried among their neighbors in city cemeteries. The priest will hallow the ground in which the Catholic is buried, but there are few Catholic cemeteries or even Catholic sections of cemeteries, and usually the cemeteries charge extra to be buried in the Catholic sections (imagine!). Still, in other parts of the South and the rest of America, Catholic cemeteries are available, and they are ideal. Burying the dead was seen as a Christian duty and as an act of charity, but more and more it has become a huge business. Churchyards were places where Catholics could be buried no matter how poor they were, but now parishes are discouraged from even having a graveyard. Still, despite all of this, our ideal is to bury the dead.

HALLOWED GROUND

The Church earnestly recommends the pious custom of burying the body of the deceased in holy ground. This burial is called interment. From the earliest days of the Church Christians followed the Semitic practice of burying our dead. Christians prefer this because we want to honor the body. Long ago St. Augustine reminded us that for Catholics, death is sleeping. A cemetery is a “dormitory” where Christians sleep awaiting the resurrection. It is consecrated ground. Catholics believe in the resurrection of the body, so when we bury the dead, we lay our loved one down to rest, in expectation of the resurrection. To bury the dead has always been seen as a corporal act of mercy for Christians. When martyrs were murdered in the streets and circuses of ancient Rome, and their bodies left on display or piled in a heap, Christians would (at great personal risk) gather up their corpses to be piously buried. It would be a great misfortune for Christians to be denied a Catholic funeral or denied burial in consecrated ground.



A WORD ON CREMATIONS

Because of this respect for the body, cremation was not a part of our tradition. Nevertheless, the Catholic Church does not forbid cremation today. But when cremations occur, families should still bury the ashes in consecrated ground. We should never scatter the ashes or keep them on the mantle. But cremation is not intrinsically evil. The 1983 Code of Canon Law allows for the practice. Still we might want to have a good reason for cremation. Some people may choose cremation because they are going to send a loved one “back” to be buried with their ancestors. Fine. Some people may choose cremation because their families are poor. Okay. But Catholics who can afford to live in nice homes should also be able to afford to honor the bodies of their loved ones. Even so when cremation happens, the Church actually prefers the body to be brought into the church for the funeral, and then cremated after the funeral. This is because the whole funeral liturgy of the Church is built around reverence of the body and the honoring the dead.

But cremation for Catholics is something new, and certainly the Church *has* forbidden cremation in the past. Why? This was primarily because anti-Catholics were so strongly promoting it. Early Christians saw incineration as a scandalous, barbarous, and pagan practice. Cremation was considered too violent and disrespectful to the dignity of the Christian body. That body had once been a living temple of the Spirit, and it had known the blessings of the sacraments. Moreover, we expected the resurrection of the body. Besides, in times of persecution Roman pagans would sometimes throw the corpses of our Christian martyrs into the flames as a double offense in denying them a Christian burial. Those pagans wanted to annihilate the bodies of the saints. So consequently wherever Christian practice influenced local law, cremation was rarely even possible (outside of the occasional pestilence, famine or battle that necessitated a large scale dispatch of corpses for the sake of public safety). Medieval European Christians rejected cremation as a part of their heathen past.

But in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century cremation began to make a comeback. The militantly anti-Catholic French Revolution proposed the revival of cremation in France as a rejection of our Faith. Freemasons began to popularize the practice in various countries to oppose Catholic law and teachings. So-called “free thinkers,” neo-pagans and atheists promoted cremation too. And Communist China made cremation mandatory, seeing burial as unnecessarily expensive and a waste of land, and even arguing that it was bad for the environment. For all these reasons, for many years, Catholics were forbidden to cremate our loved ones, and even today, we should ideally desire to give our beloved dead the proper, devout and reverent interment of the body with all the prayers that accompany that if at all possible. This idea of giving our loved one a proper Catholic funeral is still a work of mercy.

AT THE GRAVE

Sometimes the funeral ritual at the graveside is so short that it could stand a chant at the end. A long tradition in our Church is to sing a *Salve Regina*, and it would seem an appropriate place if the cleric is able. This is one they usually know by heart.



S A N G U I N E M S U P E R N O S

ONE FINAL CAUTION

Presently we live in a time where our choristers and choir masters can't read chant notation, where our priests can't read Latin, and where our clergy and people won't sing. In many places the bishops, whose job it is to protect the heritage and patrimony of the Church, have encouraged the ironic fallacy that Vatican II forbade Latin and Gregorian chant (when in fact the whole liturgical reform began with an international effort to restore and promote Gregorian chant). Consequently almost everywhere we are denied our Roman Rite by the ignorance of "experts." Two thousand years of culture is unknown to us, hidden behind an nearly impenetrable wall of cultural amnesia.

In recent years, the Church has championed the rites of the east, and rightly cautioned eastern churches from taking on additions from the Latin Rite that would be foreign to their own historical expressions of liturgy. But in the West, the Latin Church has itself taken on far too many foreign additions from Protestantism in what was perhaps an attempt to restore Christian unity, but clearly if that was the intent, it did not work. Instead, what has happened is hymns have musically obliterated our rite. And so, in this document, we argue that one way to rediscover our rite (like King Josiah of old) would be to push back against the hegemony of hymnody, and leave room for our proper chants in either Latin or the vernacular. But we recognize this may take time.

Our leap into the vernacular in the second half of the twentieth century might have been an occasion of great art, but alas it did not really happen. The Catholic music composed for most parish liturgies at the time was simply embarrassingly wrong on so many levels. The idea of letting the folk idiom affect the liturgy became an excuse to write bad music, and abandon our heritage. So much so that the Roman Rite is all but unrecognizable in most parishes today. But the winds are changing. And our efforts here — to affect one positive change with regards to how our funeral liturgies are celebrated — are but one step back in the right direction. And we benefit by some *clandestine* Catholic musicians who have pioneered the way where others failed, and who are making it possible for us to have the resources to be able to be obedient to the rite. But this process won't happen over night.



Disposable pew missals have not been helpful in keeping alive the liturgical reforms called for by Vatican II. We have needed permanent resources to learn a consistent repertoire and to rediscover our tradition over generations.

As a priest, when I began doing funerals, I knew that the musicians did not know our tradition. Some of them looked at me as dangerous because I was trying to go “backwards” so they *refused* on principle to help me or even to learn the chant. So I would just personally chant the *Requiem* Introit in the narthex before I began the funeral, or I would have them play something instrumental while I incensed the casket, and then I would personally chant the *In Paradisum* or *Subvenite* before the final commendation. Now our parish has a choirmaster who knows more about sacred music than I do (thank God), and she has brought our singers around to really love chant, and to seeing it as integral to the liturgy, but we appreciate how rare it is to find a Catholic musician who knows any of this stuff, and even if by some miracle we find one, it takes time to slowly teach this stuff to cantors and choristers and to add to a parish's repertoire. Singing a Requiem Mass for All Souls is a great place to start, because it introduces the music to your singers. You might just want to start singing the chanted Requiem too, so that your cantors will become familiar with the chants and have the skills to sing these propers for the average funeral.

So my point is we cannot expect to go from a guitar Mass to a chanted Mass in a season. There are steps to make — many, many steps — to keep your parish together and to gain the trust of your people. And it will be hard work. Real, legitimate and worthy reform usually is.

Father Charles Byrd, S.T.L.
Pastor

Our Lady of the Mountains parish
Jasper, Georgia
September A.D. MMXV



A DEACON'S PERSPECTIVE

*It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead,
that they may be loosed from sins. (2 Maccabees 12:46)*



What the pastor and choirmaster at OLM have set about doing, not only for the regular weekend Masses but also for our funerals is breathtaking. They take seriously the continuity of our Tradition while also accepting the best innovations of the Novus Ordo. In fact an accurate reading of the combined *Order of Christian Funerals of 1998* and the *Roman Missal Third Typical Edition in English of 2011* would appear to require this approach if we want to be obedient to the *Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy of Vatican II*. In my personal opinion, what this parish is promoting is a marriage of the best of the pre- and post-Vatican II traditions: sacred music that could have been at home in the Counter Reformation period (1570-1970) com-

bined with the Novus Ordo Liturgy of the Word, providing for Old Testament readings, Responsorial Psalms, and the three year cycle of Gospel proclamations.

My perspective is broad. I myself was born in 1939. From the 1940's until the USAF active duty in 1962, I was a parishioner of the Cathedral of Christ the King in Atlanta. I became an altar server in 1949, and continued in that role until 1962. I served many cathedral funerals before the Second Vatican Council of 1962-1965. I also experienced the liturgical reforms of Pope Pius XII (d. 1958), and particularly the introduction of the "new" Paschal Triduum on Holy Week — the same liturgies we use today. As a young man I was briefly a seminarian for Atlanta from 1958 to 1959. But I came home to marry and start a family. After all of our six children were graduated from college in 1994, I retired from the practice of law, and began the diaconate formation program from 1997 to 2000. This culminated in my ordination on February 24, 2001. I have served many years under our present pastor, and have served at many funerals.

As I write this my wife and I have both just finished settling our funeral plans. For the record, we want to be buried from OLM, with a mass celebrated as this document recommends. And, by the way, with black vestments and let's hear a *Dies Irae* as a reminder of all those attending (and an *Ave Maria* too, if possible). Please don't canonize us, because we may be in purgatory and may need these prayers, these offerings for the repose of our souls and a plenary indulgence.

Rev. Mr. Lloyd Sutter

UR PAGAN ANCESTORS,

IN THEIR PIETY,

HONORED THEIR ANCESTORS

BY PRAYING TO THEM.

THE APOSTLES TAUGHT US

TO SHOW OUR PIETY

BY PRAYING FOR

OUR ANCESTORS.

THEREIN WE HONOR THEM,

BUT ABOVE ALL, WE HONOR

OUR MERCIFUL LORD

AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST.

A.M.D.G.

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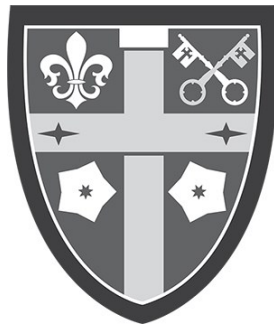
It was pulled together to be a talk on the essential music of the funeral rite of the Catholic Church

We do not want to benefit or profit from this financially in any way

We make this available to all for the Glory of God in hopes that our Church might benefit from this work

Please use it to teach from in your seminaries and to learn from in your parishes!

AN AMERICAN REQUIEM: AN AMERICAN EXPRESSION OF OUR ROMAN RITE



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