

AN EXPLANATION
OF THE
VATICAN EDITION OF THE
ROMAN CHANT

Unto Holy Mother Church is divinely committed the charge of edifying in all holiness the souls of the faithful, and to this most admirable end she is always wont to make profitable use of arts ancillary to her Sacred Liturgy : wherein (that diversity divide not souls, and that uniformity may rather flourish unimpaired to the strengthening and adorning of the mystical Body of Christ) she striveth most carefully to preserve the traditions of the Fathers : and if such traditions be obscured in continuance of time, she is at all times diligent in searching them out, mighty in restoring them.

Now of the arts which appertain to and infuse the Holy Liturgy, adding to its splendour and efficacy, the sacred Chant is to be ranked foremost : for we know by our own experience that it not only giveth a certain fullness to Divine Worship, but that it also draweth the mind heavenward after a wonderful manner. Wherefore the Church hath never ceased to forward the use of this Chant, and hath sought with the utmost care that its ancient dignity suffer no decline.

To reach this end, the chant which adorneth the Liturgy must needs be endued with a certain character, which is the very mark of its sanctity, and of its aptness to aid souls withal. First, and above all things, it must shew religious gravity : next, it must be apt sweetly to draw the understanding of the Christian soul after Truth : furthermore, it must be Catholic, as answering to the needs of every race, every clime, every age : and lastly, it must wed simplicity to the perfection of art.

It is manifest that these marks can nowhere better be found than in the Gregorian Chant, " which is the proper chant of the Roman Church : which she hath received by an heritage sole from the Fathers : which she hath most jealously kept in her manuscripts through the course of centuries : which she commendeth to the faithful as her own : which she ordaineth exclusively in certain passages of her liturgy. " (*Motu proprio* xxii, Nov. 1903, N^o. 3).

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But in the course of time the purity of the chant hath suffered no small hurt : and notably hath it come to pass that the right rules of the said chant, handed down from the Fathers, have been either carelessly passed over, or wholly forgotten : whereby what men call the ' Liturgical Spirit ', and the ' Spirit of Prayer ', are seen to be overmuch obscured : while at the same time the style and the spirit of sacred music are become wellnigh extinct, or, at the least, brought low.

But now (God guide and prosper his undertaking !) the Supreme Pontiff Pius X, vying with the zeal of his forerunners in these matters, hath uttered a monition directed against this decay of the Gregorian Chant, and hath furthermore decreed against it ; to which end he hath indicated concisely and clearly in his *Motu proprio* issued upon November the 22nd. 1903 the *principles* (the direction wherein any reform must be begun) which govern and rule the ecclesiastical chant, at the same time collecting the leading decrees of the Church against those abuses which had in the lapse of time made inroad upon the chant. A Decree of the Congregation of Sacred Rites followed upon June 8th. 1904, in which the restoration of the Gregorian Chant was yet more plainly urged.

It remained for the Roman Church, and for the other Churches following her Rite, to compile books displaying the authentick melodies of the Gregorian Chant ; and the Supreme Pontiff Pius X himself foresaw and provided for this need, declaring in a *Motu proprio* published on April the 25th. 1904 " that the Gregorian melodies are to be restored in their integrity and consistency, after the witness of the more ancient manuscripts ; but in such wise that due respect be had to the lawful traditions of ensuing centuries, and that received uses of liturgical practice be not ignored. "

With these laws and canons before them, those who undertook at the Supreme Pontiff's bidding this glorious revival embarked upon documentary research. At the outset they set about a laborious study and examination of the ancient manuscripts ; in which they were very well advised ; for documents of this order draw their importance not merely from their age, (wherein they are but narrowly separated from the actual original documents of the Gregorian Chant), but more especially from having been written in the centuries when the chant itself was in its most flourishing state. For indeed, though a somewhat ancient origin and daily use among the Fathers of any particular melody may warrant its preservation in a new edition ; yet, however native be its right to inclusion, the very essence of religious art, the very strength of liturgical prayer, depend upon the accuracy wherewith it is set out.

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In weighing the manuscripts, therefore, one fact must always be borne in mind, to wit that though a certain manuscript be of some antiquity, it doth not necessarily follow that it must be received by reason of its age ; and because the restoration of the Ecclesiastical chant ought not to be grounded solely upon palæography, it must draw also upon history, upon the art of musick and of plainchant, and upon experience and the rules of the sacred liturgy withal : these things are to be taken all together, lest the revision, though done with archæological accuracy, be inconsistent in some regards, and violate Catholick tradition by withholding things good or even excellent offered in many centuries to the storehouse of the Church. For by no means can it be permitted to bind what men call the Gregorian tradition within a set term of years ; rather must each century be taken into account, for in every age hath the art of the Gregorian Chant been cultivated with greater or less degree of success. "The Church", declareth the Supreme Pontiff in the aforesaid *Motu proprio*, "hath never ceased to cherish and foster "the progress of the Arts, hallowing for religious use all that man has "found good and beautiful in the course of centuries, having respect "always to liturgical precepts. "

With these wise counsels of our most holy Lord Pope Pius the Tenth before us hath the work of this present edition been undertaken.





























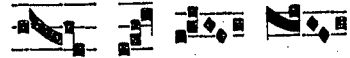
Yet the Church alloweth to the learned liberty to determine the age and type of any particular Gregorian melody, and to pronounce upon its workmanship : one thing she keepeth for herself, her undoubted right of publishing and prescribing to Bishops and to faithful the text of the sacred chant, which, carefully restored by the tradition of the manuscripts, will promote the worthy splendour of divine worship and the edification of souls.

The very firm foundation secured for the work of restoring the Church's ancient musick in its lawful integrity hath now been made clear enough : but for the convenience of those who will use quirebooks prepared after the aforementioned principles, it will be of profit to add here some few rules concerning the proper Gregorian notes and signs and their right rendering.

OF THE FORM AND USE OF THE NOTES EMPLOYED IN THE CHANT

The method of forming the notes of the chant, and especially of combining them, as established by our forefathers and used always and everywhere throughout the Middle Ages, is of the highest importance for correct singing, and is still the normal system for printers at the present time.

In the following table the chief forms of the notes (or neums, as they are called) are shewn, together with their names :

			
Punctum	Virga	Bivirga	Punctum inclinatum
			
Podatus or Pes	Clivis or Flexa	Epiphonus	Cephalicus
			
Scandicus	Salicus	Climacus	Ancus
			
Torculus	Porrectus	Torculus resupinus	Porrectus flexus
			
Pes subpunctis	Scandicus subpunctis	Scandicus flexus	Climacus resupinus
			
Strophicus	Pes strophicus	Clivis strophica or clivis and oriscus	Torculus strophica or torculus and oriscus
			
Pressus	Other forms of Pressus with added neums		Trigon
			
Quilisma		Longer or composite neums	

For the avoidance of error or doubtfulness in the interpretation of these forms, a few preliminary remarks are advisable ;

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VIII. OF THE FORM AND USE OF THE NOTES EMPLOYED IN THE CHANT.

1. Of the two notes which form the *podatus* the lower note is always sounded before the one standing directly above it.

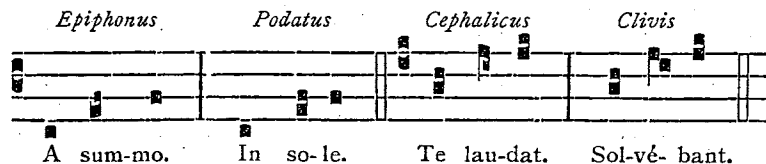


2. By the thick stroke of the *porrectus*, running obliquely, is signified only the two notes joined together by this mark, the one occurring at the top of the stroke, the other at the bottom.



3. The half-note called *cephalicus* or *epiphonus* is never found save at the end of a syllable when (another syllable following without a break) two vowels run together after the manner of a diphthong, as, *Autem, Eius, alleluia* : or in a group of consonants, as, *OMnis, sanctus*. For the voice, governed by the nature of the syllable, floweth lightly from one note to the other ('liquescent'); so that the mouth is shut and the sound 'seemeth not to be cut off'; and it loseth about half its value not of time but of stress. (Cf. Guido *Micrologus*, chap. xv).

On the other hand, when the nature of the syllable needeth that the sound be not liquefied but 'brought out more fully', the epiphonus is replaced by the *podatus*, and the *cephalicus* by the *clivis*.



Sometimes liquescence is applied to two notes (or the latter of two notes) which follow a higher note or *virga*, as in the *climacus*, in which case both are written smaller, or they are changed to a *cephalicus* added to the *virga*. The neum which differeth thus from the *climacus* is called an *ancus*.

4. When, as in the *strophicus*, *pressus* and similar forms, several single notes are set at the same pitch in such fashion that there is only a small space between them, a delay of a distinctive character is to be

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made on these notes, according to the number of them, whether less or more. But the *strophicus* and the *pressus* have this difference, that whereas the former is sung louder or even with a *vibrato* at discretion, the latter should be softer, unless the note fall upon an accented syllable, needing thereby a stronger stress.

5. There is one other tremulant note, the *quilisma* : this occurreth in the chant as an ornamental note, and is styled '*nota volubilis et gradata*'. Where this tremulous or fluttering voice is not customary, or where it is not sung alone by a trained singer, the note which goeth before the *quilisma* may be brought out with a sharper stress, so that the sound of the *quilisma* itself be diminished rather than overquicken.

6. The tail added to the upper note of the *climacus*, *clivis* and *porrectus* is proper to the form of the figure as handed down by our forefathers. A note of this kind taketh often a more marked accent; not on account of its tail but because, not being combined with any foregoing note, it meeteth the first impact of the voice. The little line which leadeth from one note to another serveth but to join them together.

7. The rhomboid puncta (*puncta inclinata*) which follow the highest note in certain neums signify nothing of themselves as to time. By their very form they depend upon the high note preceding, and this is shewn by their slanting nature; they are therefore to be performed as sounds linked together.

Single neums form one single unit in singing, however their parts be conjoined in writing; so that the notes which follow the first do altogether seem to make one family with it, issuing forth and flowing with one common movement.

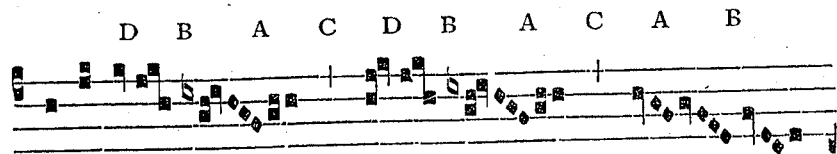
And because the notes of any one neum are joined both in notation and in chant, it is requisite also that the neums themselves be distinct one from another in sound as well as in appearance : which is accomplished in divers ways by sundry devices.

1. When several neums correspond to several syllables, the latter are clearly uttered so that the former are easily perceived. If this be the case, each neum borroweth its right quality and strength from the syllable to which it is set, in such wise that a neum is brought out with greater force if its own syllable bear a strong accent; but with less force, if the nature of the syllable require a less prominent sound.

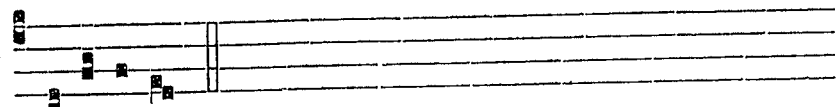
2. If several neums be fitted to the same syllable, the series is divided

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into sundry units, in such wise that some flow together as altogether connected parts of a whole (see A below) ; while others are separated either by a broader space (B) or by a short dividing line (C) and are marked by a certain delaying of the last note in their course, giving the opportunity if need be, for a quick replenishing of the breath. For example :



Ky-ri-e



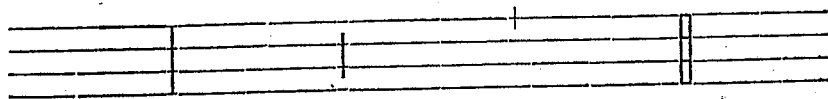
e-lei-son.

Care must be had to leave place for a rather more marked delay, though without a breathing-pause, if a tailed note (D) happen to close the neum to which it belongeth.

Following a 'golden rule', no pause may be made at the end of any neum if there follow a new syllable of a word as yet unfinished, whatever space intervene : not even a delaying on the last note ; and still less a silence, which would unfittingly break the word.

Divisions of sundry degree are to be employed in all chanting, according as the sense, whether of word or of song, shall demand or allow. For the help of singers, several kinds of bar-signs are given in quire books to-day, for the varying degrees of divisions or of pauses, in stress or in time ; to wit -

- 1 *divisio maior.* 2 *minor.* 3 *minima.* 4 *finalis.*



1. The full bar, greater division, or *divisio distinctionis* betokeneth a moderate drawing-out of the last note of the chant, and a full intake of breath.

2. The half-bar, or 'subdistinction', is for a very slight drawing-out, together with a short intake of breath.

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3. The shortest pause sheweth the smallest delaying of the sound, allowing (in case of need) for renewal of an exhausted supply of breath. If a singer should need often to replenish his lungs, he should gather his breath as it were surreptitiously, if ever the text or the chant give a little opening, but so that no word or neum be ever broken up.

4. The double bar closeth the chant itself, or one of its chief sections.

This double bar answereth commonly another purpose in quire books as shewing also the point at which the quire followeth on after the intonation of the chant, or at which the turns of the singing change. But inasmuch as a sign of this sort thrust in the midst of the chant maketh often an harmful break, it hath been found better to replace it for this purpose by an asterisk *, as is seen in the foregoing example *Kyrie eleison*.

Now in this and other such places the single asterisk * is used when the one quire which had heretofore been singing rests, while the other quire singeth alone ; but the double asterisk ** where both quires sing together, that the chant may, as is seemly, be finished by the voices of all in consort.

It is understood that when the flat sign \flat is used, it is in force until the natural \natural , or a bar-line, or a new word, shall be met.

These rules being understood, it is needful also for those who pay the meed of divine praise to be skilled in all the canons of the chant, and carefully to obey them, that so mind and voice may alway be in accord.

And first it is requisite that the words which are being sung shall be clearly and rightly understood (*Benedict XIV*). For it is meet that the chant develop rather than diminish the letters's meaning (*St. Bernard, Ep. 312*).

In every text, whether of lesson, or of psalmody, or of chant, let due regard be paid to the question whether the words rank as accentus or as contentus ; for thereby is a marvellous fragrance shed upon the understanding (*Instituta Patrum*).

And above all things let the greatest care be had lest the sacred chant lose its value by unevenness of singing. Let no neum nor note be prolonged unduly for an instant of time, nor compressed. Let us sing with one body of tone, pause together, as if we had always careful listeners. If our song be solemn, let our pause be the longer ; and that all the voices may sound in one (which is most needful) let each strive to sink his voice lowly into the consort of the choral song. Let us abhor

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every affectation of voice, all ostentation and singularity, and whatever calls up the histrionick ; nor let us copy those who fling forth the chant too lightly, or those who utter the syllables with undue pomposity ; let us rather sing every chant with such solemnity, yet with such movement, that we sing alway with ease of voice and a full sweet tone. (*Hucbald, Nicelas, Instituta Patrum*).

Thus far from the mouths of the hallowed Fathers : some of whom have learned of Angels their song, while others (by the Holy Spirit searching their hearts) have received it in contemplation. And if we strive earnestly to follow after their examples, we also shall receive an exquisite sweetness of mind, singing unto God in our hearts, by our spirit and understanding. (*Instituta Patrum*).

It behoveth also them upon whom is laid the duty of singing in the Church of God to be duly taught concerning the customs of their office. Wherefore are appended hereto the chiefest of the rules which belong unto the *Graduale*.

OF THE CUSTOMS TO BE OBSERVED IN THE CHANT OF THE MASS

1. As the Priest draws nigh to the Altar, the Cantors begin on the Antiphon to the Introit ; which is done, as far as the asterisk *, by one Cantor upon ferial days and simple feasts, but upon other holydays and upon Sundays by two, and upon solemn highdays by four, where these are to be had. The Quire continues up to the Psalm, but the first part of the Psalm-verse, up to the asterisk, and the verse *Gloria Patri* are performed by the Cantors, the verse being finished by the full chorus. The Introit as far as the Psalm is then repeated, this time by all.

2. The Antiphon done, the Quire sings *Kyrie eleison* thrice, *Christe eleison* thrice, and again *Kyrie eleison* thrice, either alternately with the Cantors, or side to side. The last *Kyrie eleison* however is divided by the single or double asterisk into two or three distinct parts. If there be two parts only, and thus but one asterisk, the former part is sung by the Cantors alone or by the first chorus, and the latter part by all : if there be three parts, and so a single asterisk at the former division and a double asterisk at the latter, the first part falls then to the same voices as before, but the second part (which repeats the opening phrase of the tune) is sung by the second quire : and finally the third part is completed by the voices of all together. In other cases as many as five parts are found : wherein the manner of allotting the alternate turns of singing

OF THE CUSTOMS TO BE OBSERVED IN THE CHANT OF THE MASS XIII
is likewise shewn by dividing signs both single and double, noted as often as need be : which will be interpreted well enough from the foregoing.

3. The Priest alone begins with a loud voice *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, and the quire continues *Et in terra pax hominibus &c.*, divided again into two parts answering one another ; or singing alternately with the Cantors. Next follows the quire's reply to *Dominus vobiscum*.

4. When the Epistle or Lesson is finished, the Responsory called the Gradual is begun by one or two singers as far as the asterisk *, where the whole chorus, or at least the selected chanters, are instant to follow on at this point. The Verse of the Gradual is sung by two voices, and is completed by the whole quire from the asterisk near the end. Alternatively, the Responsorial mode may be followed when this is more suitable, (1) all the quire then repeating, after the verse has been finished by the solo singer or singers, the first part of the Responsory up to the Verse.

If two Alleluias with a verse are to be sung, the first Alleluia is chanted by one or two voices up to the sign * : the quire then repeats the Alleluia and adds the neum or jubilus, drawing out the syllable *a*. The Cantors, sing the Verse, which is completed in full chorus from the asterisk, as before. The Verse done, the Cantor or Cantors repeat the Alleluia, and the chorus adds the neum only.

From Septuagesima Sunday onwards the Alleluia and its *V.* are omitted and the Tract is sung, the verses of which are performed alternately by two quires answering one another, or divided between Cantors and the full chorus.

In Eastertide the Gradual is omitted, and is replaced by two Alleluias with a verse, as above : and a third Alleluia follows at once, begun by one or two up to the neum, and continued by all without any repetition. A Verse and one final Alleluia are sung in the aforesaid manner.

Sequences are sung alternately, either between Cantors and chorus, or between two divisions of the quire.

5. When the Gospel is done, the Priest intones *Credo in unum Deum* if this is to be sung, the quire continuing *Patrem omnipotentem* and the rest, all together or alternately, following the custom of the place.

6. The Offertory is begun by one, two or four Cantors, as at the Introit, and is carried on by all.

(1) E. g., on the feast of St. John Baptist [Tr.]

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7. When the Preface is finished, the quire follows with *Sanctus* &c., only as far as *Benedictus qui venit*; and this being reached (but not before) the Elevation of the Host is made. At this point the singers are silent and worship with the rest. When the Sacrament has been elevated, the quire goes on with the *Benedictus*.

8. When reply has been made to *Pax Domini*, *Agnus Dei* is sung thrice, either by the full quire led out by one, two or four Cantors as the method may be, or in alternate chorus, in such wise that the close *Dona nobis pacem* (in Requiem Masses, the last word *Sempiternam* only) is sung in full.

9. When the Most Holy Sacrament has been received, the Antiphon called *Communio* is sung by the quire, begun by one, two or four Cantors, following what had been said of the Introit.

The Priest or Deacon sings *Ite Missa est* or *Benedicamus Domino*, to which the quire answers *Deo gratias* in the same melody.

To *Requiescant in pace* at Requiem Masses the reply is *Amen*.

Nihil obstat GEORGIUS D. SMITH D. D.

Censor depulatus.

Imprimatur

Westmonasterii, die 24 Octobris 1929

EDM. CAN. SURMONT VIC. GEN.

PROPRIUM DE TEMPORE

DOMINICA PRIMA ADVENTUS.

Introitus. VIII.

Ad te le-vá-vi * á-nimam me-am : De-us me-
us in te confi- do, non e-ru- bé-scam : ne-
que ir-ri- de- ant me in-imí- ci me- i : ét-e-
nim u-ni-vér- si qui te exspé- ctant, non confun- dén-
tur. *Ps.* Vi- as tu-as, Dómi-ne, demónstra mi-hi : * et sé-
mi-tas tu-as é-do-ce me. Gló-ri- a Patri. sæ-cu- ló-rum.

Quo finito, repetitur Ad te levavi, usque ad Psalmum.

Amen.

† *Hic modus repetendi Introitum servatur per totum annum.*

I. GRADUALE.