

APPENDIX.

Shall the Gregorian chant in general, the Preface and Pater noster in Particular, be accompanied?

Time and again we are asked: Is the Gregorian chant to be accompanied by the organ? Let the question be answered in whatever way, one thing is certain, there is no ecclesiastical decision against such accompaniment. Considering the question from its historical and musical stand-points, any and every kind of harmonization is to be rejected as an anachronistic and incongruous additamentum. The Gregorian chant was conceived as mere melodies inspired by the sacred text, and not founded on certain harmonic tone combinations on which modern harmony is built; for harmony in the modern sense of the term was unknown to the ancient world. For that reason any harmonization of the Gregorian chant will always constitute an unwarrantable garb marring its peculiar beauties rather than presenting them in their proper light.

From a practical point of view, however, a befitting accompaniment by the organ will recommend itself, be it for assisting the execution of the chant, be it on account of the paucity of singers, be it to prevent tiresomeness on the part of the performers and to steady their voices, or for producing variety, always affording pleasure and delight. At all events the accompaniment must be in keeping with the characteristic peculiarities of the ancient church tonalities that differ essentially from our modern major and minor keys; it is never allowed to deviate from the melodic nature of the chant, its only object being the elucidation of the melody ensuring an easy and flowing declamation of the sacred text. — Though it may be allowed to accompany the Preface and Pater noster still it would be better to omit them, from both musical and practical considerations. It not unfrequently happens that the officiating priest sings them incorrectly, or his voice is faulty; in such cases an accompaniment may cover many sins against clearness and beauty of the chant, still the dissonances caused will harshly grate on the ears of the hearers. On the contrary, is the Preface sung correctly and with a sonorous voice, many niceties will be destroyed; for 1) the organ-tone is of an uncouth and much less supple nature than the human voice; 2) Are the chanters — the priest and the organist — at too great a distance as to make it possible for both to proceed simultaneously, as we all know from experience. In this wise, melody and harmony are clashing and the effect far from producing an effect to edify the congregations or to enhance their devotion.

Moreover the Preface should always be sung "intelligibili voce", which is rendered impossible if the organ accompaniment is too loud; finally, a temporary pause on the part of the organist is a veritable recreation, more conducive to true devotion than an incessant dinning of sound, more particularly at a moment when the offering priest intones that sublime, majestic hymnus requiring a frame of mind to which a dead instrument, like the organ, by no means can do justice. From all these considerations, it is evident that the organ accompaniment would better be omitted than executed: better none than incorrectness and inevitable diversion.

Conceive of an organist to whom both tonality and melody of the Preface are unknown quantities, accompanying the officiating priest with an organ only in rare cases in time, how is it possible for the priest to sing it correctly? Or the organist is running up and down the keyboard as if in a rage, what kind of nerves must the priest possess in order to proceed composedly with a melody the most solemn, sublime, simple, grave and holy? In such instances the only remedy is an imperative: "Organum non pulsetur" — the organ shall not be played. If, however, an accompaniment is desirable, well, let it be one correctly contrived, tonality in consonance with the nature of the melody, sustaining the voice of the priest and doing full justice to text and melody.

In this sense the harmonizations must be taken. Respecting the execution of the organ part we will merely state, 1) that only soft stops (8') are to be drawn, by means of which the priest will keep the proper pitch, his voice will be sustained and not drowned. The organ is but to serve and not to domineer, the former to be done in the most discreet manner. — 2) The accompaniment is to be executed fluently in order not to impede the declamation of the text. Hence the Organist always ought to be guided by the chant at the altar. If the priest evinces any inclination to flatten his voice, a little more powerful stop will restore his proper pitch instantly. The question as to what chord should be the closing one of the preface is easily answered. In as much as the following "Sanctus" is intimately connected with the Preface, the chord to be played will be either major or minor, according to the incipient chord of the Sanctus. — The responses should be taken from the Roman missal and sung in unison by choir and congregation. The Antiphones, by which the

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priest greets and invites the choir, — the representative of the congregation — to offer up praise and thanksgiving, would be more worthily re-echoed. Thus after the grandest of hymns of praise, the choir will chime in with the angels singing before the throne of the Lamb, the thrice Holy, Holy, Holy, for the glory of the Lord and His immaculate Spouse, the church, as well as for the edification and salvation of the faithful.

I. At the Sprinkling of Holy Water.

1. On Sundays throughout the year except at Paschal time.

Adsparges me. a.

1. s.

The musical score is presented in four systems. The first system (a) shows the piano accompaniment for the first part of the hymn, marked 'rit.' and '1. s.'. The second system (b) continues the piano accompaniment, also marked 'rit.' and 'P. Mol.'. The third system is for the vocal parts, starting with 'Intonation.' and 'Chorus.' and includes the lyrics: 'Ads - per - ges me Dó - mi - ne, hys - só - po, et mun - dá - bor:'. The fourth system continues the vocal parts with the lyrics: 'la - vá - bis me, et su - per ni - vem de - al - bá - bor.' and includes a 'Cantor.' part with the lyrics: 'Ps. Mi - se - ré - re me - i De - us, se - cún - dum magnam misericór - di - am tu - am.'

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