

THE SONG OF THE CHURCH

relevant to the subject of Liturgical Chant, can be found in *L'école grégorienne de Solesmes*, by Abbé Norbert Rousseau. Among other things the author of this well- and devotedly-written book informs us that "the ownership of the rhythmic signs was authoritatively left to the Benedictines by the will of Pius X, at the time when they, in agreement with the publisher of Tournai, ceded *gratuitously* to the Holy See their labors in Gregorian Chant in view of the Vatican Edition. [All the italics in the present quotation from this book are those of its author.] This reservation was renewed at different times by Pius X, happy in his gratitude, he said paternally, to find this slight compensation in return for the considerable sacrifice rendered to the Holy See by the Abbot of Solesmes."<sup>147</sup>

Three French editors, MM. Biais, Lecoffre and Lethielleux, members of the *Société d'éditions du chant grégorien*, sent a request to the Sacred Congregation of Rites for special information regarding the use of the rhythmic signs used in the Solesmes editions. They received the following reply, signed by the Secretary of the S.C.R., dated May 2, 1906: "... The typical Vatican Edition, with its most purely traditional notation, giving the traditional rhythm, comprises, without a doubt, all necessary indications, and sufficient for practical purposes. Nevertheless, the Holy Father believed it opportune to tolerate, under certain guarantees and special restrictions, the addition of certain supplementary signs, with the permission of the Ordinaries, *permittente Ordinario*, and also with great circumspection.

<sup>147</sup> Decree of Feb. 14, 1906, quoted by Rousseau, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

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Thus, the Decree of February 14 does not in an absolute manner condemn all editions containing signs of this kind; but, on the other hand, it [the Decree] cannot be regarded as an approbation. The conclusion to be drawn from the very terms of the Decree is that the latter requires that the integrity of the typical notation should always be respected. The erroneous commentaries which have presented this Decree as an approbation on the part of the Sacred Congregation of Rites cannot be considered as having any value whatsoever, and no such conclusions should be inferred from them."<sup>148</sup>

On the same page of the *Revue* we find a letter written by Cardinal Merry del Val to the same three editors acknowledging receipt of the first copies of the new chant edition edited by the *Société d'éditions du chant grégorien*. This letter is dated June 9, 1906, and reads in part: "... His Holiness was pleased to receive this gracious gift, and had, furthermore, words of praise for publications of this character, which, in not presenting any sort of additions, are in true conformity to the aforementioned Vatican Edition."

A number of Papal documents on the subject of Church music may be found in *The White List*, published by the Society of St. Gregory; they comprise those issued from the fourteenth century to the present day. Among these documents only one, at the present time, deals with the authentic rhythmic interpretation of Liturgical Chant as binding upon the universal Church; it is dated February 18, 1910, and is signed by the Prefect of the Sacred Con-

<sup>148</sup> *Revue du chant grégorien*, May-June, 1906, p. 169.