# Liturgical Music
# For English Speaking Churches

## Text and chant-style melodies from the
## International Commission on English
## in the Liturgy (ICEL)

## Musical Arrangements by Lavern Wagner

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# INTRODUCTION TO THE ARRANGEMENTS OF MUSIC
# FOR THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ROMAN MISSAL

In the summer of 2009 the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) issued a collection of chants for use in the Catholic English Liturgy. The texts are taken from the forthcoming *English Language Roman Missal,* sometimes called the *Sacramentary.* ICEL is offering to Conferences of Bishops of the English-speaking world chants for everything that is set to music in the *Missale Romanum, editio tipica tertia* (2002).[1]

Gregorian chant with Latin text dates back to early Christianity. This chant was codified by Pope Gregory in the 7th century, thus the term "Gregorian chant".[2] It is monophonic music, i.e. a single melodic line, and was originally meant to be sung unassociated with any other melodic lines, either vocal or instrumental. The beauty of unaccompanied chant is subtle, but immensely potent and effective. As music of Western Civilization developed, attitudes toward chant underwent transformations, especially shown in the Medicean Gradual of the late 16th century. Beginning in the 19th century, a scholarly approach to chant brought about the revival of interest in its original style as understood at the time. This renewed scholarship led to the restoration of chant, leading to its use in the Catholic Church in the 19th-20th centuries. The revival stemmed from research by Monks of Solesmes Abbey in Southern France. Their scholarly approach surveyed available Medieval chant manuscripts, and resulted in a stylistic chant performance which the Benedictine Monks of Solesmes regarded as practiced during the golden age of chant, 11th – 13th centuries.[3] The Solesmes version of Gregorian chant became the approved and official chant for use in the Catholic Church. This approval was promulgated in 1903 by Pope Pius X, although controversy continued for some time over the rhythm of chant.

A body of music as rich and interesting as Gregorian chant was highly influential in the development of all music in medieval Western Civilization. A climax of this development was the sacred polyphony of the musical Renaissance in the 16th century. The organization of chants into modes played a seminal role in developing 16th century polyphony, which is basically a modal musical expression.[4] This is important to the derivation of accompaniments in this edition of chant-style melodies with English texts.[5]

In the 19th century there were various styles of accompaniment applied to chant melodies. These organ accompaniments reflected the 19th century understanding of chant underpinned with chords as used in the hymn-style of the period.[6] 19th century chant accompaniments were rooted in the major-minor key system prevalent at the time, and known today as "common practice" harmony, now studied by music students.

Only recently has it been realized that any accompaniment to chant should be based on the same musical principles as those of chant itself. Since chant is based on the church modes, accompaniments should also be modal in character. This edition, which presents accompaniments to newly approved chant melodies with English text, is based on such a

modal approach. This modal style of chant accompaniment has been cited by contemporary scholars as most appropriate for chant-style music.[7]

ICEL furnished its English chant in standard G clef, with stemless round notes, using a five-line staff rather than the four-line staff with square notation which is traditional for chant. As was usual throughout the centuries, the notation is not supposed to suggest an absolute pitch level. Rather it suggests a succession of musical intervals, giving rise to what is known as relative pitch performance, at a comfortable level for the singers. ICEL suggests that printed or on-line accompaniments be made available at various pitch levels. These could be on web sites, so the celebrant of a mass could click on the text of the Sunday Preface to be chanted and hear a recording of it at his preferred pitch level.

Some of this approach is incorporated in this edition. The Reading Tone for the Gospel is presented on the higher pitch level, C, with the Gospel, Solemn Tone, a third lower, on A. One step below that, on G, is available from the arranger. Gospel tones on B-flat, F, and E-flat would about cover the spectrum of pitch levels which celebrants may require. These can be readily obtained by transpositions of existing pitch levels. Accomplished organists would have no problem in adapting varying pitch levels to such a requirement, since the chord structures in this edition are not chromatic, nor complex. Many organs have a transposition device which enables the pitch level to be adjusted for the singer's requirements. This would make additional editions using printed or on-line pitch levels unnecessary.

A suggestion on the use accompaniments is in order. Whenever the Priest sings alone the accompaniment should be lighter, and softer, than when the entire congregation sings. In many Catholic churches, especially in the older churches, the large pipe organ is located in the gallery at the rear of the church. In these cases a small instrument could be located near the Priest in the front of the church. This could be a portative organ, a small electric organ, or just an electronic keyboard. The function of this instrument would be to support the Priest when he sings alone. Priests are more likely to sing their portions of the liturgy when they have proper musical support.

Further, the contrast between the single voice of the Priest and the voices of the entire congregation is emphasized when the large organ supports the people's musical responses. We now have a dramatic effect similar to that found in Renaissance churches such as St. Mark's in Venice, Italy.

With the arrangement of accompaniments as given in this edition, a monophonic chant performance of people's responses is also possible. The accompaniment for people's responses may simply be omitted.

The settings of the *Lord have mercy,* and *Kyrie,* the *Gloria, Credo I,* and *Credo III,* the *Holy, Holy, Holy,* and *Sanctus,* the *Lamb of God,* and *Agnus Dei,* are so written that they may be sung in four parts by an SATB choir. This is an effective use of the present edition of new music for the Catholic liturgy.

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NOTES

*Music for the English Language Roman Missal:  An Introduction* (International Commission on English in the Liturgy, 2009).  20 pp

[2]  For a detailed study of Gregorian chant consult:  Willi Apel, *Gregorian Chant* (U. of Indiana Pr., Bloomington, Indiana, 1958, 1966).

[3]  The results of scholarship by the Monks of Solesmes are published  in their *Paleographie Musicale* (1889-1974), vols. I-XIX.  The earlier volumes conclusively established their scholarly approach.

[4]   The Gregorian chant modes are scale patterns of one octave:  Mode 1, Dorian (d-d', final d); Mode 2, Hypodorian (A-a, final d); Mode 3, Phrygian (e-e', final e); Mode 4, Hypophrygian (B-b, final e, but alternate finals such as c were common, due to uncertainty on b and its tritone relationship to f); Mode 5, Lydian (f-f', final f); Mode 6, Hypolydian (c-c', final f); Mode 7, Mixolydian (g-g', final g); Mode 8, Hypomixolydian (d-d', final g).  Since any mode can exist at any pitch level, each mode is actually a distinctive scale pattern of successive whole-steps and half-steps.   This simplified explanation touches only on basics of the chant modes.  Each mode has its own characteristic melodic approach, cf. Apel, cited above, and also article "modes" in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians,* 2002 edition.

[5]   Accompaniments are based on modal practice as it was used in the 16th century.  At that time six modes were in common use:  Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Aeolian (A-a, final A).with other finals as cited above, while Ionian, (same as our major scale) was being added.  Cf.:  Knud Jeppesen, *The Style of Palestrina and the Dissonance* (1927), a seminal study.

The composer of these accompaniments has honed his understanding of Renaissance polyphony through the transcription of thousands of pages of 16th century music manuscripts and printings.  This has resulted in fourteen volumes of editions of 16th century polyphony published by A-R Editions, and the American Institute of Musicology.   These volumes contain sacred polyphony for liturgical use by composers from the Low-Countries active at the court of Philip II in Spain, c. 1560-1600, i.e. Pierre de Manchicourt, Gérard de Turnhout, George de La Hele, Philippe Rogier, and Gery de Ghersem.

[6]     A history and commentary on the various styles of accompaniments applied in the past to Gregorian chant melodies: "The composer's Modus Operandi of Gregorian Modal Accompaniments," an essay by Jeff Ostrowski, Corpus Christi Watershed composer, 19 pp, available on line from the Liturgical Music Office of St. Meinrad Archabbey, St. Meinrad, Indiana.

[7]   Ostrowski, pp. 18-19.