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INTRODUCTION

“If we consider and ask ourselves what sort of music we should wish to hear on entering a church we should surely, in describing our ideal, say first of all that it must be something different from what is heard elsewhere; that it should be a sacred music, devoted to its purpose, a music whose peace would still passion, whose dignity should strengthen our faith, whose unquestion’d beauty should find a home in our hearts, to cheer us in life and death; a music worthy of the fair temples in which we meet and of the holy words of our liturgy; a music whose expression of the mystery of things unseen never allow’d any trifling motive to ruffle the sanctity of its reserve. What power for good such a music would have!”

*Robert Bridges, 1844-1930
Poet Laureate of Great Britain*

The task of the church musician is an awesome one. We follow in the footsteps of King David singing Psalms with the harp; we join with the angels who sang to herald the birth of God Incarnate; we sing with Christ and His Apostles in the upper room; and we follow St. Paul’s admonition to “sing and make melody in our hearts to the Lord.” Our job is to assist musically as we approach the gate of Heaven at each Liturgy. In order to do this job, we have to have a clear understanding of the flow of the Liturgy, of the musical “conversation” that takes place among clergy, choir, and congregation. We need to be able to lead others in their musical efforts to “make a joyful noise unto the Lord.”

For Western Rite church musicians, the task is more complicated. We are part of a restoration - a return to Orthodoxy of worship according to ancient Western practices. Ours is a venerable heritage and we must strive to know it well and preserve it as a part of the inheritance from those who came before us. But these forms of worship were removed from Orthodoxy for 1,000 years. During those years, some version of our liturgies continued to be used in the separated West and the musical expressions which adorned them continued to evolve and develop through the centuries as a continuation of Western cultural expression. We have been given permission to use any of these developments which are a logical continuation of that which existed in the first 1,000 years when East and West were not divided, and which are consistent with Orthodox theology. We musicians must make judgements about musical propriety and we

need to do it prayerfully, and with as much knowledge and careful thought as possible. This manual is offered as an aid to that effort. It is an expansion of talks which I have given at our Archdiocesan Sacred Music Institute and at Western Rite Conferences, and it is a reflection of the full, rich liturgical life which we celebrate at St. Gregory the Great parish.

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HISTORY

In order to examine the music of the Western Rite, we begin with the first Christians and the songs of praise which they sang to our Lord. We know that the first followers of Christ were Jews and that they continued worshipping regularly in the Synagogue and the Temple, setting aside Sunday - the day of the Resurrection - for specifically Christian worship, for retelling the stories which Jesus had taught them and for breaking bread in the manner He taught them. Jewish worship included the singing of Psalms and readings from the Scriptures and these practices continued in Christian worship.

As Christianity became first legally accepted, and then the favored religion of the Empire, and spread throughout the world, its beginnings in Jewish Temple and synagogue worship expanded to include new elements. Each newly converted people contributed something of their culture to a unique expression of the faith. In the West, Rome offered imperial architecture; the Celtic people of the British Isles contributed a unique form of iconography; and throughout the West, a distinct style of chant developed. This chant became the primary musical form for Western Christians for about 1400 years.

Western chant is called “Gregorian chant”, named for St. Gregory, who was Pope of Rome from 590-604, or “plainsong” (even though it is sometimes far from plain). Like its Eastern counterpart, Byzantine chant, it is the most distinguishable of all western church music. Beginning with the earliest chant in Rome (now called “Old Roman” chant), many local variations on the style developed in various parts of the west (there was an *Ambrosian* style in use in Milan, a *Sarum* style in Salisbury, England and surrounding areas, etc.) there were enough similarities for this music to be considered a separate, complete genre, apart from any other style of music. It was unique to the Church, and never used for any other purpose but to adorn the services of Christian worship. It was - and still is - the perfect church music!

What does Gregorian chant sound like? In our day, there has been a renewed interest in this music and, not surprisingly, it is sometimes marketed as a “New Age” relaxation tool! The music exudes an aura of calm. It is flowing, very legato, not rhythmic or strongly accented, not hurried in any way or sung laboriously slowly; there are no abrupt changes or large interval leaps. The proper tone quality for the singer’s voice in singing Gregorian chant is light (singing from the head rather than the chest) and with little vibrato. The music should convey the peace of God and it should, therefore, sound peaceful.

Western chant music (as well as Eastern) was used first for singing Psalms, Christianity's first hymns, brought into the Church from the Jewish heritage. (Continuing the tradition of the early Church, singing Psalms still forms a major part of Western Rite services, particularly the daily Offices of Matins and Vespers.) Soon, however, poets and church fathers began writing new hymns. These not only represented the praises of the people in worship, they were also used for teaching tenets of the faith. Particularly during the 3rd and 4th centuries, some heretical groups challenging the Church used attractive music as a way to lure people away from the true faith. Church fathers wrote Christian hymns to counteract this trend.

We must always remember that a hymn is a text, a set of words written to give praise or thanksgiving to God or to tell about his love and mercy. The tunes which we associate with these texts are called "hymn-tunes". Ideally, the text and the tune would be conceived by one person and written for each other. But, most often, hymn authors and hymn-tune composers have been two different people and, often, their works have been combined years, or even centuries, after they were written. In this early stage of the Church's life, most hymns were written for specific liturgical use and these were sung to Gregorian chant melodies.

Some of the Western hymn writers of this early period in the life of the Church are St. Ambrose (340-97), the Bishop of Milan who wrote (and inspired others to write) hymns, especially for the Daily Offices of the Church (Matins, Vespers, etc.) and who introduced antiphonal Psalm-singing in the Church at Milan; St. Gregory the Great (540-604), whose hymns are also for daily services; the poet Venantius Fortunatus (c.535-c. 600), whose most well-known hymns are settings of his poems for use in Holy Week; the Spanish poet Marcus Prudentius (348-c. 410), whose poems were later set to music and sung as hymns; and Caecilius Sedulius (5th century), whose poems summarizing the Old and New Testaments were also later adapted as hymns.

As with most cultural elements, the music for these hymns and other parts of the services was at first part of the oral tradition of Christians, passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth and taught by "rote". But as the liturgical requirements became more complicated and the various sung parts of services more numerous, it became necessary for musicians to develop a method of notating the music. A few "squiggles" on the page indicating the direction of a musical line sufficed for a while, but later the practice of using lines to indicate positions in a scale developed, and by the 13th century, a more specific system of square (and sometimes diamond-shaped) notes on a 4-line staff had evolved for writing down Gregorian chant melodies. Our modern system of notation (which had come into common use by the end of the 17th century)

is not as subtle and not always exactly accurate when attempting to transcribe chant melodies, but church musicians need to be able to read, understand, and use both modern notation and Gregorian notation in order to teach this music to others.

In many places, by the Middle Ages, church music had moved from being the expression of all worshipers to being the exclusive domain of those trained specifically for singing in church. “Professional” church musicians in the West began to experiment with harmony and developed a polyphonic style of music. At first, well-known chant melodies still formed the basis of this music, the Gregorian melody serving as a “cantus firmus” around which other parts wove compatible melodies. Sometimes, there was simply a “copy” of the chant melody sung, at the same time, at an interval of a 4th or 5th higher or lower (this is called “parallel organum”); sometimes a drone (one or two notes held under the moving melody) was used to accompany a chant tune in similar style to the Eastern use of an *ison*. Gradually, music with three or more equal voices, with equally developed melody lines all singing together (polyphony), became the norm and, by the 17th century, using chant melodies as the basis of this music was much less common.

One of the most undesirable trends in the West in the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance was that of using secular songs instead of chant melodies as the basis of polyphonic pieces. Many early Renaissance composers, to the detriment of their positions as church musicians, introduced compositions which included popular love songs and other secular tunes well-known to the people, so that the attention of worshipers would be called away from contemplation of the Divine and toward worldly pursuits.

While the Protestant Reformation was a monumental movement which had no bearing on the Orthodox Church at the time, its effects must now be considered by those of us who are bringing Western practice back into the ancient Church. At least two results of the Reformation are of benefit to us - the return of the use of the vernacular in worship and the return of congregational singing. While the Church in the East had continued to make use in worship of the languages which people spoke (although Greek and Slavonic dominated), Latin had been the exclusive language of worship from Spain, Gaul, and Germanic and Nordic lands to the British Isles. Liturgical texts which we use today in America were translated into English in the 16th and 17th centuries, at a time when the language had reached a high level of development. Congregations began to sing Psalms and hymns again, as in the early Church, with new styles of hymn tunes added to the chant melodies of earlier times.

As time went on, there were other developments in western church music which are not appropriate for use in Western Rite Orthodox services. These include music which was heavily influenced by opera, with dramatic virtuosic solo singing, and the 20th and 21st century music which pairs sacred texts to music in a popular, secular style (i.e. “Christian rock” music).

In our efforts to wade through the centuries of development and make choices about musical propriety, we would do well to consult the Church Fathers, just as we do for theological correctness. The admonitions of the fathers regarding music are almost exclusively related to the subject of *association* - what activity or place the style or sound of the music represented to the hearer. St. Clement of Alexandria (who lived between 150 and 215) wrote: “It must be banned, this artificial music which injures souls and draws them into feelings snivelling, impure and sensual, and even a Bacchic frenzy and madness... the irregular movements of aulos, psalteries, choruses, dances, Egyptian clappers and other such playthings become altogether indecent and uncouth, especially when joined by beating cymbals and tympana and accompanied by the noisy instruments of deception.” St. Clement was not claiming that instruments in themselves are evil and un-Christian, but that, in his day, these instruments were associated with the debauchery of contemporary life which the Christian was to avoid. St. Augustine, writing in the late 4th or early 5th century, warns against the effects of highly emotional music when he said: “...when it happens to me that the song moves me more than the thing which is sung, I confess that I have sinned blamefully and then prefer not to hear the singer.” Niceta, the bishop of Remesia in the early 5th century, complained about the style of singing which some in his day were using: “One must sing with a manner and melody befitting holy religion; it must not proclaim theatrical distress but rather exhibit Christian simplicity in its very musical movement; it must not remind one of anything theatrical, but rather create compunction in the listeners...each should strive to integrate his voice within the sound of the harmonious chorus and not project it outwardly...as if to make an immodest display.”

Through all the stylistic changes in the last thousand years, there has always been a thread of continuity with ancient practice, and this thread is what we must now pick up and weave anew in establishing a truly Western, truly Orthodox style of music.

WHAT WE SING

In preparing music for our services, we need to be completely familiar with the parts of both the Mass (the Divine Liturgy) and the Daily Offices (Matins and Vespers) that are sung. The norm in the Church has always been to sing most of the words of our worship rather than to simply say them. On the following pages, those portions of the services that are sung by the choir and congregation will be examined.

The Mass

The texts for all the service components mentioned below are *liturgical* texts, prescribed by the Church. They are not optional and are not to be changed. We should remember that words are of utmost importance. The early Councils of the Church were called to debate and determine the precise words that we use and their precise meaning. From earliest times, Christians were concerned to guard against wandering into heresy through the use of the wrong words or meaning. The music to which these words are sung is also of utmost importance, but we are given greater latitude in our choice of what music to use.

In the Mass, there are several “layers” with different musical requirements. The first of these layers is called the “Ordinary”. This is made up of the textually unchanging portions of the service and includes:

Kyrie - sung immediately after the Introit, typically in Greek or English, with 9 petitions (“Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy” three times each)

Gloria - follows immediately after the Kyrie and is not sung in Lent, Pre-Lent or Vigils. The first phrase (“Glory be to God on high”) is sung by the priest alone.

Sanctus - sung at the conclusion of the Proper Preface of the Day which the priest sings. Bells are rung on each “Holy, Holy, Holy”.

Benedictus - follows immediately after the Sanctus and the two are often treated as one musical piece.

Agnus Dei - this text, which is sung shortly after the Lord’s Prayer, is altered slightly for Requiem, or funeral masses.

These texts - along with that which the Priest sings or says throughout the service, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Creed - are always the same, service after service. Of course, different musical

settings of these texts can be used, but the texts remain the same. The *St. Ambrose Hymnal* provides several Gregorian Chant settings of the Ordinary of the Mass, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer.

The other layer in the Mass is called the "Proper" and includes those texts which vary from week to week, service to service:

Introit - the choir sings this at the beginning of the Liturgy, while the priest and acolytes are sensing the altar. As with the following chants, the cantor (or cantors on special occasions) and full choir alternate verses.

Gradual - sung by the choir between the Epistle and the Gospel and is followed immediately by Alleluia (or Tract, in Lent).

Sequence hymn - on several occasions during the year (Pentecost, Easter, etc.) one of the long Sequence hymns is called for and is sung immediately following the Gradual.

Offertory - sung after the priest's offertory sentence as the preparation of the elements for Communion is begun and the people's offerings are received.

Communion chant - sung just before the people receive Communion.

Like the Collects which the Priest prays and the scripture readings, these texts reflect the season or celebration of the day. Although very elaborate chant melodies were collected through the centuries for these texts (and are available in the *Liber Usualis* and other Roman Catholic publications), most of our Western Rite parish cantors or choirs sing these chants (called the "Minor Propers") to fairly simple Psalm tone melodies. These can be found in the *English Gradual*, which has been reprinted by the Royal School of Church Music (available through Amazon.com, though older, out-of-print editions are often available from used book dealers.) St. Mark's Church in Denver, Colorado, has also published settings of the Minor Propers (to different translations from those in the *Orthodox Missal*).

In each Liturgy, there are other sung parts. On Sundays, we begin with the *Asperges* or *Vidi Aquam* in Paschal-tide (#351 and #352 in the *St. Ambrose Hymnal*), a chant sung while the priest sprinkles the congregation with holy water as a reminder of our baptisms. We carry on a musical "conversation" with the priest in the *Sursum Corda* ("Lift up your hearts"; "we lift them up unto the Lord"; "The peace of the Lord be always with you" "And with thy spirit"). These dialogues draw us all into the Liturgy to worship together, and the melodies are some of the most ancient that we sing.

The texts for the Mass, as provided in the *Orthodox Missal*, are liturgical texts. They are official, required (unless the rubrics state otherwise). All other texts which are sung or said in a service are paraliturgical and are to be used cautiously and only if these texts are consistent with Orthodox theology.

There are several places in the Mass where *paraliturgical* music can be used. At the beginning, such as when the Priest and acolytes are saying the prayers of preparation; at the Offertory (after the singing of the required liturgical chant) while the elements are being prepared and the offering of the people is being collected; during the reception of communion by the people; and at the end, before the people leave the church - these are all times when other music such as hymns or choir motets can be sung. While the texts of this music are not prescribed, they must be theologically acceptable and appropriate for the occasion. In the first Millennium, the Orthodox West very conservatively maintained a preference for Psalms and other Scriptural texts, considering this a safeguard against heresy. Many of the hymns we sing are based on Scripture.

The Daily Office

The oldest version of the Offices (Hours) in the West developed in the monasteries. Matins, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Compline are services consisting of Psalms, antiphons, prayers, and hymns which have provided the life of prayer for monks and nuns since the earliest days of monasticism in the West. Western Rite parishes, but most often individuals, may continue to pray these services daily.

Another form is available which is well suited to parish life. The English Office, which developed at the time of the English Reformation, consists of Matins and Vespers which are conflations of several of the monastic Offices. Matins combines elements from monastic Matins and Lauds; Vespers combines portions of Vespers and Compline. These services are somewhat longer, include a cycle of readings from the Old and New Testaments, and have the Psalms arranged for singing so that the entire Psalter is sung through each month. For Western Rite use, these parish Offices have been further enriched by the inclusion of the antiphons and Office hymns from the monastic Offices.

Just as in the Mass, there are some parts of Matins and Vespers that are unchanging and others that vary with the day or season. Below are the major musical elements in each service.

Matins

Versicles and Responses - This short “dialogue” begins the Office.

Venite - this canticle, which begins with verses from Psalm 95, is sung by all and, on the 19th day of each month, is replaced by the full Psalm 95, which is appointed for that day. The canticle is preceded and followed by an Invitatory antiphon.

Psalms for the day - For the English Office, the Psalter is arranged to be sung through entirely in a month’s time, with the Psalms divided between Matins and Vespers. Several methods of singing the Psalms are described below.

Te Deum laudamus or **Benedictus es, Domine** - One of these canticles follows the first Lesson, but in Lent, the Te Deum is replaced by **Benedicite omnia**.

Office Hymn - hymns are appointed for seasons (i.e., Advent, Sundays after Pentecost) or feast days (i.e., Trinity Sunday, martyrs’ days). A table for finding the Office hymns is found in the *St. Ambrose Hymnal* (page 373). The Office hymn is sung immediately following the second Lesson and is followed by a seasonal versicle and response.

Benedictus Dominus - this canticle is sung immediately after the Office hymn and is preceded and followed by an antiphon for the day (i.e., 13th Sunday after Pentecost). The antiphons can be found in the *Antiphoner* (available at www.stgregoryoc.org).

The remainder of Matins consists of Preces (a series of petitions, in dialogue) the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer and collects.

Vespers

Psalms for the day - these are sung after the initial versicles and responses.

Office Hymn - as above, appointed for the day or season and sung after the first Lesson.

Magnificat - this canticle follows the Office hymn and is preceded and followed by an antiphon appropriate for the day or season (found in the *Antiphoner*)

Nunc dimittis - this canticle follows the second reading.

As in Matins, the remainder of the service consists of Preces, the Creed and Lord’s Prayer, and collects.

It is customary to follow Vespers with the **Marian antiphon** (or anthem) for the season. These are provided in the *St. Ambrose Hymnal* (see hymnal page 386).

Music for Other Services

Throughout the liturgical year, there are additional ceremonies and rituals which either take the place of, or are added to the normal Mass for special occasions. Primary among these are the ceremonies for Candlemas, Ash Wednesday, and the services of Holy Week. The texts for these services are provided in the *Orthodox Missal*. Chant melodies for these ceremonies can be found in the *Liber Usualis* (with Latin text), in the publications of the Plainchant Publications Committee (now out of print) and at www.stgregoryoc.org.

Candlemas, or the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple (also called the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary), which is observed on February 2, begins with the ceremony of the blessing of candles (hence, the name “Candlemas”). The priest blesses all the candles that are to be used in the church for the coming year (altar candles, votive candles) and, in some parishes, the people bring candles for use in their home prayers for blessing. Then, as candles are distributed to the people and lighted, the canticle, *Nunc dimittis*, (the song of Simeon at the time of the Presentation of our Lord) is sung with an antiphon which reminds us that Christ is the “light to lighten the Gentiles”. Then a procession is made around the church while three more antiphons about the events celebrated are sung.

On Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent in the Western Rite calendar, a similar series of blessing prayers - this time for the ashes (which have been made from the palms of the previous year’s Palm Sunday and sprinkled with holy water) - occurs at the beginning of the service after an antiphon which the choir sings as the clergy enter the church. More antiphons are sung as ashes are imposed upon the foreheads of the people. Then the Mass continues as usual. Music for these antiphons is available from the sources listed above.

The services of Holy Week are among the most ancient and beautiful offered by the Church. The Palm Sunday Mass is preceded by a ceremony in which the palms are blessed and distributed to the people, while antiphons and psalms are sung. The palms are then carried in procession while the liturgical hymn “All glory, laud and honor” is sung before the Mass begins. The Gospel for this Mass is the Passion story from the Gospel of St. Matthew and in many parishes, it is sung dramatically, with the clergy and cantors singing the parts of the Evangelist, Jesus, and the other people in the story, and the choir and/or congregation singing the parts of the crowd. Singing the Gospel in this manner is a stark reminder to us all of how we betray Christ daily and are in need of repentance, as we prepare spiritually for the celebration of Pascha. The ancient chant melodies for the Passion Gospel are found in the Plainchant Publications

Committee offerings. Through the centuries, many later composers (such as J. S. Bach) wrote extended settings of the Passion story.

On Wednesday of Holy Week (the Eve of Maundy Thursday), a ceremony for blessing of the oils (used for anointing the sick and for catechumens) takes place within the Mass. This service is available from the Western Rite Vicariate. The *Gloria in excelsis*, which was set aside, except for feast days, after the last Sunday in Epiphany (before the Pre-Lenten Sundays of Septuagesima, Sexagesima, and Quinquagesima and then the Sundays of Lent) is sung, and the hymn specified for the service (“O Redeemer, hear us”) is found at #99 in the *St. Ambrose Hymnal*.

On Maundy Thursday, there are several differences in the service and additional ceremonies are included. The *Gloria in excelsis* is again sung on Maundy Thursday while bells are rung by the acolytes. Thereafter, bells and the organ (and any other accompanying instruments) are silent until the first Mass of Easter begins. After the homily, the ceremony of foot-washing takes place, in remembrance of our Lord’s demonstration of humility in washing the Apostles’ feet at the Last Supper. The antiphons (whose texts are provided in the *Orthodox Missal*) are sung by the choir while this takes place. There are a number of antiphons to choose from, but the ceremony always ends with the singing of *Ubi caritas* (“Where love and charity are, there is God.”) This liturgical hymn also appears in the *St. Ambrose Hymnal* at #100. The *Agnus Dei* at this Mass is altered so that the text “O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us” is sung three times. After the priest’s postcommunion prayer, the Sacrament is carried to an Altar of Repose, which has been set up in another place and adorned with flowers and candles. This altar provides a kind of garden for holding the reserved Body and Blood of Christ for our veneration and for use the next day. We are asked to “watch and pray” as Christ bid his disciples do on that first Maundy Thursday. Two liturgical hymns are specified, *Pange lingua gloriosi* and *Tantum ergo* (both hymns can be found in the *St. Ambrose Hymnal*, #198 and #168.) Then the clergy and acolytes strip the main altar of all its paraments, as the choir sings Psalm 22 with its antiphon, “They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture they cast lots.” The service ends with the people departing in silence or remaining to venerate the Blessed Sacrament at the Altar of Repose.

Good Friday is the only day in the Western Rite calendar that the Pre-sanctified Liturgy is called for. Bread and wine which were consecrated the evening before are used at this service, which is the most stark of all our services. Two lessons and responsories are sung and then the Passion Gospel according to St. John is sung, usually in the same manner as that on Palm

Sunday. After a long series of Collects for the Church and the world, a wooden cross, which is veiled in black (all the crosses in the church have been veiled in purple since Passion Sunday, and the veils are changed to white for Maundy Thursday and black for Good Friday), is carried in procession through the church while a versicle and response are sung and the people kneel. The cross is then venerated by the people, during which the choir sings the Reproaches. This long chant provides the one time in the Western church year that the Trisagion text is specified: “Holy God, holy, mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us” This text, interspersed with verses, can be sung to chant melodies or a choral version (many Renaissance composers, particularly, provided choral settings of the Reproaches). This is followed by another liturgical hymn, “Sing, my tongue, the glorious battle” (found in the *St. Ambrose Hymnal* at #101). As the reserved Sacrament is carried back to the high altar for the administration of Communion, another liturgical hymn - *Vexilla Regis* (The royal banners forward go, #96 in the *St. Ambrose Hymnal*) and other antiphons are sung. The choir sings Psalm 22 again (without antiphon) as the people receive communion and the service ends in silence. Remember that, throughout this service, there is to be no instrumental accompaniment and no hymns substituted for those given in the *Orthodox Missal*. Paraliturgical music is unnecessary on this day.

The Service of Tenebrae (the anticipation of Matins and Lauds of the following day) is found in the Plainchant Publications Committee offerings for Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of Holy Week. Tenebrae consists of readings, Psalms (with antiphons), responsories which are sung while candles are gradually extinguished, leaving the church finally in darkness.

The Paschal Vigil, held late on the Eve of the Resurrection, also includes many unique ceremonies. The service should begin outside, where a fire is struck from flint to light the Paschal candle, which is carried in procession into the church. The deacon or priest sings the long chant, the Exultet, followed by a series of lessons recounting the story of our salvation. The choir sings canticles after the lessons and then the Litany of Saints is begun. The music for this litany can be found at www.stgregoryoc.org. At the end of the first part of the litany, water is blessed (for baptisms or the renewal of baptisms) accompanied by ancient rituals. When the remainder of the Litany of Saints and a Kyrie have been sung, the Resurrection is greeted with the ringing of bells and the organ accompanies the joyful singing of *Gloria in excelsis*. All of Lent has been a preparation for this moment. This is the high point of the entire Church year! The Mass then proceeds, with extra “alleluias” between Epistle and Gospel. There is no Creed or offertory chant, no Agnus Dei or communion chant. At the end of communion, Lauds for Easter morning is sung, the dismissal (with more alleluias) and blessing are sung.

While the foregoing services are the most musically challenging, there are other times during the church year when additional music may be used. In Advent, the so-called “O” antiphons (because each one begins with the word “O”) may be used for the Magnificat at Vespers on the nine evenings preceding Christmas (music for these can be found at www.stgregoryoc.org). The paraliturgical service of Advent Lessons and Carols (which is not ancient, but originated in English cathedrals and collegiate chapels in the early 20th century) can be an appropriate preparation for Christmas. A version adapted for Orthodox use can also be found at www.stgregoryoc.org.

At Epiphany, the service of the Great Blessing of Water may take place at Matins or Vespers. This service includes the singing of the Litany of Saints, Psalms, antiphons and canticles. Also in Epiphany, when homes are blessed, antiphons, canticles and responsories are sung. The music can be found at www.stgregoryoc.org.

Rogation processions may be held (in the week before Ascension Day), which are accompanied by the singing of the Litany.

The services which surround the death and burial of a Christian are rich with ceremonial and music. There are services for receiving the body at the church, Vespers of the Departed, Lauds of the Dead, and the Absolution of the Departed (which are available at www.stgregoryoc.org). For all these services, there are Psalms, antiphons, and canticles. For Requiem Masses, which are used at funerals and also on All Souls Day (November 2), the *Agnus Dei* is altered in this way: “O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, grant them rest” is sung twice and the third time, “grant them rest eternal” is sung. The Gregorian Mass for the Dead and the Sequence hymn, *Dies irae*, are provided in the *St. Ambrose Hymnal* at #236.

The monastic service of Compline is sometimes used in parishes. This is the last Office in the evening and is appropriate at the end of meetings, classes, or other events. As with the other Offices, it consists of Psalms, prayers, a hymn and a canticle. This service can be found at www.stgregoryoc.org.

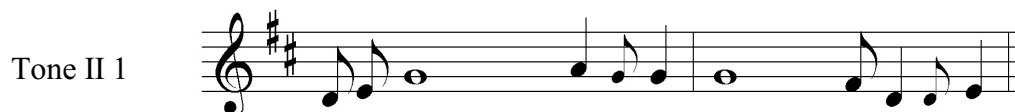
In the service of Holy Baptism, the Litany is sung (if water is to be blessed) and an antiphon is sung at the time of Chrismation. At the baptism of adults, Psalms with antiphons are sung in addition.

There is a separate short service for greeting the Bishop when he makes a visitation to a parish. The Solemn Reception of a Bishop includes the singing of the Benedictus Dominus with an antiphon (which is in the *St. Ambrose Hymnal* at #372) and versicles and responses (the complete form is at www.stgregoryoc.org).

Singing the Psalms

There are eight primary Psalm “tones”, or melodic formulas to which the Psalm texts are sung, and there are some additional ones that are used occasionally. Each tone begins with a several note *intonation*. The cantor sings these notes in introducing the first verse of a Psalm; thereafter, the intonation is not sung (except when New Testament canticles, such as the *Nunc dimittis*, are sung to Psalm tones, and then the intonation is repeated with every verse). Following the intonation is the *reciting tone*, to which most of the words are sung, and then the *mediant* provides a short ending for the first half of the verse (which leads up to the asterisk in the text). After the asterisk (and the corresponding bar line in the music) the reciting tone appears again for most of the words in the second half of the verse. The *final ending* of each verse is more extended than the *mediant*. This basic tune is repeated over and over for each verse of the Psalm, the syllables adapting easily to the notes. Sometimes, there are not enough syllables to use all the notes and those are simply left out. The signs (called “pointing”) given in the text indicate where the singer is to change from reciting tone to ending. Another sign sometimes found in the text is the flex, †, which tells the singer to drop the preceding syllable (or several syllables) to a lower note (the same note that is in the intonation just before the reciting tone). Below is a chart of the eight Psalm tones plus the Tonus Peregrinus (notice that here the reciting tone is different in each half of the verse) and the “Indirect” Tone.

A Selection of Psalm Tones



Tone III A 1



Tone IV 4



Tone V 1



Tone VI A



Tone VII 1



Tone VIII 6



Tonus Peregrinus



Indirect Tone



There are many variations on the endings for the psalm tones which can be found in any noted Psalter (one which includes music and pointing).

There are several traditional ways to sing the Psalms. One is to simply have the entire congregation sing all verses *in unison* (or a solo cantor to sing them if that is preferable). More

commonly, the Psalms are sung *responsorially*, with a cantor alternating verse by verse with the congregation; or *antiphonally*, with one group alternating with another (i.e. one side of the church with the other or men's voices alternating with women's voices).

It is traditional practice to pause slightly at the asterisk in each verse (this pause is most effective in a reverberant building) and there should not be a long break between verses. Breathing (which can be a problem in long phrases) is usually observed at semi-colons, colons and periods, while commas are either sung through or the singer slightly elongates the syllable before. As with all Gregorian chant melodies, the Psalms should not be sung slowly or hurriedly, but should maintain the pace which a public speaker would use to read the texts. Members of a congregation who are accustomed to singing together will learn to listen to each other, to corporately agree on the pace, and to sing as one voice.

A few Western Rite parishes (who were Episcopal parishes before their entry into Orthodoxy) use Anglican chant in some of their services. Anglican chant developed following the Reformation in England and is associated solely with the Church of England and its national subsidiaries (i.e. the Protestant Episcopal Church in the U.S.A.). This type of chant consists of a series of chordal progressions to which the text of the Psalm (or canticle) is sung. A different system of "pointing" is utilized to indicate where the singers move from one chord to another. This style of chanting is most effective when sung by a choir trained to professional standards, such as the English collegiate choirs, and there are numerous recordings which demonstrate their skill.

Hymns and How to Choose Them

Office hymns (for Matins and Vespers) are **liturgical** hymns, with a specified text for each occasion. An index on page 373 of the *St. Ambrose Hymnal* gives the hymn appointed for each day of the week (morning and evening), each feast day (i.e. All Saints) morning and evening service, and the seasons (Epiphany, Advent). When there is not a hymn listed for a specific feast day, the one appointed for "Commons" should be used. An example of this would be St. Matthew's day, when the hymns listed for Commons of Apostles would be used. These Office hymns may also be used at Mass on a appropriate feast day if Matins or Vespers is not sung.

The Sequence hymns that are specified for the Mass on certain days or occasions - Easter, Pentecost, Corpus Christi, at Requiem Masses (All Souls, funerals, etc.) - and the hymns appointed for special liturgies in Holy Week are also liturgical hymns. **Paraliturgical** congregational hymns are not essential for a celebration of the Western Rite Liturgy. But when

they are used, these additional hymns can wonderfully aid the worshiper to understand the teaching and emphasis of the Church on a particular day. While each Mass is primarily a celebration of praise and thanksgiving, offering the Body and Blood of Christ, there is usually a particular emphasis in the changing components of the Mass, i.e. forgiveness and love of God, the healing miracles of our Lord, our duty to our fellow man. It is very helpful if the church musician chooses hymns that correspond to the emphasis for the day. Here are suggestions for how to go about this task, using the *St. Ambrose Hymnal*, but the procedure is the same when using any hymnal.

Begin by reading the Epistle, Gospel and Collect for the day, and then read through the minor propers for that day. For example, here is what we read for the Fourth Sunday after Pentecost (in the Gregorian Rite):

Introit - *The Lord is my light, and my salvation...though an host of men were laid against me, yet shall not my heart be afraid.*

Epistle (Romans 8) - *the sufferings of the present time...the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain until now...delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God...we groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption...the redemption of our body.*

Gradual (Ps. 79) - *help us...O Lord, deliver us.*

Alleluia (Ps. 9) - *be thou the refuge of the oppressed in time of trouble.*

Gospel (Luke 5) - *calling of Simon Peter, James and John - great catch of fish - henceforth, thou shalt catch men.*

Offertory (Ps. 13) - *lighten mine eyes...lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him.*

Communion (Ps. 18) - *The Lord is my stony rock and my defence..*

Out of all these texts, two themes emerge: God as defender in times of trouble; and God calling man to be disciples and evangelize. Some of the word imagery that is used includes: The Lord as “rock” and us as children of God.

Now, look through the hymnal to find texts that emphasize these themes or make reference to these images. To do this, you really do have to read through every verse of every hymn - at least once - at least the ones in the General section (Hymns #265-350), where the hymns are arranged in alphabetical order by first line. On the theme of God’s protection in time of trouble are “All my hope on God is founded” (#265) and “Be thou my vision” (#270), which also speaks of God as Father and us as true sons, as in the Epistle. “Come, labor on” (#278) and “Go, labor on” (#285) are missionary hymns in the spirit of the Gospel. “If thou but trust in God to guide thee” (#298) asks for God’s help through adversity and “Jesus calls us” (#302) refers to

the calling of the Apostles as in the Gospel reading. “O Christ, our King, give ear” (#302) continues the theme of asking for God’s protection and defense and “We come unto our Father’s God” (#345) speaks of God as the Rock of our salvation, echoing the Communion chant. The Communion hymn “My God, thy table now is spread” (#162) continues the missionary emphasis. Using any of these hymns would help to reinforce the lessons which the Church is asking us to learn and will make the hymns a part of the whole.

In addition to hymns that refer to specific ideas in the propers, it is always appropriate to sing general hymns of praise, hymns to the Holy Trinity, and Communion hymns. It is also appropriate to choose hymns from one of the seasonal sections if it fits in at another time (for instance the hymn “Kind maker of the world” (#89), from the Lenten section, could well be sung on the 10th Sunday after Pentecost because it refers to that day’s Gospel story of the Publican and the Pharisee.

In choosing hymns for feast days, we are helped by the specific sections in the Hymnal set aside for those days, but other hymns may also be appropriate. For instance, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross has only one hymn - “Lo, the blest Cross is displayed” (#217) - listed for the occasion. But if we have looked through the general section, we know that we can find many hymns about the Cross: “Lift high the Cross” (#304), “Take up thy cross” (#335), “We sing the praise of Him who died” (#346), “When I survey the wondrous Cross” (#347) and more. We should note that the hymn, “At the Name of Jesus” (#269) is based on Philippians 2:9-10, which is part of the Epistle for this feast day. We should also check the Holy Week section, when the Cross is a central focus of our attention. There, we find the hymns, “Thirty years among us dwelling” (#95) and “The royal banners forward go” (#96). These are liturgical hymns, appointed as the morning and evening Office hymns but, as pointed out earlier, they can also be used at Mass if they are not used for the Office immediately preceding.

The purpose of singing hymns is not to make members of the congregation feel good. This may sometimes be the result, but it should not be the motivating factor in choosing hymns. Hymns are for appropriate praise and for teaching. It takes an average congregation many years to learn enough hymns in a hymnal to build up a common repertoire of familiar hymns, so there will often be hymns that many in a congregation will not already know. Church musicians should not limit the choice of hymns to those they think people already know, but should choose the best hymns for each service. Sometimes, however, the best hymn for a service will be set to a tune which would be extremely difficult for a congregation to sing without preparation (or if a strong choir will not be leading). In this case, the hymn should not be sacrificed, but can instead be sung to a more familiar tune. Using “The royal banners forward go” (#96) as an example, notice (at the bottom of the page) that the meter (indicating the number of “beats” in each poetic line) for this

hymn is LM (Long Meter - or four lines of eight syllables each). Then look in the metrical index in the back of the Hymnal and see that there are numerous hymns in this meter. Not all of the tunes will match well with the text, but there should be no difficulty in finding a suitable alternative to the original Gregorian chant melody (such as Melcombe at #71) .

Most hymnals will include hymns and tunes from many sources. In the *St. Ambrose Hymnal*, in addition to early Christian hymns set to Gregorian chant tunes, there are numerous Western hymns written after the Great Schism which divided East from West. These hymns have been carefully examined for their theological content and consistency with Orthodox thought. There are hymn tunes from many musical traditions, among them German chorales and French and English Psalm tunes. Great effort was taken to match text and tune well and to provide the best examples possible from various traditions.

All of the reading and analyzing and searching and matching in order to choose hymns is time-consuming (at least at first), but it is necessary if we are to do justice to our responsibilities. The priest uses similar procedures in preparing a sermon, consulting the writings of the Fathers in order to illuminate the liturgical themes and interpret the day's scripture. We musicians add the poetic commentary of hymnographers. Liturgy should be a seamless whole - all the elements should fit together in such a way that the worshiper is transported to the heavenly realm enlightened and enriched, making his offering of praise as part of that whole.

Gregorian Chant Notation

Numerous treatises have been written about the history and interpretation of chant notation and scholars have devoted their entire life's work to this subject. The musician who wants to become an expert in this field will find many resources. But knowledge of a few basic principles will enable the musician to read simple chant melodies.

First, note that the staff consists of 4 lines only and either the doh (C) clef or the fah (F) clef are given to indicate where the ½ step intervals occur. These clefs do not represent the actual notes C and F, but rather the singer simply chooses the most comfortable area of the voice for the range of the melody. Key signatures, a later invention, are not used. Occasionally, a flat will indicate that the leading tone should be lowered. Time signatures are also not given, as the chant is not measured or rhythmic. The melody lines flow along, often in groups of two and three notes. Musical punctuation markings (single and double bar lines, 1/4 and 1/2 bar lines) help to indicate phrases, pauses or places for breathing.

The manner in which the specific notes are written is very succinct, almost like a sort of shorthand. An individual note is called a *punctum* and is a square placed on a line or in a space on the staff. Some notes are connected to each other (but not like barred eighth notes) and some are written on top of each other (but not to indicate chords as in more modern music). This is to show that two or more notes are sung to one syllable of the text, creating *melismas*. Sometimes the direction a musical line should take is indicated by a long slanted mark which connects notes. Here are some examples, with an interpretation given in modern notation:



punctum
(a single note)



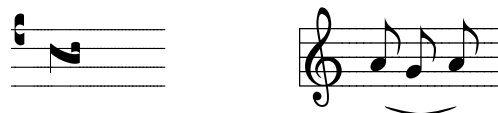
podatus
(in this figure, the lower note is sung first)



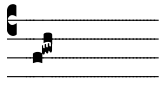
clivis
(the upper note is sung first)



climacus
(the upper note receives more stress, the diamond-shaped notes are sung more lightly)



porrectus
(begin at the left side of the porrectus, then sing to the bottom of the porrectus, then the remaining note)



quillisma

(a commonly occurring sign which may originally have been used when a sort of trill or tremolo was expected, but it has been refined now to indicate that, in a group of three ascending notes, the first note receives more emphasis than the other two)

Church Modes

In the Middle Ages, music theorists began to make use of the modal system of classifying music, using an 8-note pattern of intervals (the intervals corresponding to the modern C major scale). There are four “authentic” modes, each with a “plagal” mode having the same “tonic” note, but a range beginning a fourth below that of the authentic mode. This system, which is not equivalent to the eight Byzantine tones, continued to be used by music theorists until the advent of the modern system of major and minor keys in the 17th century. The eight “modes” or scale patterns with their ranges are:

Mode I (*Protus authenticus* or *Dorian*) = range of d to d’

Mode II (*Plagal* or *Hypodorian*) = range of A to a

Mode III (*Deuterus authenticus* or *Phrygian*) = range of e to e’

Mode IV (*Deuterus plagalis* or *Hypophrygian*) = range of B to b

Mode V (*Tritus authenticus* or *Lydian*) = range of f to f’

Mode VI (*Tritus plagalis* or *Hypolydian*) = range of c to c’

Mode VII (*Tetrardus authenticus* or *Mixolydian*) = range of g to g’

Mode VIII (*Tetrardus plagalis* or *Hypomixolydian*) = range of d to d’

As mentioned earlier, Gregorian chant was all but abandoned by many church musicians in favor of polyphonic composition from the Renaissance onward, but a revival of interest in the chant began in the 19th century. Leading this renewed interest were the French (Roman Catholic) monks of Solemnes. They compiled a number of resources, including the monumental work, *Liber Usualis*, which includes explanation and direction as well as music in Gregorian notation for the masses in the liturgical year. This book could well provide the basis for further study on the subject of Gregorian notation.

The Use of Instruments in Western Rite Services

Many of us know from experience that singing which is undergirded by an accompanying instrument is often more hearty and confident than unaccompanied singing, especially that of a congregation. But how does using accompaniment - or using instruments in any way - fit into Orthodoxy?

A look at history reveals two things: first, while many Church fathers railed against the use of instruments in church, there was never a decision by an Ecumenical Council to ban the use of instruments. The second is that the organ began to be developed for the almost exclusive use of the Church in the West around the 7th or 8th century.

As pointed out in the introduction to this manual, most of the early anti-instrument sentiment seems to come from those who were surrounded by pagan worship and its instrumental accompaniment and by the Roman “games” (which provided the place of martyrdom for many) where instruments were used.

We also know that, in the early centuries, this negative attitude toward instruments was not universal. Christian communities in some parts of the world regularly incorporated the use of bells, cymbals, and hand clapping as a culturally acceptable accompaniment to worship. These practices have continued among our Oriental Orthodox “cousins”, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

Whether it was due to this diversity of opinion regarding instruments or to some other reason, the hierarchs did not ban instruments from use in worship and we can see that, in the West, this lack of restriction led to far greater use there.

The primitive organ that existed in antiquity was a water-powered hydraulis which must have sounded much like a very noisy calliope and was used in much the same way that electronic organs are sometimes used today at baseball stadiums to rouse the fans. It is amazing to think that this instrument evolved through history into the “king of instruments” which the world knows primarily through the music of the great German 18th century composer, J. S. Bach.

After the fall of Rome, organs (now wind-powered and highly decorated), continued to be used in the Byzantine Empire for ceremonial occasions. One such instrument was presented by the Byzantine Emperor Constantine Copronymus to Pepin, King of the Franks, in 757. Charlemagne received a similar one in 812. England seems to have led the way in devoting the organ to the services of the Church, as attested by Bishop Aldhelm (c. 640-709), and we know

that, in the early 10th century, one was in use in Winchester Cathedral. Some historians believe that St. Dunstan (monk, abbot, bishop, and Archbishop of Canterbury in the 10th century), who was an artist and silversmith, was also a builder of organs. [Many centuries later, another Orthodox saint - St. Innocent of Alaska - would also build organs, his of the “barrel” variety, to sell to the Franciscan monks in California!]

What this history shows us is that, contrary to the atmosphere when Christianity had to separate itself from the practices of pagan society, in later years, the organ was taken over by the Church and “baptized” for use in the worship of Almighty God. As in Psalm 150, “let everything that hath breath, praise the Lord.”

However, *a capella* singing was still the norm all over Christianity world-wide in the first millennium. When the organ or other instruments were used, they were at first simply reinforcing the chant that voices were singing. As polyphony developed in the Middle Ages in the West, the organ began to be used in more independent ways - sometimes playing the chant tune while the choir sang the polyphonic parts; sometimes playing interludes between verses of a chant. It was not until the 15th and 16th centuries that solo organ compositions became commonly used. In the next several centuries, we find other instruments being used in churches - entire orchestras sometimes accompanying choir and congregational singing and sometimes providing purely instrumental pieces.

For our purposes today, what is appropriate? How much of this historical development do we make use of? While it is not uncommon today for some Eastern rite Orthodox congregations to employ an organ to accompany the singing and to provide music before and after weddings (particularly in the Greek Archdiocese), there has been very little instrumental music in Orthodox worship anywhere in the world in the last thousand years. It would be wise for us to be cautious in our use of instrumental music, making certain that what is used is an aid, and not a hindrance, to worship.

Despite the ready availability of electronic keyboards, a “natural” instrument is preferable over anything that produces sound artificially. Natural sound is produced by air causing a vibration in a string, across a reed, or through a pipe. This is true of the human voice and all instruments except electronic ones. Just as natural flowers (rather than plastic ones) are preferred for use in church; just as beeswax candles are required (rather than electric light bulbs) for the altar; so natural musical sound is preferred for accompanying in church whenever possible. In addition to the pipe organ, reed organs, or harmoniums, also provide a “natural” accompaniment.

Conclusion

In the Western Rite, we have the privilege of making use of everything from ancient chant to hymn tunes composed yesterday. Organ music is not prohibited, nor are many different musical styles. But we have a responsibility, in restoring Western liturgy to its Orthodox roots, to be discerning in the styles and quality of the music which adorns our worship; to be diligent in preserving the best of the old and to be careful in the use of anything new. We must always remember that Orthodox worship is approaching the throne of God, stepping out of this world into heaven, and so nothing that we do or sing or play should detract from that. We must remember that the words of our worship, which express our Orthodox theology, are of primary importance, and the music which carries these words along should always be appropriate to them. Our worship must never be “entertainment”; our music should never be trite or simply emotional; nothing that we sing or do should be done casually or carelessly or without preparation. Christian music for any rite must be sung with the utmost reverence and true belief. We would do well to keep in mind this blessing given to the liturgical singers at the 4th Council of Carthage: “Take heed that what you sing with your mouths you believe in your hearts, and what you believe with your hearts, you show forth in your works.”

APPENDIX

Liturgical and Musical Resources:

The *Orthodox Missal* - available from the Western Rite Vicariate

The *St. Ambrose Hymnal* - available from St. Gregory the Great Orthodox Church,
7326 Poplar Ct., Falls Church, VA 22042

The *English Office Noted* - Draft revision available from St. Gregory the Great Orthodox
Church. Portions can be found at www.stgregoryoc.org.

The *St. Dunstan Psalter* - available from St. Mark's Orthodox Church, 1405 S. Vine St.,
Denver, CO 80210

The *English Gradual* - available from the Royal School of Church Music (through
Amazon.com)

The *Liber Usualis* - Reprint available from St. Bonaventure Publications (see
www.libers.com/liber.htm)

Plainchant Publications Committee offerings - can sometimes be found in antiquarian
book stores

Websites for music:

stgregoryoc.org (St. Gregory's, Washington, DC)

westernorthodox.com (St. Mark's, Denver, CO)

stcolumbachurch.org (St. Columba's, Lafayette, CO)

cpdl.org (Choral public domain library)