Responsorial Psalms for Weekday Mass
Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter

Set by
Anthony Ruff, OSB
ANTIPHON GRAPHICS

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The division of text in the following NAB psalms is designed to accommodate the musical setting and may not reflect the stanza division of the original text: Lectionary nos. 17, 179, 185, 198, 207, 231, 232, 243, 267, 268, 280, 283, 285, 293, 299, 564, 572.

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I wish to thank Abbot John Klassen, OSB, abbot of Saint John’s Abbey, for first asking that the responsorial psalm be sung at daily Mass in our monastery. It was his impulse and inspiration that led to the creation of this collection. Thanks also to Br. Aelred Senna, OSB, and Fr. Nicholas Becker, OSB, for their assistance with indexing and psalm verse layout during novitiate work periods.
Foreword

To the singer and musician:

For daily Mass, the U.S. bishops recommend singing the “Responsorial Psalm, perhaps in a simple chanted setting” (“Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship” 116). This collection offers such simple chanted settings and makes it possible for the responsorial psalm to be sung at every daily Mass during the seasons of the liturgical year.

These responsorial psalms were conceived for unaccompanied singing led by a single cantor as practiced daily at Saint John’s Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota. All that is needed for these settings is one singer with self-confidence and a good sense for pitch and rhythm. But for those who desire it, keyboard accompaniments and guitar chords are also provided.

The psalm verses are provided in two translations, the New American Bible translation of the U.S. Lectionary for Mass and the Grail translation as revised in 1983 for inclusive human language. Some may prefer to use the translation of the officially approved lectionary, although one will find that the NAB translation is not well suited for singing in its cadence and accent patterns. It is for this reason that the Grail translation is also provided. According to “Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship” (158), based on the U.S. “General Instruction of the Roman Missal” (61), one may use translations other than the NAB of the lectionary when singing the responsorial psalm, and this interpretation has been confirmed by officials of the U.S. Bishops’ Committee on Divine Worship.

These antiphons are text based in every respect, intentionally simple and unornamented. The melodies are only slightly more than inflected speech, with primary scale degrees bringing out the natural accentuation of the text, and infrequent two-note groups highlighting important words or defining syntactical units. The melodic settings are in the eight Gregorian chant modes as found in the psalm tones of Saint Meinrad Archabbey. Type melodies, one for each mode, are employed repeatedly for varying antiphon texts, making it easier for cantor and congregation to pick up the antiphon melodies. The Saint Meinrad psalm tones are used because they are well suited to the rhythm and accentuation of the English language, which, unlike Latin, frequently has an accent on the final syllable of a line.

To the musicians: Practices for singing and accompanying responsorial psalms vary from place to place. The single most important thing for the success of these settings is an agreed-upon plan that is followed with consistency and confidence in order to enable the congregation to join in readily. The antiphon might or might not be played by the instrumentalist before being sung by the cantor; the cantor might intone the antiphon with or without accompaniment; the congregational antiphon might be led more by the cantor or more by the instrumentalist; the accompanist might play the first chord of each line of the psalm tone a bit before the cantor (to give the pitch) or might come in exactly with the cantor; the accompanist might hold the first chord of the antiphon before the congregation comes in or come in exactly with the congregation. Whatever practice is customary in a given community, it should be known by all the musicians and followed consistently.

The horizontal line that sometimes appears over a melody note, technically called an “episemata,” indicates that this syllable is to be held a bit longer. In a few cases, a slur joins two notes of the psalm tone melody. This indicates that both notes are sung to one syllable when that syllable is double underlined.

To the singer: Regarding rhythm, the singer should follow the natural accentuation of spoken English. The singer should first recite the text of the antiphon and verses, and then sing with the same rhythm and tempo, neither slowing down nor falling into an unnatural equalism. Each syllable receives the same length and stress when sung as it does when spoken. Regarding melody,
the singer should become as familiar as possible with the modal melodies of the eight psalm tones, committing them to memory if possible. Before singing the melody of the antiphon, the singer should first internalize the melody of the psalm tone, since the melody of the antiphon in every case is based upon and grows out of the melody of the psalm tone.

To the keyboard player: It is good to vary the volume between antiphon and verses, playing more loudly to stimulate and support the congregation, but playing as quietly as possible for the verses (while still offering necessary support to the cantor) so as to allow the text of the verses to be heard clearly. As much as possible, the accompaniment for the psalm tone should be committed to memory so that one can follow and support the cantor without delay or hesitation. It is advisable to memorize the first chord of the antiphon as well so that the transition from verse to antiphon can be made smoothly. Some organists might wish to help the congregation by soloing out the antiphon melody with a louder registration on a separate manual.

Piano players should account for the fact the piano is percussive and does not sustain sounds like the organ. In order to provide continuous support, chords should be repeated more often than is written. For both antiphon and verses, such repetition should occur on accented syllables. Especially on the verses, the reiteration of chords might take the form of gentle arpeggiation.

To the guitarist: What is said to the piano player in the preceding paragraph applies also to the guitarist. The guitarist will often need to strum the same chord repeatedly on the antiphon—always on primary accented syllables. The chord symbols for the psalm tones account for virtually every chord change of the keyboard setting. Guitarists should feel free to omit some chords and reduce the number of chord changes (provided that the chord played fits the mode), especially if fewer chord changes help one better to follow and support the cantor without hesitation or delay. It is not recommended to use guitar along with keyboard, or to use more than one musician as accompanist, since this might complicate matters and constrain the freedom of the cantor.

Fr. Anthony Ruff, OSB
Saint John’s Abbey
The Feast of Saint Benedict, July 11, 2008
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Monday of the First Week of Advent

Antiphon

Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

Capo 3:

G (Bb) (Gm7) (Bbm7) (Cm7) (Em7) (Dm)

Psalm Tone

Mode 8

Verses  Psalm 122:1-2, 3-4b, 4cd-5, 6-7, 8-9

NAB

1. I rejoiced because they said to me,
   “We will go up to the house of the Lord.”
   And now we have set foot
   within your gates, O Jerusalem.

2. Jerusalem, built as a city
   with compact unity.
   To it the tribes go up,
   the tribes of the Lord.

3. According to the decree for Israel,
   to give thanks to the name of the Lord. In it are set up judgment seats,
   seats for the house of David.

4. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! May those who love you prosper! May peace be within your walls, prosperity in your buildings.

5. Because of my relatives and friends I will say, “Peace be within you!” Because of the house of the Lord, our God, I will pray for your good.

Grail

1. I rejoiced when I heard them say:
   “Let us go to God’s house.”
   And now our feet are standing
   within your gates, O Jerusalem.

2. Jerusalem is built as a city
   strongly compact.
   It is there that the tribes go up,
   the tribes of the Lord.

3. For Israel’s law it is,
   there to praise the Lord’s name. There were set the thrones of judgment of the house of David.

4. For the peace of Jerusalem pray:
   “Peace be to your homes!
   May peace reign in your walls, in your palaces, peace!”

5. For love of my family and friends
   I say: “Peace upon you!”
   For love of the house of the Lord
   I will ask for your good.
Tuesday of the First Week of Advent

Antiphon

Jus-tice shall flourish in his time, and full-ness of peace for ev-er.

Capo 1: (F♯m/A) (Gm) (Dm7) (C♯m7) (D6) (C♯m)

Psalm Tone

Verse 1

1. O God, with your judgment endow the king, and with your justice, the king’s son; He shall govern your people with justice and your afflicted ones with judgment.

2. Justice shall flower in his days, and profound peace, till the moon be no more. May he rule from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

3. He shall rescue the poor when he cries out, and the afflicted when he has no one to help him. He shall have pity for the lowly and the poor; the lives of the poor he shall save.

4. May his name be blessed forever; as long as the sun his name shall remain. In him shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed; all the nations shall proclaim his happiness.

NAB

Grail

1. O God, give your judgment to the king, to a king’s son your justice, that he may judge your people in justice and your poor in right judgment.

2. In his days justice shall flourish and peace till the moon fails. He shall rule from sea to sea, from the Great River to earth’s bounds.

3. For he shall save the poor when they cry and the needy who are helpless. He will have pity on the weak and save the lives of the poor.

4. May his name be blessed forever and endure like the sun. Every tribe shall be blessed in him, all nations bless his name.
Antiphon

I shall live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

Capo 1: (Em) (Em) (Em/D) (Cm7) (Bm7) (Em)

Psalm Tone

[A] [B] [C] [D] [E] [F]

Verses  Psalm 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6

NAB

1. The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
   In verdant pastures he gives me repose;
   Beside restful waters he leads me;
   he refreshes my soul.

2. He guides me in right paths
   for his name’s sake.
   Even though I walk in the dark valley
   I fear no evil; for you are at my side
   With your rod and your staff
   that give me courage.

3. You spread the table before me
   in the sight of my foes;
   You anoint my head with oil;
   my cup overflows.

4. Only goodness and kindness follow me
   all the days of my life;
   And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
   forever and ever.

Grail

1. The Lord is my shepherd;
   there is nothing I shall want.
   Fresh and green are the pastures
   where he gives me repose.
   Near restful waters he leads me,
   to revive my drooping spirit.

2. He guides me along the right path;
   he is true to his name.
   If I should walk in the valley of darkness
   no evil would I fear.
   You are there with your crook and your staff;
   with these you give me comfort.

3. You have prepared a banquet for me
   in the sight of my foes.
   My head you have anointed with oil;
   my cup is overflowing.

4. Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me
   all the days of my life.
   In the Lord’s own house shall I dwell
   forever and ever.
Thursday of the First Week of Advent

Lect. #178

Antiphon

Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Capo 3: (G) Bb (Gm7) Bbm7 (Cm7) Em7 (Cm7) Ebm7 (D) F

Or

Al - le - lu - ia.

(G) Bb (Cm7) Ebm7 (D) F

Psalm Tone

Mode 8

[A] [B] [C] [D] [E] [F]

Verses  Psalm 118:1 and 8-9, 19-21, 25-27a

NAB

1. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
   for his mercy endures forever.
   It is better to take refuge in the LORD
   than to trust in man.
   It is better to take refuge in the LORD
   than to trust in princes.

2. Open to me the gates of justice;
   I will enter them and give thanks to the LORD.
   This gate is the LORD’s;
   the just shall enter it.
   I will give thanks to you, for you have answered me
   and have been my savior.

3. O LORD, grant salvation!
   O LORD, grant prosperity!
   Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD;
   we bless you from the house of the LORD.
   [omit E]
   The LORD is God, and he has given us light.

Grail

1. Give thanks to the LORD for he is good,
   for his love endures forever.
   It is better to take refuge in the LORD
   than to trust in mortals;
   it is better to take refuge in the LORD
   than to trust in rulers.

2. Open to me the gates of holiness:
   I will enter and give thanks.
   This is the LORD’s own gate
   where the just may enter.
   I will thank you for you have answered
   and you are my savior.

3. O LORD, grant us salvation;
   O LORD, grant success.
   Blessed in the name of the LORD
   is the one who comes.
   We bless you from the house of the LORD;
   the LORD God is our light.
Lect. #179

Friday of the First Week of Advent

Antiphon

The Lord is my light and my salvation.

Capo 1: (Em) (Cm7) (Bm7) (Em)
Fm Dbm7 Cm7 Fm

Psalm Tone

Mode 2

[A] [B] [C] [D] [E] [F]

Verses  Psalm 27:1, 4, 13-14

NAB

1. The Lord is my light and my salvation;
   whom should I fear?
   [omit D, E]
   The Lord is my life’s refuge;
   of whom should I be afraid?

2. One thing I ask of the Lord; this I seek:
   [omit B]
   To dwell in the house of the Lord
   all the days of my life,
   That I may gaze on the loveliness of the Lord
   and contemplate his temple.

3. I believe that I shall see the bounty of the Lord
   in the land of the living.
   Wait for the Lord with courage;
   [omit D, E]
   be stouthearted, and wait for the Lord.

Grail

1. The Lord is my light and my help;
   whom shall I fear?
   The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
   [omit D, E]
   before whom shall I shrink?

2. There is one thing I ask of the Lord,
   for this I long,
   to live in the house of the Lord,
   all the days of my life,
   to savor the sweetness of the Lord,
   to behold his temple.

3. I am sure I shall see the Lord’s goodness
   in the land of the living.
   Hope in him, hold firm and take heart.
   [omit D, E]
   Hope in the Lord!
Saturday of the First Week of Advent

Antiphon

Bless-ed are all who wait for the Lord.

Capo 1: (Em) (Cm7) (Bm7) (Em)

Fm Dm7 Cm7 Fm

Psalm Tone

Mode 2

[A] [B] [C] [D] [E] [F]

Verses  Psalm 147:1-2, 3-4, 5-6

NAB

1. Praise the LORD, for he is good;
sing praise to our God, for he is gracious;
[omit C]
it is fitting to praise him.
The LORD rebuilds Jerusalem;
the dispersed of Israel he gathers.

2. He heals the brokenhearted
and binds up their wounds.
[omit C, D]
He tells the number of the stars;
he calls each by name.

3. Great is our LORD and mighty in power:
to his wisdom there is no limit.
[omit C, D]
The LORD sustains the lowly;
the wicked he casts to the ground.

Grail

1. Praise the LORD for he is good;
sing to our God for he is loving:
[omit C]
to him our praise is due.
The LORD builds up Jerusalem
and brings back Israel’s exiles.

2. He heals the brokenhearted,
he binds up all their wounds.
[omit C, D]
He fixes the number of the stars;
he calls each one by its name.

3. Our LORD is great and almighty;
his wisdom can never be measured.
[omit C, D]
The LORD raises the lowly;
he humbles the wicked to the dust.
Antiphon

Our God will come to save us!

Capo 3: (D) (Gm7/D) (D)
F BbM7/F F

Psalm Tone  

Verse  

Psalm 85:9ab and 10, 11-12, 13-14

NAB

1. I will hear what God proclaims;  
the LORD—for he proclaims peace to his people.  
Near indeed is his salvation to those who fear him,  
glory dwelling in our land.

2. Kindness and truth shall meet;  
justice and peace shall kiss.  
Truth shall spring out of the earth,  
and justice shall look down from heaven.

3. The LORD himself will give his benefits;  
our land shall yield its increase.  
Justice shall walk before him,  
and salvation, along the way of his steps.

Grail

1. I will hear what the LORD God has to say,  
a voice that speaks of peace,  
His help is near for those who fear him  
and his glory will dwell in our land.

2. Mercy and faithfulness have met;  
justice and peace have embraced.  
Faithfulness shall spring from the earth  
and justice look down from heaven.

3. The LORD will make us prosper  
and our earth shall yield its fruit.  
Justice shall march before him  
and peace shall follow his steps.

(D) (F) (D) (G) (A) (D) (Gm7) (Bbm7) (Fm/A) (Gm7) (D)
Tuesday of the Second Week of Advent

Antiphon

The Lord our God comes with power.

Capo 3: (D) F (G/B) B7/D (Cm7) EbM7 (D)

Psalm Tone

Verse 96:1-2, 3 and 10ac, 11-12, 13

NAB
1. Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all you lands. Sing to the Lord; bless his name; announce his salvation, day after day.
2. Tell his glory among the nations; among all peoples, his wondrous deeds. Say among the nations: The Lord is king; he governs the peoples with equity.
3. Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice; let the sea and what fills it resound; let the plains be joyful and all that is in them! Then let all the trees of the forest rejoice.
4. They shall exult before the Lord, for he comes; for he comes to rule the earth. He shall rule the world with justice and the peoples with his constancy.

Grail
1. O sing a new song to the Lord, sing to the Lord all the earth. O sing to the Lord, bless his name. Proclaim his help day by day.
2. Tell among the nations his glory and his wonders among all the peoples. Proclaim to the nations: “God is king.” He will judge the peoples in fairness.
3. Let the heavens rejoice and earth be glad, let the sea and all within it thunder praise, let the land and all it bears rejoice, all the trees of the wood shout for joy.
4. At the presence of the Lord for he comes, he comes to rule the earth. With justice he will rule the world, he will judge the peoples with his truth.
Antiphon

O bless the Lord, my soul!

Psalm Tone

Verses  Psalm 103:1-2, 3-4, 8 and 10

NAB
1. Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all my being, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.

2. He pardons all your iniquities, he heals all your ills. He redeems your life from destruction, he crowns you with kindness and compassion.

3. Merciful and gracious is the LORD, slow to anger and abounding in kindness. Not according to our sins does he deal with us, nor does he requite us according to our crimes.

Grail
1. My soul, give thanks to the LORD all my being, bless his holy name. My soul, give thanks to the LORD and never forget all his blessings.

2. It is he who forgives all your guilt, who heals every one of your ills, who redeems your life from the grave, who crowns you with love and compassion.

3. The LORD is compassion and love, slow to anger and rich in mercy. He does not treat us according to our sins nor repay us according to our faults.
Thursday of the Second Week of Advent

Antiphon

The Lord is gracious and merciful; slow to anger, and of great kindness.

Capo 1: (Em) (Bm7/F♯) (Em/G) (D/F♯)(Em) (A m/C) (Bm7) (Em)
Fm Cm/G Fm/Ab Eb/G Fm Bm/Db Cm7 Fm

Psalm Tone

Mode 2

Verses Psalm 145:1 and 9, 10-11, 12-13ab

NAB

1. I will extol you, O my God and King, and I will bless your name forever and ever. The LORD is good to all and compassionate toward all his works.

2. Let all your works give you thanks, O LORD, and let your faithful ones bless you. Let them discourse of the glory of your Kingdom and speak of your might.

3. Let them make known to men your might and the glorious splendor of your Kingdom. Your Kingdom is a Kingdom for all ages, and your dominion endures through all generations.

Grail

1. I will give you glory, O God my king, I will bless your name forever. How good you are, LORD, to all, compassionate to all your creatures.

2. All your creatures shall thank you, O LORD, and your friends shall repeat their blessing. They shall speak of the glory of your reign and declare your might, O God.

3. To make known to all your mighty deeds and the glorious splendor of your reign. Yours is an everlasting kingdom; your rule lasts from age to age.
Lect. #185
Friday of the Second Week of Advent

Antiphon

Those who follow you, Lord, will have the light of life.

Capo 1:

Psalm Tone

Mode 2

Verses  Psalm 1:1-2, 3, 4 and 6

NAB
1. Blessed the man who follows not
   the counsel of the wicked
   Nor walks in the way of sinners,
   nor sits in the company of the insolent,
   But delights in the law of the LORD
   and meditates on his law day and night.

2. He is like a tree
   planted near running water,
   That yields its fruit in due season,
   and whose leaves never fade.
   [omit E]
   Whatever he does, prospers.

3. Not so the wicked, not so;
   they are like chaff which the wind drives away.
   For the LORD watches over the way of the just,
   [omit D, E]
   but the way of the wicked vanishes.

Grail
1. Happy indeed are those
   who follow not the counsel of the wicked,
   nor linger in the way of sinners
   nor sit in the company of scorners,
   but whose delight is the law of the LORD
   and who ponder his law day and night.

2. They are like a tree that is planted
   beside the flowing waters,
   that yields its fruit in due season
   and whose leaves shall never fade;
   [omit E]
   and all that they do shall prosper.

3. Not so are the wicked, not so!
   For they like winnowed chaff
   shall be driven away by the wind.
   For the LORD guards the way of the just
   [omit E]
   but the way of the wicked leads to doom.
Saturday of the Second Week of Advent

Antiphon

Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.

Capo 1: (Em) Fm (Am7/D) (Em) Bm7/F F (G/B) Ab/C (Cm7) Dm7 (D) Eb (D/F#) (Em) Eb/G Fm

Psalm Tone

Mode 2

Verses Psalm 80:2ac and 3b, 15-16, 18-19

NAB
1. O shepherd of Israel, hearken,
   From thy throne upon the cherubim, shine forth.
   [omit C, D, E]
   Rouse your power.

2. Once again, O Lord of hosts,
   Look down from heaven, and see;
   Take care of this vine,
   And protect what your right hand has planted
   [omit E]
   the son of man whom you yourself made strong.

3. May your help be with the man of your right hand,
   With the son of man whom you yourself made strong.
   Then we will no more withdraw from you;
   [omit D, E]
   give us new life, and we will call upon your name.

Grail
1. O shepherd of Israel, hear us,
   shine forth from your cherubim throne.
   [omit C, D, E]
   O Lord, rouse up your might.

2. God of hosts, turn again, we implore,
   look down from heaven and see.
   Visit this vine and protect it,
   [omit D, E]
   the vine your right hand has planted.

3. May your hand be on the one you have chosen,
   the one you have given your strength.
   And we shall never forsake you again;
   [omit D, E]
   give us life that we may call upon your name.