English Proper Chants

Chants for Entrance & Communion
Antiphons of The Roman Missal
for Sundays & Solemnities

composed by
John Ainslie

MELODY EDITION

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Preface

This collection of settings of the Entrance and Communion antiphons of The Roman Missal has been compiled principally for use by religious and collegiate communities for whom chant is a familiar, significant, and practical expression of worship.

Liturgical music should always seek to be inclusive as well as inspiring, inviting those who hear it not just to admire it from afar but to enter into it, vocally if possible, so that it may become for them their own means of worship and prayer and thus enable them to take their part in the sacred liturgy.

The musical language to be found in this collection is an adaptation of Gregorian chant for use with English texts, respecting the particular sounds and rhythms of the English language. A few of the pieces are adaptations of the corresponding Latin settings; most are new compositions using traditional Gregorian formulae and melodic phrases.

Although Gregorian chant is honored as the traditional music of the Roman rite, it will be unfamiliar to many parish and school congregations. Accordingly, music leaders should use these chants with discretion, respecting always the spiritual and pastoral needs of the people they serve in their ministry, for their benefit and the glory of God.

John Ainslie
The antiphon texts are taken from the third typical edition of The Roman Missal, translated by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL), and are used by permission. Occasionally there is an additional text from the Graduale Romanum (Solesmes, 1974); if this has no ICEL translation, the translation from the Society of Saint Gregory’s Processional (Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, 2012) has been used.

The responsorial texts have been chosen in accordance with the recommendations provided by the Graduale Romanum or by the Antiphonary (ICEL, 2012). In all but a few instances, the responses are from the psalms. The 1963 Grail translation, approved for liturgical use in the British Isles and elsewhere, is used here by permission. Long recognized for reproducing the rhythm of the psalms in their original Hebrew language, this translation is particularly suited for chant settings. Other responsorial texts are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

Liturgical Use

Entrance Songs are “to open the celebration, foster the unity of those who have been gathered, introduce their thoughts to the mystery of the liturgical season or festivity, and accompany the procession of the priest and ministers” (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, [GIRM] 47). They should start when the procession enters the church and be brought to a conclusion when the priest is ready to make the sign of the cross and greet the people.

Communion Songs are “to express the communicants’ union in spirit by means of the unity of their voices, to show joy of heart, and to highlight more clearly the ‘communitarian’ nature of the procession to receive Communion.” They should start while the priest is receiving the sacra-
ment and be continued for as long as it is being administered to the faithful. If there is to be a hymn after Communion, the Communion Song should be ended in a timely manner.

Choice of Texts

For festivals, and for Sundays in the major liturgical seasons, the texts provided for each day are to be preferred. They are the texts to be found in missals and missalette sheets. The *praenotanda* (introduction) to the *Graduale Romanum* states that “the faculty is granted to select from the chants pertaining to the Proper of Time, in place of the proper text of the day . . . another text from the same season . . . so that pastoral necessities may be more widely satisfied.” Thus repetition of an antiphon on successive Sundays is permitted (and may even be recommended) to assist congregational participation. In addition, the *Graduale Simplex* permits some common communion antiphons to be used at any time—notably Psalm 33 with its antiphon “Taste and see that the Lord is good” (provided in the appendix).

How to Sing English Chant

English as a spoken language is very different from Latin. In the customary pronunciation of Latin, syllables are uttered evenly: like modern Spanish, it is a syllable-timed language. On the other hand, English, with its many vowels of different lengths, is stress-timed.

The natural rhythm and accentuation of English must be maintained when singing English chant. The chant is an enhancement and expression of the natural rhythm of the English words to which it is set. The text is always primary.

Following Gregorian tradition, “liquescents” are used where a two-note syllable is followed by a consonant cluster. This is rendered in the modern notation and accompaniment editions by a smaller note; this does not indicate a rhythmically shorter note.

Accompaniment?

It is preferable to sing chant unaccompanied. During part of the Sacred Triduum, instrumental accompaniment is not permitted.

Because of the nature of English as a stress-timed language, it is preferable that the singing be led vocally by the cantor or choir rather than
by the accompanying instrument, which should ideally provide an accom-
paniment to the voices rather than lead them. When there is a good vocal lead, an organist should play only the lower three parts in the score and refrain from doubling the melody line.

In addition, note that although the accompaniments use the quaver as the basic unit this is only to enable them to be notated conventionally. Unless it occurs in a multi-note cadence, the final note of a textual phrase should be as long as the natural utterance of its syllable requires.

**How to Sing Antiphon Settings**

The traditional method of singing antiphons is for a cantor to sing the first phrase up to the asterisk, followed by a choir singing the remainder of the antiphon (or the cantor may sing the entire antiphon). The antiphon may then be repeated by all.

After the antiphon, the cantor(s) may then sing one or more psalm verses, after each of which the antiphon is repeated. The final psalm verse is traditionally the doxology “Glory be to the Father,” which is “pointed” thus:

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Glory be to the Father, and | to the Son,
and to the | Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and | ever shall be
world without | end. Amen.
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The antiphon is repeated finally after this doxology.

In some longer antiphons, the first phrase of the antiphon may stand alone as a shorter antiphon in its own right. This is indicated by a double bar line with a ‡ sign below it in the text. In these instances, it might be preferable to sing the remainder of the antiphon only as a coda after the final repetition of the shorter excerpt.

In some other instances, a shorter version of the full Missal text has been set to music as the antiphon. In these cases, the remainder of the Missal text forms the beginning of the psalm verse text, shown in **bold type** and designated with a ° sign.

**How to Sing Psalm Verses**

Psalm verses will normally be sung by one or more cantors. The psalm tones provided are of a single format, with a cadence falling two syllables
before the final accent in each line. The cadence starts at the syllable following the | line. Special care should be taken to maintain the natural rhythm of the English phrasing over the cadence.

Other psalm tones may be chosen in place of the ones provided. They should be of the same mode as the antiphon—indicated alongside the psalm-tone (in the melody and accompaniment editions).

**Psalm Numeration**

To simplify references, the Greek/Vulgate numbering traditionally used in the Roman rite has been used throughout. The Hebrew numbering is one ahead of the Vulgate for most of the psalms.

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ADVENT
First Sunday of Advent

Entrance Song

Ps 24:1-2

TO you, I lift up my soul, O my God.

In you, have I trusted; let me not be put to shame.

from Psalm 24

* Nor let my enemies exult over me;
* and let none who hope in you be put to shame.

Lord, make me know your ways.
Lord, teach me your paths.

Make me walk in your truth, and teach me;
for you are God my savior.
In you I hope all day long
because of your goodness, O Lord.

Remember your mercy, Lord,
and the love you have shown from of old.
Do not remember the sins of my youth.
In your love remember me.

The Lord is good and upright.
He shows the path to those who stray,
He guides the humble in the right path;
He teaches his way to the poor.

* These lines are from the antiphon of the Roman Missal, © 2010 International Commission on English in the Liturgy, Inc. All rights reserved.
from Psalm 84
O Lord, you once favored your land
and revived the fortunes of Jacob,
you forgave the guilt of your people
and covered all their sins.

Revive us now, O God, our helper!
Put an end to your grievance against us.
Will you be angry with us for ever,
will your anger never cease?

Will you not restore again our life
that your people may rejoice in you?
Let us see, O Lord, your mercy
and give us your saving help.

Mercy and faithfulness have met;
justice and peace have embraced.
Faithfulness shall spring from the earth
and justice look down from heaven.
Second Sunday of Advent

Entrance Song

O people of Sion * behold,
the Lord will come to save the nations.

from Psalm 79
° And the Lord will make the glory of his voice heard
° in the joy of your heart.

God of hosts, bring us back;
let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.

O Lord, rouse up your might,
O Lord, come to our help.
God of hosts, bring us back;
let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.

Lord God of hosts, how long
will you frown on your people’s plea?
God of hosts, bring us back;
let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.

God of hosts, turn again, we implore,
look down from heaven and see.
God of hosts, bring us back;
let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.

° These lines are from the antiphon of the Roman Missal, © 2010 International Commission on English in the Liturgy, Inc. All rights reserved.
from Psalm 147
O praise the Lord, Jerusalem!
Zion, praise your God!
He has strengthened the bars of your gates,
he has blessed the children within you.

He established peace on your borders,
he feeds you with finest wheat.
He sends out his word to the earth
and swiftly runs his command.

He hurls down hailstones like crumbs.
The waters are frozen at his touch;
he sends forth his word and it melts them:
at the breath of his mouth the waters flow.

He makes his word known to Jacob,
to Israel his laws and decrees.
He has not dealt thus with other nations;
he has not taught them his decrees.
Third Sunday of Advent

Entrance Song

Phil 4:4-5

RE-joice in the Lord always; again

I say, re-joice. Indeed, the Lord is near.

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from Psalm 84

I will hear what the Lord God has to say,
a voice that speaks of peace,
peace for his people and his friends
and those who turn to him in their hearts.

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

The Lord will make us prosper
and our earth shall yield its fruit.
Justice shall march before him
and peace shall follow his steps.
SAY to the faint of heart: * Be strong and do not fear.

Be-hold, our God will come, and he will save us.

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from Isaiah 35

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus it shall bloom abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and singing.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the Lord,
the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.
Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
‘Be strong, do not fear!’

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
Fourth Sunday of Advent

Entrance Song

DROP down__ dew * from a-bove__, you heav-ens,

and let the clouds__ rain down__ the Just One.

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from Psalm 18
The heavens proclaim the glo-ry of God
and the firmament shows forth the work __ of his hands.
Day unto day takes __ up the story
and night unto night makes __ known the message.

No speech, no word, no __ voice is heard
... [omit bar 2]
yet their span extends through __ all the earth,
their words to the utmost bounds __ of the world.

There he has placed a tent __ for the sun;
... [omit bar 2]
it comes forth like a bridegroom coming __ from his tent,
rejoices like a champion to __ run its course.

At the end of the sky is the rising __ of the sun;
... [omit bar 2]
to the furthest end of the sky __ is its course.
There is nothing concealed from its __ burning heat.
BE-hold, a Vir-gin will con-ceive * and bear a son;
and his name will be called Em-ma-nu-el.

from Luke 1
My soul glor ifies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.
He looks on his servant in her lowliness;
therefore all ages will I call me blessed.

The Almighty works marvels for me.
Holly his name!
His mercy is from age to age,
on those who fear him.

He puts forth his arm in strength
and scatters the proud-hearted.
He casts the mighty from their thrones
and raises the lowly.

He fills the starving with good things,
... [omit bars 2 & 3]
sends the rich away empty.

He protects Is-ra-el his servant,
remembering his mercy,
the mercy promised to our fathers,
to Abraham and his sons for ever.