

INTRODUCTION

Purpose/Aim

These settings of the Antiphons from the Roman Missal have been created

- To provide settings of the Missal texts which might be easily learnt and performed by a community.

To enable this the antiphons are set to a common formula which is repeated over a season or a number of weeks. It began with the sketching out of the Entrance Antiphons. In practice we have used the Communion Antiphons on a regular basis.

Antiphon tone/formula

The music is in between a tone and a melodic formula. The variety of passing notes are to give the melody some interest and shape and to differentiate it from the psalm verses. As over a period the antiphons can be of 2, 3, 4 or sometimes more lines the formula needed a flexibility and usually there is a 3 and 4 line version. As the application of the formula to the text requires some adaptations the antiphons are set individually. It is hoped that the common melodic patterns allow them to be easily learnt.

I have used 5-line staves and stemless notes. Dashed barlines indicates where the sense of the line encompasses two bars.

Performance

Though the notation suggests the freedom of speech rhythm I suspect that singing them will benefit from a certain amount of rhythm, and even some rhythmic patterns, both for melodic shape and keeping singers together. In practice I have sometimes found it helpful to first begin by all reading the text together so that the natural accents are clear and then all sing through the melody before adding the other parts.

Initially the settings were designed to work as an unaccompanied unison setting, in practice we have used them for Communion at least in 3-4 parts and as we became familiar with the music unaccompanied.

Psalm verses — choice

Psalm verses are taken from the recommendations found in the *Processional* which compiles recommendations from a number of sources. As a rule I have chosen psalm texts which are not repeated in the Liturgy of the Word.

Where the *Processional* indicates further choices these are given.

Psalm verses — tone

A simple two-line psalm tone is given. Its shortness and simplicity is intended to offer a contrast to the antiphon. Where needed a 'flex' is given. Psalm verses have been grouped together.

Psalm verses — performance

The guidance found in the Introduction to *Ordo Cantus Missae* should be followed.

- The antiphon and psalm verse may go on as long as the Procession they accompany.
- After the final psalm verse the *Gloria Patri* (Glory be...) is sung.
- If the music is too long for the procession the *Gloria Patri* may be omitted.
- It is possible to sing just one psalm verse or even just the antiphon.

Antiphons — structure

Settings are provided for the Sunday antiphons in the following groupings:

- Advent
- Christmas
- Ordinary Time 1 (Jan–Mar)
- Lent
- Triduum
- Easter
- Ordinary Time 2 (June–July)
- Ordinary Time 3 (August–September)
- Ordinary Time 4 (October–November)
- Solemnities and Feasts of the Lord

Ordinary Time has been broken up into 2 month groupings. This means that the Sundays 6–11 which can appear both before and after Lent–Easter have 2 settings. For other days there are two settings, such as Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe where there is a setting in the Solemnities group and Ordinary Time 4.

The Antiphons of Advent–Christmas and also Lent-Triduum–Easter are musically related to show the connections between the seasons.

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The Psalm texts are taken from the Grail, 1963 — the text used in our liturgical books. Canticles use the version found in the Divine Office.

- From *The Psalms: A New Translation* © 1963 The Grail (England) published by HarperCollins.

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Questions

Like any liturgical music the ultimate question will be does this work in liturgical celebration — until then it is dots on paper. It was easier to plan the project as a whole and so the foundations for Sunday settings are laid. Questions the composer may ask:

- Is this approach useful and workable?
- Is the balance between repetition from Sunday (ease) and variety over a season (interest) maintained?
- To begin with no accompaniment was provided. A starting point is that the settings should work as an unaccompanied melody. Since then I have used the Communion Antiphons SATB and unaccompanied. I suspect an accompaniment might simplify the part writing, but I would prefer to leave that to the skill of the accompanist rather than provide another version.

If nothing else this inspire another composer to consider this approach and improve it.

Martin Foster

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