

The "Game Plan" for Singing the Mass

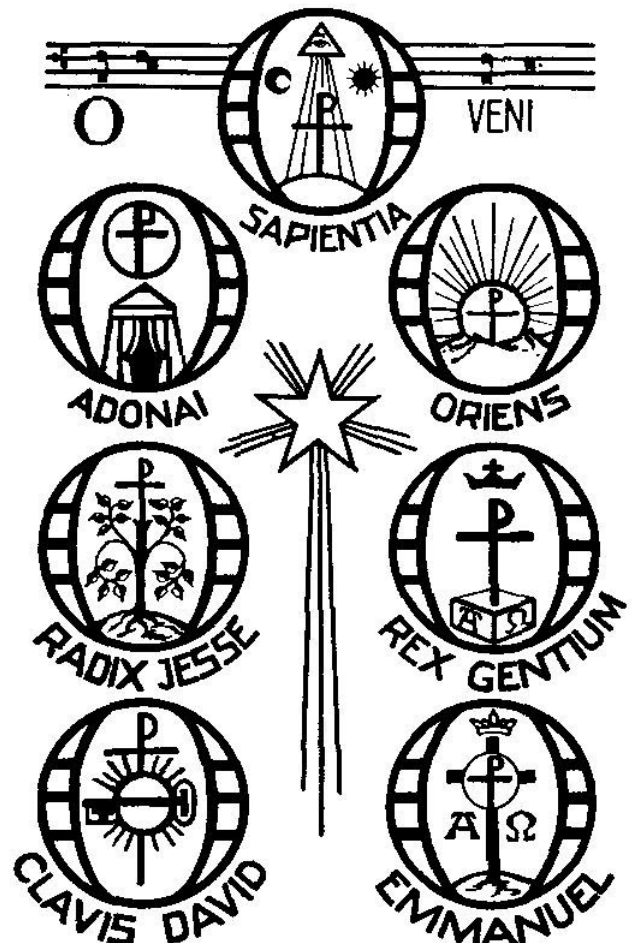
by Father Eric Roush

Over the last few weeks we've been reflecting on music in the Mass. We've tried to outline where we as Catholics currently are, how we got here, and the principles which will guide us forward to where we're called to go. If you missed the previous bulletin inserts, they're available on the parish website. This week, we conclude with getting down to brass tacks, our "game plan" for moving from singing *at* Mass to *singing the Mass*. To anticipate this transition at Holy Trinity, let's state our goals, what we are going to do and when. This is the bulletin insert everyone's been waiting for!

One thing is going to be starting sooner, rather than later. Good news in the pews, the burden of this first change falls largely on the pastor. The priest celebrating Mass is going to start singing what are called the "presidential prayers". This belongs to that top tier in the pecking order of things to sing in the Mass mentioned last week. The only additional singing required of the congregation is the singing of the "Amen" after the prayer. This will be prompted by the priest with the congregation responding using a simple chant of only two different notes. Many of you may already be familiar with this from visiting other parishes.

Another thing you may have experienced elsewhere is the choir being in the loft. Deferring to our music director Alice Barnes' guidance, we will be moving the organ and our dedicated singers into the choir loft. While still using the speaker system, the acoustics of the church building will elevate their sound and allow the choir to support and propel our community worship toward its focal point at the altar, where we participate sacramentally in the Lord's redeeming sacrifice on Calvary through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

At the arrival of the Advent season, we will begin chanting the Entrance Antiphon. In cooperation with the choir, the congregation will sing the antiphon and the verses from Scripture that go with it. At this time we hope to start singing the "Our Father" as well.



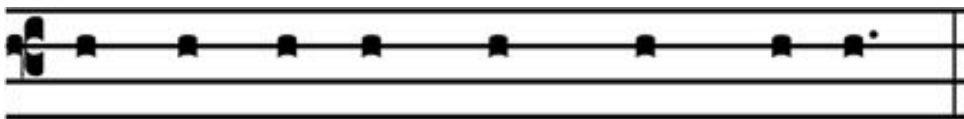
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Next is the Christmas season. During this time, the priest will sing the preface, which is that prayer to God which begins with "The Lord be with you; lift up your hearts; let us give thanks to the Lord our God". This is another of the dialogue parts between priest and people that the Church places at the top of the list of parts of the Mass to always sing.

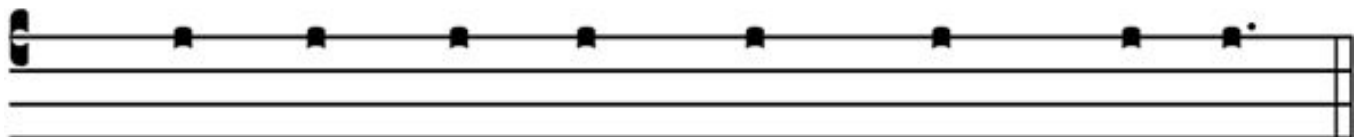
As Christmas blends back into Ordinary Time at the Baptism of the Lord, we hope things will be humming along: the priest chanting the presidential prayers, singing the Preface Dialogue, and the Mass Ordinary. Gradually, we also hope to begin singing the Offertory and Communion antiphons at the proper places.

Then Lent, being a particularly penitential season, will be a fitting time to add singing the Penitential Act after the Sign of the Cross and the Greeting dialogue at the beginning of Mass. As we approach Easter at that time, our steady practice and patience will hopefully pay off for a season of rejoicing with our parish community singing the Mass from Resurrection Sunday to Pentecost.

The last thing we want is for people to be overwhelmed, which is why we are taking things slowly. Everyone wants to be able to appreciate and enter more deeply into the Mass, experiencing the liturgy in all its beauty. While it might take some getting used to, the result should be singing the Mass feeling more reverent and focused. This is ambitious, for sure. But in aiming for the moon we'll have the best chance of at least landing among the stars.



The Fa Clef tells you where "Fa" is.



The Do Clef tells you where "Do" is.