

Hymnody

A Survey for the Catholic
Church Musician

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**Processional Hymn:
"O sanctissima"**



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Introduction

- Hymns are commonplace today, both at EF and OF Masses.
- But some Catholics ask
 - Are hymns a Protestant thing?
 - Do hymns have a place in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass?
 - If not, why not?
 - If so, when and where should hymns be sung?

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Introduction

- These questions can be answered after we study the
 - Definition of hymn
 - History of hymnody

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Introduction

- False Assumptions about hymns
- The U.S. is historically a Protestant country, so American Catholics have ideas about hymns that have been garnered from our generally Protestant culture.
 - False: Hymns are Protestant
 - False: Catholics' knowledge of hymnody is based on their exposure to/knowledge of Protestant hymns.

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What is a Hymn?

- Etymology
 - Hymnos (Greek) - song praising gods or heroes
 - Hymnody – “the singing or composition of hymns”

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What is a Hymn?

- Loose terminology, especially in early Church sources – hymn, psalm, song
- Basic definition
 - A religious song which is
 - Strophic
 - Metered and sometimes rhymed

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What is a Hymn?

- Also described as hymns
 - *Te Deum laudamus* – Sung at Matins
 - *Gloria in excelsis Deo*

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The Hymn in the Western Church

- Strophic Latin hymnody in the Mass
 - Processional hymns
 - *Vexilla Regis prodeunt*
 - *Gloria, laus et honor*
 - *Corpus Christi*
 - Sequences
 - *Victimae paschali laudes*
 - *Veni Sancte Spiritus*

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What is a Hymn?

- St. Augustine (353-430) distinguishes hymns from the other two by saying that they should have these 3 elements.
 - Song
 - Praise
 - God

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A History of Catholic Hymnody

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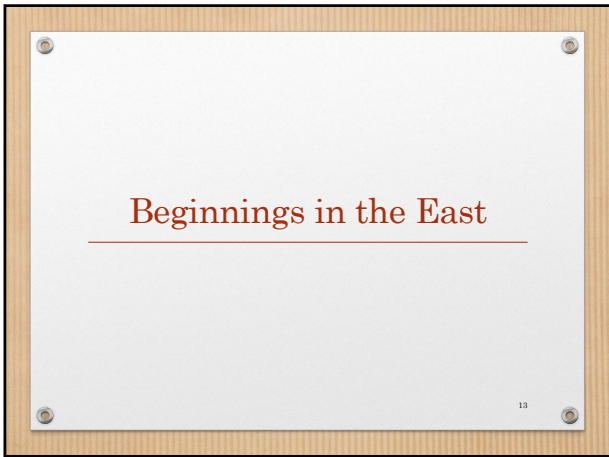
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New Testament

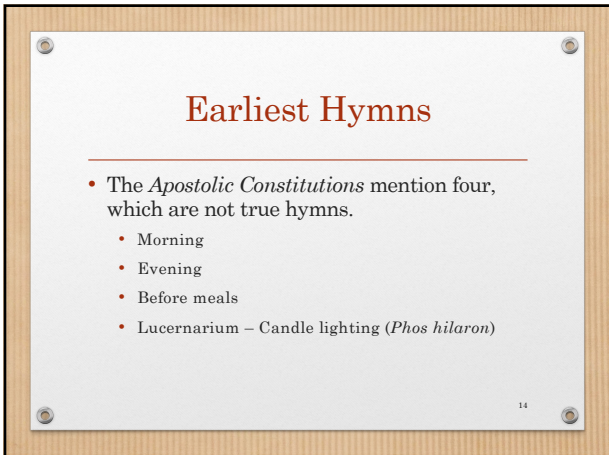
- At the Last Supper
 - Matthew 26: 30
 - Mark 14: 26
 - Possibly the *Hallel* psalms (113-118)
- St. Paul mentions psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.
 - Ephesians 5: 19
 - Colossians 3: 16.

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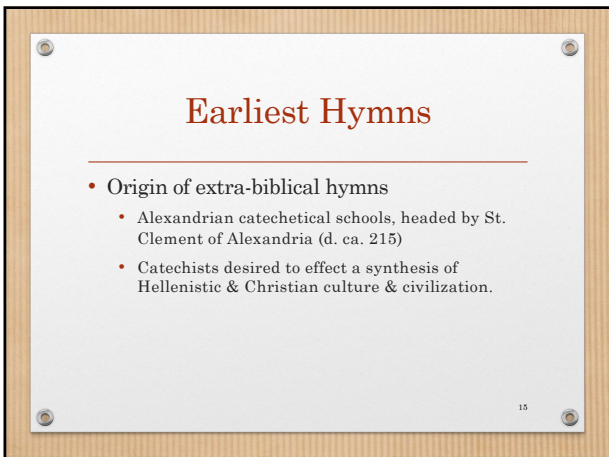
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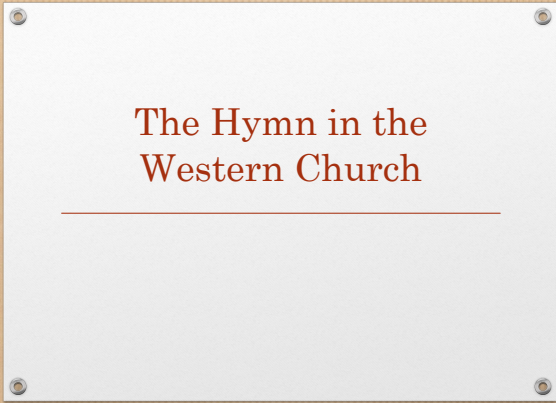
Eastern Hymnody

- Hymns were used to fight heresy
- Saint Ephrem of Syria (ca. 306-373) wrote at least 65 hymns to combat heresies like
 - Docetism
 - Arianism
- He set orthodox lyrics to the tunes of heretical hymns.

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The Hymn in the Western Church



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The Hymn in the Western Church

- Saint Hilary of Poitiers (ca. 310-367)
- Saint Ambrose (ca. 340-970)

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The Hymn in the Western Church

- **St. Hilary of Poitiers (ca. 315-367)**
 - Celebrated 14 Jan (1962) & 13 Jan (1970).
 - Discovered Syrian hymns when he was exiled to Phrygia (ca. 356-360?).
 - Returning to Gaul, he translated some of the Syrian hymns into Latin, & he also wrote some of his own.
 - St. Isidore of Seville considers Hilary to be the 1st Latin hymn writer.
 - Alas, the Gauls did not take to hymns.

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The Hymn in the Western Church

- **St. Ambrose (ca. 340-397)**
 - First to make hymnody viable & popular in the West.
 - St. Augustine described how Ambrose introduced hymn singing during Arian persecutions.
 - The Ambrosian hymn became the model for Western hymnody.
 - 8 strophes, each consisting of 4 lines
 - 8 syllables in each line
 - Now also known as Long Meter (LM)

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The Hymn in the Western Church

- Saint Ambrose is known to be author of five hymn texts.
 - *Aeterne rerum conditor*
 - *Deus creator omnium*
 - *Iam surgit hora tertia*
 - *Iam Christus astra ascenderit*
 - *Veni redemptor gentium*

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The Hymn in the Western Church

- From the start it has featured certain elements.
 - Use of the vernacular
 - Teaching doctrine
 - Sung by the lay faithful

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The Hymn in the Western Church

- 4th century - Western hymn has its defining characteristics
 - Language--Latin
 - Form--Strophic
 - Metered and often rhymed
 - Moving away from classical Latin (quantitative accent) to medieval (qualitative).
 - Manner of performance--alternation of some kind

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An Ambrosian Hymn

- "Veni, Redemptor omnium"
 - This chant hymn is not found in the Roman Breviary
 - It can be found in the Liturgy of the Hours
- Translated by Luther as "Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland" ("Savior of the Nations")
- Can be sung to PUER NOBIS NASCITUR, by Michael Praetorius (1571-1621)
- 1959: Paul Benoit, OSB, adapted the chant melody as "Where charity & love abide"

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The Hymn in the Western Church

- 6th century--*Rule of St. Benedict* specifies singing a hymn at each of the Hours
- The Latin hymn developed mainly within the Divine Office, in a monastic setting.
 - At first sung mostly at Lauds & Vespers.
 - Possibly the choir alternated with soloists.
 - Hymns were arranged according to the liturgical season.

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The Hymn in the Western Church

- 7th century--By the death of St. Gregory the Great (604), the medieval hymn was fully formed.
- Early Medieval hymn writers
 - Saint Venantius Fortunatus (ca. 530-ca. 600) – *Vexilla regis prodeunt*

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The Hymn in the Western Church

- Some hymn writers of the Later Middle Ages
 - Carolingian Renaissance
 - Paul the Deacon (ca. 720s-790s) -*Ut queant laxis*
 - Rabanus Maurus (c780-856) -*Veni Creator spiritus*
 - 12th century
 - St Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) - *Jesu dulcis memoria*
 - Peter Abelard (1079-1142) -Hymn cycle for the liturgical year

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The Hymn in the Western Church

- 13th Century
 - St Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) – *Adoro te devote*
- All of the above are poets
- Hymn melodies exist only in manuscripts of the 11th or 12th century and later.

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The Hymn in the Western Church

- Conventional wisdom says that
 - Martin Luther invented congregational hymn singing.
 - But hymns—whether Latin or vernacular—were sung at Catholic Masses from the Middle Ages.

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The Hymn in the Western Church


- Pre-Reformation Vernacular Hymns at Mass
 - 9th century – Hymn of St. Peter, from Freising
 - Some vernacular hymns are based on Sequences
 - *Veni Sancte Spiritus* = *Nun bitten wir den Heiligen Geist*
 - *Victimae paschali laudes* = *Christ ist erstanden*
 - German version sung after each 2 verses of Latin Sequence (Crailsheimer *Schulordnung*, 1480)

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Sequence to Hymn

- *Victimæ paschali laudes*
- *Christ ist erstanden*



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The Hymn in the Western Church

- Locations for hymns at a medieval Mass
 - After the *Credo*
 - Before or after the sermon
 - After Communion
- But this practice was not common in all churches.
- Hymns were not an integral part of the liturgy, but were merely embellishments.

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The Hymn in the Western Church

- Musical Ecumenism? Protestant hymns in Catholic hymnals – a few examples
 - Michael Vehe hymnal (Halle, 1537) - several
 - Graz hymnal (1602) – Luther's "Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland"
 - Hungarian Catholic psalters – "Ein' feste Burg"

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The Hymn in the Western Church

- Joseph Jungmann, SJ, says that the Counter-Reformation practice of singing a hymn at points in the Mass is evidence of their use prior to the Reformation.
 - Gradual
 - Offertory
 - After the Consecration (“Elevation hymn”?)
 - Communion

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The Hymn in the Western Church

- In France there was also development of vernacular singing.
 - Clément Marot’s 1551 collection of Protestant metrical psalms was also popular with Catholics
 - 1648 – Bishop Godeau of Grasse, publishes the *Paraphrase des Psaumes*.

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The Hymn in the Western Church

- Post-Reformation “Germany”
 - Devotional songs, hymns, & psalms in German
 - The Mainz *Cantual* (1605)
 - German hymns could be sung at a Latin Mass.
 - Especially in place of Proper chants
 - 1700: Hymns as substitute Ordinary chants.

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The Hymn in the Western Church

- By the early 18th century, this had become the *Deutsche Singmesse*.
 - Now, congregational singing was mixed with orchestrally- or organ-accompanied music sung by the choir.
 - Example: Michael Haydn, *Deutsche Singmesse*

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An 18th-Century Catholic Hymn

- “Holy God, we praise Thy Name”
 - Lyrics: *Te Deum laudamus*
 - English translation paraphrased by Clarence Augustus Walworth (1820-1900), alt.
 - Melody: *Katholisches Gesangbuch*, Vienna, 1774
 - Tune Name: GROSSER GOTT (TE DEUM)
 - Meter: 7 8. 7 8. 7 7 with Repeat

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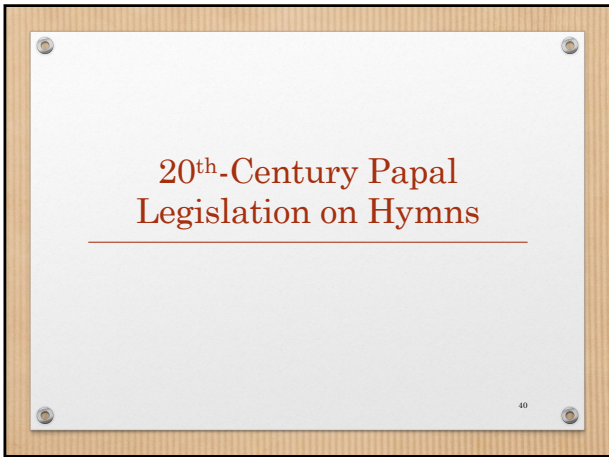
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A 19th-Century Catholic Hymn

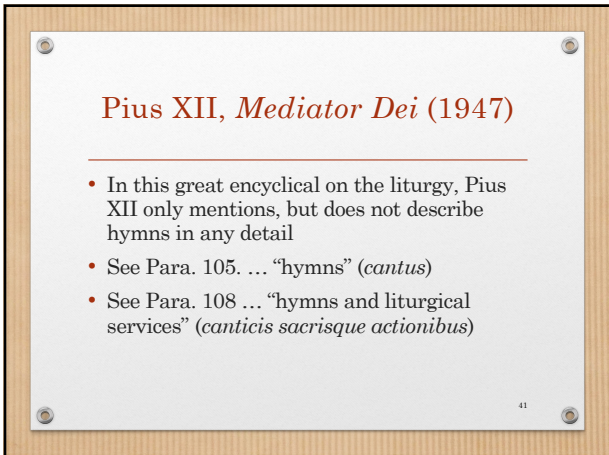
- “Faith of Our Fathers”
 - Lyrics: Frederick W. Faber (1814-63), alt?
 - In memory of the English Catholic martyrs of the English Reformation
 - Melody: Henri Frederick Hemy (1818-88)
 - Tune Name: ST. CATHERINE (TYNEMOUTH)
 - Meter: 8 8. 8 8. 8 8

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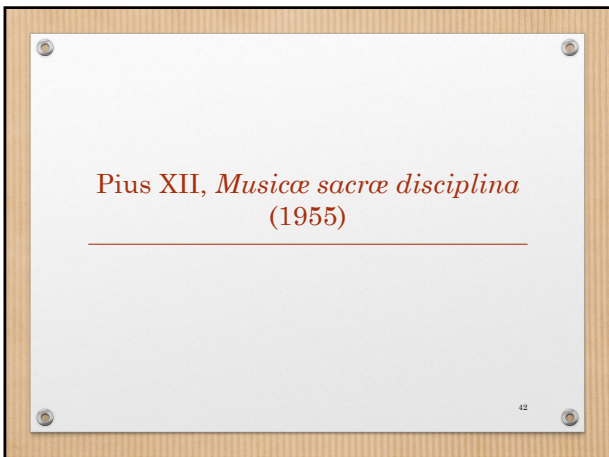
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*Pius XII, **Musicæ sacræ disciplina**
(1955)*

- Pius XII's encyclical on sacred music
 - This was the 3rd reiteration of the Church's fundamentals of sacred music.
 - Pius X, *Tra le sollecitudini* (1903)
 - Pius XI, *Divini cultus* (1928)
 - Pius XII gives a "mini-history" of sacred music.
 - The Holy Father restates Pius X's 3 qualities of sacred music.

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*Pius XII, **Musicæ sacræ disciplina**
(1955)*

- The Holy Father discusses
 - Gregorian chant (Nos. 42-46)
 - **Popular religious songs (No. 47, 62-68)**
 - Sacred polyphony, with reservations (Nos. 53-57)
 - Musical instruments (Nos. 58-61)
 - Music in missionary efforts (Nos. 69-71)
 - *Scholæ*, choirs (Nos. 73-74)
 - Seminarians (Nos. 75-76)

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*Sacred Congregation of Rites,
Musica sacra et sacra liturgia
(1958)*

aka Instruction on Sacred Music

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**Sacred Congregation of Rites,
Musica sacra et sacra liturgia
(1958)**

- **9.** Hymns (*Cantus popularis religiosus*) are songs (*cantus*) which spontaneously arise from the religious impulses with which mankind has been endowed by its Creator. Thus they are universally sung among all peoples.

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**Sacred Congregation of Rites,
Musica sacra et sacra liturgia
(1958)**

- **14. a)** In sung Masses only Latin is to be used. This applies not only to the celebrant, and his ministers, but also to the choir or congregation.
- "However, popular vernacular hymns (*popularia vulgaris sermonis cantica inserantur*) may be sung at the solemn Eucharistic Sacrifice (sung Masses), after the liturgical texts have been sung in Latin, in those places where such a centenary or immemorial custom has obtained. Local ordinaries may permit the continuation of this custom 'if they judge that it cannot prudently be discontinued because of the circumstances of the locality or the people' "

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**Sacred Congregation of Rites,
Musica sacra et sacra liturgia
(1958)**

- **14 b)** At low Mass the faithful who participate directly in the liturgical ceremonies with the celebrant by reciting aloud the parts of the Mass which belong to them must, along with the priest and his server, use Latin exclusively.
- But if, in addition to this direct participation in the liturgy, the faithful wish to add some prayers or popular hymns (*cantus populares*), according to local custom, these may be recited or sung in the vernacular.
- 4-hymn sandwich

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Sacred Congregation of Rites,
Musica sacra et sacra liturgia
(1958)

- **19.** Hymns (*Cantus popularis religiosus*) may be freely used in private devotions. But in liturgical ceremonies the principles laid down in paragraphs 13-15 should be strictly observed.

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Sacred Congregation of Rites,
Musica sacra et sacra liturgia
(1958)

- First, interior participation is extolled.
- **22 b)** ... "Those who are working for the exterior participation of the congregation in the sacred ceremonies are to be warmly commended. This can be accomplished in more than one way. The congregation may answer the words of the priest, as prescribed by the rubrics, or sing hymns (*cantus*), appropriate to the different parts of the Mass, or do both. ...

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Sacred Congregation of Rites,
Musica sacra et sacra liturgia
(1958)

- **30.** The faithful can participate another way at the Eucharistic Sacrifice by saying prayers together or by singing hymns (*cantus*). The prayers and hymns (*cantus*) must be chosen appropriately for the respective parts of the Mass, and as indicated in paragraph 14c.

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Sacred Congregation of Rites,
Musica sacra et sacra liturgia
(1958)

- 33. The faithful may sing hymns (*cantus populares religiosi*) during low Mass, if they are appropriate to the various parts of the mass.
 - 4-sandwich hymns

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Sacred Congregation of Rites,
Musica sacra et sacra liturgia (1958)

- 51. Hymns (*cantus popularis religiosus*) ought to be highly encouraged, and fostered, for this form of music does much to imbue the Christian with a deep religious spirit, and to raise the thoughts of the faithful to the truths of our faith. Hymns (*cantus popularis religiosus*) have their own part to play in all the festive solemnities of Christian life, whether public or of a more personal nature ... But they attain their ideal usefulness in all private devotions, whether conducted outside or inside the church. At times their use is even permitted during liturgical functions, in accord with the directions given above in paragraphs 13-15.

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Sacred Congregation of Rites,
Musica sacra et sacra liturgia
(1958)

- 52. If hymns (*religiosa cantica popularia*) are to attain their purpose, their texts "must conform to the doctrine of the Catholic Church, plainly stating, and explaining it. The vocabulary should be simple, and free of dramatic, and meaningless verbiage. Their tunes, however brief, and easy, should evince a religious dignity and propriety" (*Musica sacra disciplina*, (AAS 48 [1956] 20). Local Ordinaries should carefully see that these ideals are observed.

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Sacred Congregation of Rites,
Musica sacra et sacra liturgia
(1958)

- **53.** All who have the training should be encouraged to compile serviceable collections of these hymns (*cantiones populares religiosas*) which have been handed down either orally or in writing, even the most ancient, and to publish them for the use of the faithful, with the approval of the local Ordinary.

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Sacred Congregation of Rites,
Musica sacra et sacra liturgia (1958)

- **A. Training of the clergy, and people.**
- **104.** Sacred music, and the liturgy are intimately bound together; sacred chant forms an integral part of the liturgy (no. 21), while hymns (*cantus denique religiosus popularis*) are used to a great extent in private devotions, and at times even during liturgical functions themselves (no. 19). ...

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Vatican II
Sacrosanctum Concilium
(1963)

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**Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*
(1963)**

- **24.** Sacred Scripture is of the greatest importance in the celebration of the Liturgy. For it is from Scripture that lessons are read and explained in the homily, and Psalms are sung; the prayers, collects, and liturgical songs (*carmina*) are scriptural in their inspiration and their force, and it is from the Scriptures that actions and signs derive their meaning. Thus, to achieve the restoration, progress, and adaptation of the Sacred Liturgy, it is essential to promote that warm and living love for Scripture to which the venerable tradition of both Eastern and Western rites gives testimony.

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**Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*
(1963)**

- **30.** To promote active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalms, antiphons, and songs (*cantica*), as well as by actions, gestures, and bodily attitudes. And at the proper times all should observe a reverent silence.

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**Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*
(1963)**

- **33.** Although the Sacred Liturgy is above all things the worship of the Divine Majesty, it likewise contains much instruction for the faithful
- **34.** For in the Liturgy God speaks to His people and Christ is still proclaiming His Gospel. And the people reply to God both by song (*cantibus*) and prayer.

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**Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*
(1963)**

- **112.** The musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art. The main reason for this pre-eminence is that, as sacred song united to the words, it forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn Liturgy.
- Holy Scripture, indeed, has bestowed praise upon sacred song¹², and the same may be said of the fathers of the Church and of the Roman pontiffs who in recent times, led by Saint Pius X, have explained more precisely the ministerial function supplied by sacred music in the service of the Lord.

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**Use & Performance of
Hymns**

Final Questions

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Use & Performance of Hymns

- At a *Novus ordo* Mass
 - Processional – along with Entrance antiphon
 - Offertory – after Offertory antiphon
 - Communion – after Communion antiphon
 - Recessional

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Use & Performance of Hymns

- At a Traditional Latin *missa cantata*
 - Processional
 - Recessional
- Strictly speaking, these are not part of the Mass.
- At a Traditional Latin Low Mass
 - As at the *Novus Ordo* Mass

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Use & Performance of Hymns

- Lyrics expressing orthodox Catholic theology are essential.
- Examples
 - Bad – “Ashes,” by Tom Conry, Handout p. 9
 - Bad – “Amazing Grace,” by John Newton, p. 9
 - Good – “Godhead here in hiding,” G.M. Hopkins’s translation of “Adoro te,” by St Thomas Aquinas, Handout p. 10

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Use & Performance of Hymns


- May I use Protestant hymn lyrics or tunes?
 - Catholic lyrics + Protestant tune
 - Protestant lyrics + Catholic tune
 - Protestant lyrics + Protestant tune
- Do the lyrics accord with orthodox Catholic theology?

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A 20th-Century Catholic Hymn

- “To Jesus Christ, our sovereign King”
- Lyrics: Msgr. Martin Hellriegel
- Melody: *Mainz Gesangbuch*, 1870
- Tune Name: CHRISTUS REX (ICH GLAUB’ AN GOTT)



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The End

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