

REVISED  
EDITION

# CHANTING ON OUR BEHALF

RICKY MANALO, CSP



A PASTORAL GUIDE TO PRESIDENTIAL CHANTING  
AND MUSICAL LEADERSHIP

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*Chanting on Our Behalf: A Pastoral Guide to Presidential Chanting and Musical Leadership, Revised Edition*  
ISBN 978-1-56929-089-7

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Pastoral Press

An imprint of Oregon Catholic Press

5536 NE Hassalo Street

Portland, OR 97213

Phone: 1-800-LITURGY (548-8749)

E-mail: [liturgy@ocp.org](mailto:liturgy@ocp.org)

Website: [ocp.org](http://ocp.org)

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Printed in the United States of America.

Publisher: John J. Limb

Director of Music Development and Outreach: Eric Schumock

Director of Product Development: John Vogler

Music Development Manager: Rick Modlin

Worship Publications Manager: Wade Wisler

E-book Production Team: Robert Koglin, Eddie Osborn, Paul Raspa, Tia Regan

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Cover Art and Posture Drawings: Jean Germano

Recorded, Mixed, and Mastered at Dead Aunt Thelma's Studio, Portland, Oregon

Executive Producer: Kevin Walsh

Producer: Rev. Ricky Manalo, CSP

Sound Engineer: Mike Moore

Presiders: Rev. Mark Wiesner, Kevin Walsh

Assembly: Rev. Ricky Manalo, CSP; Kevin Walsh

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE REVISED EDITION (2015)

### SETTING THE SOCIOCULTURAL CONTEXT FOR PRESIDENTIAL CHANTING

When I was growing up during the 1970s, a book entitled *The Book of Lists* noted that speaking in public was Americans' greatest fear. I often thought singing solo in public should have ranked even higher. My ranking of fears was mostly due to my perception of our culture's expectations of musical performance. Only a small fraction of the world's population is actually tone deaf; the majority of us are quite capable of carrying a tune. In my experience, whenever I meet someone who insists that he or she is incapable of singing, the reasons usually center around a lack of vocal training or a lack of self-confidence.

In U.S. mainstream culture, we prize the sound of professionally trained singers "up on stage" and we continually seek to find the next reality TV singing star. Thus, it is no wonder that most people feel intimidated when singing in front of others. This is not to underestimate the value and sheer enjoyment of listening to finely trained voices. Having been trained in composition and piano at a music conservatory, I continue to appreciate the vast richness of the western European classical tradition, like when I attend an opera. I simply ask whether the set of standards we use in the concert hall may actually be inhibiting further development of vocal music making in other areas of our mainstream culture, especially in our liturgical celebra-

tions. Are we quietly judging each other's voices when we sing during eucharistic celebrations? If so, by whose standards do we make these judgments?

After viewing the video *The Dancing Church*,<sup>1</sup> which explores the use of gestured movement in liturgical worship in Africa, Latin America, and the South Pacific, it is hard to ignore the vocal chants that accompany the ritual actions. The criteria for vocal performance in many liturgies are a means for ritual expression. Yet we do not have to travel to Africa to experience this phenomenon. In our own culture, the singing of "Happy Birthday to You" is perhaps the closest experience of communal singing initiated by ritual spontaneity. During these moments it continues to amaze me how everybody joins in the singing of this song regardless of vocal quality. By the end of the song, not only do the people who claim to be tone deaf sing aloud, but they can also miraculously culminate in three-part or even four-part harmony.

Ritual expression through vocal and bodily symbols without the pressure of being evaluated or judged with unreasonably high standards invites and promotes better ritual participation, regardless of the quality of the voice. This is distinct from the competency of musical leadership. I make this distinction between the quality of the voice and the competency of musical leadership by taking the lead from *The Milwaukee Symposia for Church Composers* when it states the following:

Determining what is "good musical leadership" requires a culturally conditioned judgment. What might be good or appropriate musical leadership in one community, or with one kind of music, or in one cultural context, might not translate well into another. However, certain principles would seem to undergird effective and appropriate pastoral-musical leadership in any situation. One of these is musical competency. Music leaders must

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1 Thomas A. Kane, CSP, *The Dancing Church: Video Impressions of the Church in Africa* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1990).

be skilled, artistically competent and secure in the exercise of their art. This is essential if the community is to be led ably in their song. Musical competency includes the ability to elicit a response from the assembly.<sup>2</sup>

The more recent statement *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship* (STL) balances well the importance of sung participation by the priest and his musical skill:

The importance of the priest's participation in the Liturgy, especially by singing, cannot be overemphasized. The priest sings the presidential prayers and dialogues of the Liturgy according to his capabilities,<sup>3</sup> and he encourages sung participation in the Liturgy by his own example, joining in the congregational song. "If, however...the priest or minister does not possess a voice suitable for the proper execution of the singing, he can render without singing one or more of the more difficult parts which concern him, reciting them in a loud and distinct voice. However, this must not be done merely for the convenience of the priest or minister" (19).<sup>4</sup>

In light of these conditions in US mainstream culture, and with the view of acknowledging one's musical capabilities and limits, I hope this resource moves us forward in the area of presidential musical leadership.

I present my first rule: Relax. Become comfortable with your own voice and learn to embrace it. Do not set yourself up for unnecessary anxiety attacks by worrying about what will become of your vocal skills or about how the quality of your

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2 *The Milwaukee Symposia for Church Composers: A Ten-Year Report* (Archdiocese of Milwaukee, 1992), no. 65.

3 STL states: "The documents of the post-conciliar liturgical renewal repeatedly commend the ideal of a sung Liturgy with sung dialogues between priest and people, such as *The Lord be with you*, the acclamation at the end of the Gospel, and the introductory dialogue to the Eucharistic Prayer. See MS [*Musicam Sacram*], nos. 29–31; *Lectionary for Mass (Second Typical Edition): Introduction* (LFM) (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1998), no. 17; GIRM, no. 40."

4 STL references the 1967 document, *Musicam Sacram*, no. 8.

voice may improve. That remains to be seen, or heard, in this case. Such anxieties will only impede your growth. Trust in the gifts you do have, and by the end of this book you will be pleasantly surprised.

## AN OVERVIEW

Once we change our attitude about singing in public, we can begin to understand the methodology of this resource. The goal is to provide a step-by-step course for liturgical presiders who wish to learn the vocal skills necessary for presidential chanting and leadership. Specifically, these lessons teach us how to set any printed prayer text to music, as distinct from chanting prayer texts that have already been set and musically notated.<sup>5</sup>

There are a few advantages to the approach of this revised edition. First, my pedagogical approach is very simple as it involves the learning of just six notes and the ability to recognize the liturgical, grammatical, and ritual flow of a prayer text. For those interested in learning how to chant the actual musical settings in the *Roman Missal*, I encourage you to consider the fine resources that are currently available.<sup>6</sup> Second, my approach allows for more freedom to improvise, embellish, and adapt one's own interpretation of prayer texts, rather than someone else's interpretation and fixed notated setting. And third, this resource is spread out to ten lessons and eighteen exercises and could be integrated seamlessly into any clergy formation course in seminaries or theological institutions within the scope of one semester, an

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5 Since the original 2003 edition focused on the notated scores that were in the *Sacramentary*, less attention was given to developing the skills for chanting any printed prayer text. Based on my experience and the feedback I have received over the years, the majority of my students were more interested in obtaining the latter skill.

6 Resources include Michael S. Driscoll and J. Michael Joncas, *The Order of Mass: A Roman Missal Study Edition and Workbook* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publication, 2011); Daniel Merz, SLD, and Marcel Rooney, OSB, *Essential Presidential Prayers and Texts: A Roman Missal Study Edition and Workbook* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publication, 2011); and the accompanying CDs to *Learning the Chants of the Missal (Part I: The Order of Mass and Part II: Essential Presidential Prayers and Texts)* chanted by J. Michael Joncas.

intercession course, or even a weekend seminar. For those already ordained, you may wish to use this resource to complete your own mini course on the subject.

As noted, I have divided this resource into ten lessons and eighteen exercises. Lesson One introduces the music basics for chanting. It also includes a short section on how to play the six notes on a keyboard. Lesson Two presents the basic vocal skills needed for presidential chanting. Lesson Three presents the heart of my method (musical homonyms) as we learn the first two (out of six) notes. These two notes are the most important notes to learn as they form the tonal frame for all other notes. The next set of three notes (neighbor notes) is introduced in Lesson Four. Since we are venturing into the chanting of prayer texts, Lesson Five presents a basic introduction to the theological-liturgical, grammatical, and ritual components of presidential prayer texts. The next lesson, Lesson Six, addresses the skill of coordinating the chanted notes with the accented syllables or words of a prayer text. In Lesson Seven, we learn about the sixth and last note in our sequence, followed by Lesson Eight, which brings together all six notes for the goal of chanting the prefaces. I end that lesson with some thoughts about the chanting of eucharistic prayers, the heart of our liturgical celebrations. Then, in Lesson Nine, I teach the skill of chanting a presidential prayer text that uses the notes from a previous musical event that had just been sung by the assembly. Finally, Lesson Ten addresses the integration of non-musical skills and other areas of concern that are not necessarily musical but may affect the musical leadership of presidential prayer, for example, acoustics, the use of microphones, and ongoing evaluation and feedback.

The performance skills you will be learning in this resource are not about performance in the sense of our western understanding of entertainment; the skills relate to how the coordination of our actions during the ministry of presidential chanting affects our ministerial style, overall communication, and communal worship. As you

read through this resource and practice the exercises, keep one thought in mind: the goal is not to one day perform like an opera singer but, rather, to become a better leader of prayer.

Ricky Manalo, CSP  
Santa Clara University  
Santa Clara, California  
July 11, 2014  
Memorial of Saint Benedict, Abbot

## LESSON SIX:

# PREPARE YE THE WAY OF THE TEXT

If you have been doing the exercises in this lesson, you have probably been accenting certain syllables or words based on the natural speech pattern of the English language. Let's take this one step further. At the beginning stages of learning how to chant a printed text, it helps to place particular markings on the actual text as a guide. In traditional chant notation this is known as pointing.

Appendix of the *Roman Missal* provides an approach to pointing that places marks above the notes. The purpose of these marks is to cue the presider when to change notes; a grave mark ( ` ) signals a lower note and an acute mark ( ´ ) signals a higher note. With time and disciplined practice, one could learn the approach that is found in the *Roman Missal*.

The approach to pointing in this resource, however, provides a simpler and, in my opinion, more practical method. All you need to do is circle or underline (with a pencil!) the accented syllable of the text. I prefer to mark *only those syllables or words* that need vocal emphasis. In this way, our eyes never lose sight of the natural flow, pace, and rhythm of the phrase, sentence, or section. Vocal improvisation of

the chanted text emerges around these accented syllables.

## PART ONE: ACCENTING THE RIGHT SYLLABLE

Take a look at the following text of the opening greeting—for now, we will not include the assembly assent, “Amen”—and ask yourself, where do the natural accents occur?

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

In my interpretation, I came up with three accents:

In the name of the **Fa**-ther, and of the **So**n, and of the Holy **Spir**-it.

After framing quietly to yourself (humming C-3 and A-1), chant this entire sentence out loud on one note, either C-3 or A-1. Even though you are chanting only one note, make sure to emphasize the accented syllables or words; chant as if you are speaking naturally. Next, chant the entire sentence again on either C-3 or A-1, but this time move up one note at the end of the sentence on “Spir-” and come back down on “it.”

C-3

D-4 C-3

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy **Spir**-it.

Listen 

or

A-1

B-2 A-1

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy **Spir**-it.

Listen 

Finally, chant the sentence one more time on A-1, but this time, go down to G-7 on the word “Holy” and back up to A-1 on “Spirit.”

A-1

G-7 A-1

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Hòly **Spir-it**.

Listen 

Notice here that with the A-1 and G-7 combination, there is a more natural tendency to move down to G-7 on the word that *precedes* the accented syllable (in this case “Hòly”). In this option, if I am marking the text with a pencil, I prefer to draw a grave accent over the preceding word while still keeping the stronger syllable underlined or circled. In my workshops and seminars on presidential chanting, I have seen students who also prefer to indicate syllables or words that move upward by placing an acute accent (´) over the syllables or words: e.g., In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Hòly **Spir-it**. The suggestions in this lesson keep the number of markings as simple as possible by (1) using the underline (or circle) alone to indicate a strong accented syllable or word that moves up, and (2) a grave accent (˘) that precedes an accented syllable or word, thus indicating a downward movement. There is no right or wrong method. In fact, I encourage all students to experiment and adapt my suggestions to their specific needs.

Since you have learned five notes, there are a number of combinations one could use for more elaborate interpretations of this line. Remember: there is no right or wrong combination, and as you accent the intended syllable or word based on your own interpretation.

The following are three possible settings. As a further aid, I include the musical notation after this set of texts.

### EXAMPLE ONE

C-3

D-4 C-3

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy **Spir-it**.

Listen 

## EXAMPLE TWO

A-1

G-7 A-1

G-7 A-1

In the name of the Father, and of the **Son**, and of the Hòly **Spirit**.

Listen 

## EXAMPLE THREE

C-3

A-1 C-3

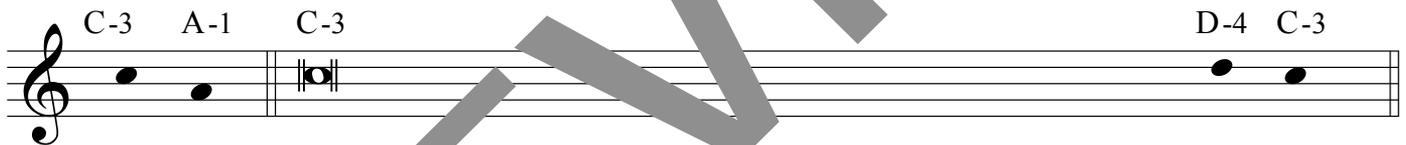
D-4 C-3

In the name of the Father, and of the **Son**, and of the Hòly **Spirit**.

Listen 

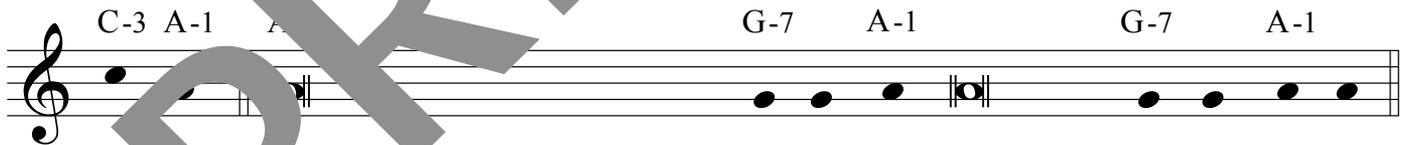
### Example One

*Teasing Chant Homonym*



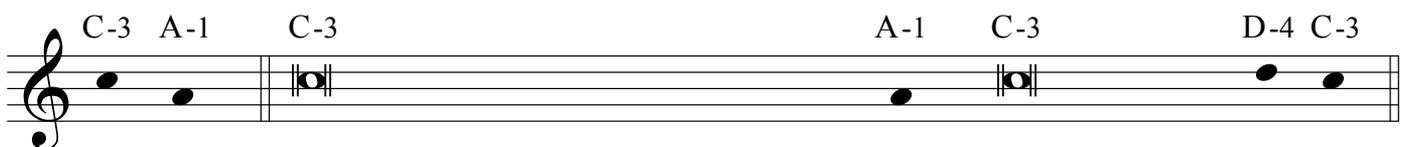
[Hmm...] In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spir - it.

### Example Two



[Hmm...] In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Ho - ly Spir-it.

### Example Three



[Hmm...] In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spir - it.

## PART TWO: THE ASSEMBLY ASSENT

There are three musical settings of the “Amen” assemblies may sing at the end of presidential prayers.

### Assembly Assent One: The Last Note of the Presider

*Teasing Chant Homonym*

Musical notation for Assembly Assent One on A-1. The staff shows a treble clef with notes on the lines A-1, G-7, A-1, G-4, A-1, and A-1. Chord symbols C-3, A-1, A-1, G-7, A-1, G-4, A-1, and A-1 are placed above the notes. The notation includes a double bar line and repeat signs.

[Hmm...] In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. A-men.

Musical notation for Assembly Assent One on C-3. The staff shows a treble clef with notes on the lines C-3, C-3, D-4, C-3, and C-3. Chord symbols C-3, A-1, C-3, D-4, C-3, and C-3 are placed above the notes. The notation includes a double bar line and repeat signs.

[Hmm...] In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. A-men.

[Listen](#) Assembly Assent One on A-1

[Listen](#) Assembly Assent One on C-3

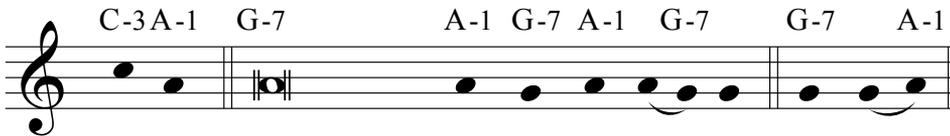
### Assembly Assent Two: C-3

Musical notation for Assembly Assent Two on C-3. The staff shows a treble clef with notes on the lines C-3, A-1, C-3, A-1, C-3, A-1, and C-3. Chord symbols C-3, A-1, C-3, A-1, C-3, A-1, and C-3 are placed above the notes. The notation includes a double bar line and repeat signs.

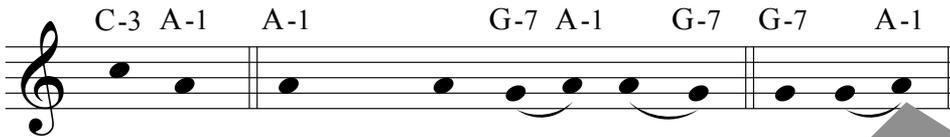
[Hmm...] In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. A-men.

[Listen](#) Assembly Assent Two on C-3

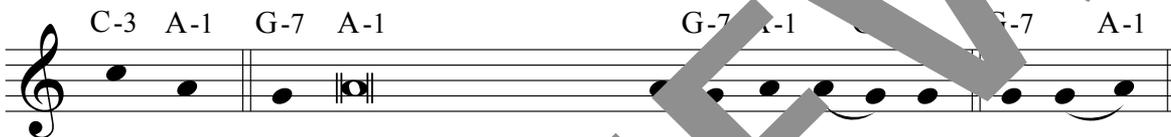
### Assembly Assent Three: G-7 to A-1



[Hmm...] one God for ev - er and ev - er. A-men.



[Hmm...] Through Christ our Lord. A-men.



[Hmm...] Who lives and reigns for ev - er and ev - er. A - men.

[Listen](#) One God

[Listen](#) Through Christ

[Listen](#) Who Lives

In the first setting, the assembly simply takes the last note that the presider chanted and responds on a single note. The second setting is also common as it involves the use of an interval of C-3 to A-1. In my experience, most assemblies will naturally sing the higher note (in this case, C-3) no matter what note the presider sings last. This is due to the prominence of the reciting tone (C-3), the note on which the majority of the prayer text is chanted. Finally, the third setting has the assembly chanting first on G-7 and then moving up to A-1. Note that the syllable “-men” is chanted on two notes. This setting is found in Appendix I of the *Roman Missal*.

I prefer the first or second settings simply because I believe it is easier for the assembly to sing one tone. This is not to say there is anything wrong with the third setting. Here again, what is important is ritual consistency. Whatever tones

you choose for the assembly's "Amen," be consistent whenever you preside. The assembly needs to develop ritual repetition of assenting to their prayers. The worst thing to do is interchange their assents between the first, second, or third examples because this sends a confusing message to the assembly. They need to own their assent with full voice.

## EXERCISE 13

Chant the following prayer texts (taken from Lesson Five, Exercise 12) using only two to four notes. Remember, there are no right or wrong combinations.

If you have not done so already, analyze the following prayer texts using the three questions outlined in Lesson Five. Next, mark up the texts. Underline or circle the syllable or word at the end of a phrase or section that you wish to emphasize, based on its natural accent. There are a number of ways you could vocally accent these syllables by moving either up or down. For example, if you wish to use the G-7 and A-1 combination at any time, place a grave accent ( ` ) over the preceding syllable(s) or word(s) before the accented syllable. Finally, remember to keep in mind how you will be conducting the prayer based on the type of assembly assent you choose. The source and page number (when possible) for each prayer is included so you can easily locate and photocopy the prayers for use in this exercise.

### CLOSING PRAYER FOR MORNING PRAYER OF THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

*The Liturgy of the Hours*, vol. I, p. 146

All-powerful God,

increase our strength of will for doing good

that Christ may find an eager welcome at this coming

and call us to his side in the kingdom of heaven,

where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,

one God, for ever and ever.

## CLOSING PRAYER FOR EVENING PRAYER FOR THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

*The Liturgy of the Hours, vol. I, p. 643*

Almighty, eternal God,  
when the Spirit descended upon Jesus  
at his baptism in the Jordan,  
you revealed him as your own beloved Son.  
Keep us, your children born of water and Spirit,  
faithful to our calling.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

## PRAYER OVER THE PEOPLE FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

*Roman Missal*

Bless your faithful in prayer, O Lord,  
with a blessing that endures forever,  
and keep them faithful  
to the Gospel of your Only Begotten Son,  
so that they may always desire and at last attain  
that glory whose beauty he showed in his own Body,  
to the amazement of his Apostles.  
Through Christ our Lord.

## CLOSING PRAYER FOR MORNING PRAYER OF HOLY SATURDAY

*The Liturgy of the Hours, vol. II, p. 509*

All-powerful and ever-living God,  
your only Son went down among the dead  
and rose again in glory.  
In your goodness  
raise up your faithful people,  
buried with him in baptism,  
to be one with him  
in the eternal life of heaven,  
where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

## SOLEMN BLESSING FOR EASTER TIME

*Roman Missal*

May God, who by the Resurrection of his Only Begotten Son  
was pleased to confer on us  
the gift of redemption and of adoption,  
give you gladness by his blessing.  
May he, by whose redeeming work  
you have received the gift of everlasting freedom,  
make you heirs to the eternal inheritance.  
And may you, who have already risen with Christ  
in Baptism through faith,  
by living in a right manner on this earth,

be united with him in the homeland of heaven.

And may the blessing of almighty God,

the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit,

come down on you and remain with you for ever.

PREVIEW