Annotated Bibliography of Musical Resources for the Roman Catholic Liturgy

Core Books for the Roman Liturgy

The Roman Missal: The present English version is commonly referred to as the Sacramentary though with the new translation of the third edition, it seems preferable to refer to it as the English Translation of the Roman Missal. This book contains the complete texts of the Mass with the exception of the scripture readings, which are contained in the Lectionary. This is the book from which the presider reads all the prayers and other presidential texts. In the appendix of the current Sacramentary there are example intercessions as well as musical settings and formulas for some of the presidential prayers. The forthcoming new translation of the third edition promises to be more comprehensive in its musical offerings. It is interesting to note that the Entrance and Communion Antiphons found in the Missal/Sacramentary are not the same antiphons found in the Roman Gradual (though sometimes there are the same or at least similar). Most missalettes reprint the antiphon found in the Missal rather than the Gradual.

General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM): This document is the manual for how to properly celebrate Mass. Practically every detail of the Mass is covered. It covers all the parts of the Mass and outlines what music is appropriate for the various parts. This should be every musician’s/liturgist’s first “go to” resource. It is found as a preface to the Roman Missal/Sacramentary. However, as with most liturgy documents it is published separately both on its own as well as part of a collection. It is also available for free on the USCCB website.

General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours: This is the counterpart of the GIRM. What GIRM is for the Mass, the GILH is to the Liturgy of the Hours. Unless your parish celebrates the Liturgy of the Hours, you may not need to rely on it much, but it does offer much perspective on the church calendar and the ranking of the various types of feasts.

Ordo (The Order of Prayer in the Liturgy of the Hours and Celebration of the Eucharist): This compendium basically tells you how to navigate the other books. There is an entry for every day of the year, which gives the celebration of the day and the liturgical rank. It indicates what kind of Mass can be celebrated (funerals, ritual/vigils, or if one is restricted to the Mass of the Day). For the Liturgy of the Hours, it indicates which part of the Psalter to use. For Mass, it gives the readings of the day including the lectionary number, and what other elements are to be included (like the Gloria and Creed). Be sure to look at the key to abbreviations as they are used extensively throughout. When in doubt, check the Ordo.

Liturgical Calendar Update: An annual publication available on the Office of Worship and Liturgical Music section of the Diocesan website that provides a summary of the Ordo as it applies to our Diocese. For example: Our Lady of the Rosary (Oct. 7) is ranked as a memorial for the Universal Church, but in our Diocese, since it is the patronal feast of our Cathedral it is ranked as a Feast. It is further ranked as a Solemnity at the Cathedral Church.

Lectionary for Mass: The collected scripture readings for the Mass. It is available in various editions, but most often as a multi-volume set divided by weekdays and Sundays/Feasts as well as liturgical year (e.g. Sundays and Feasts year B, Weekdays Year II, etc.). The introduction to the Lectionary for Mass is another must-read for those who plan liturgies. Be sure to explore the vigil and votive Masses as well as Masses for various needs and occasions when planning “special” liturgies.

The Psalter: The book of 150 Hebrew Psalms as found in the Bible. The term can also be used to describe any book or portion of a book that contains psalmody—either in its entirety or in part—and in translation or paraphrased or metrical form. For example, most Catholic Hymnals have a section dedicated to psalmody. Likewise a breviary or section of the breviary may be called the Psalter. The Psalter is the traditional hymnal of the Church. As of yet there is not an official English translation for Liturgical use though one is in preparation. The Grail and the NAB Lectionary are two examples of different Psalter translations.

Breviary: [Lit. an abridgement] A single volume book that is either an abridgement of or a selection from a larger multi-volume collection of prayers from the Divine Office (Liturgy of the Hours). This allows one to carry the prayer book when traveling. Christian Prayer and the Mundelein Psalter are both examples.
Antiphonary: A book containing all the antiphons for the Divine Office with the exception of Matins (aka, nocturne or vigils). Both monastic and Roman versions exist. Often published as a multi-volume work, the revised antiphonary is still in preparation, though certain sections have been released.

Responsory: Historically, a book containing all the responsories and antiphons for Matins, published separately due to the length. However, no such book for contemporary use seems to exist.

Chant Resources
These are excerpted from http://www.npm.org/Sections/Chant/resources.htm. The website lists additional resources for the Office, learning about chant and Latin pronunciation. Listed here are the major books that are frequently referred to in Church Documents. Most of these books, which are published by Solesmes, are available through GIA Publications and Paraclete Press.

Iubilate Deo [sometimes spelled Jubilato Deo] ("Shout to God"), Libreria Editrice Vaticana, expanded edition, 1987. The entire order of Mass for congregational singing in Latin, including all the responses and some settings of the Ordinary, plus a few other miscellaneous chants. The idealistic wish of Pope Paul VI was that this would become the core repertoire known by Catholic congregations around the world.

Kyriale Simplex ("simple Kyriale"), Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1965. A kyriale is a collection of Mass ordinaries. An interesting collection of Mass ordinaries, astutely drawn from non-Roman traditions of Latin chant (e.g., Mozarabic, Ambrosian) to provide the most singable congregational Mass settings.

Graduale Romanum ("Roman gradual"), Solesmes, 1974. A large book of Mass propers: including the Introit/Entrance, Offertory and Communion Antiphons, the Gradual (hence the name of the book), Alleluia etc. Also includes is a complete Kyriale or collection of Mass ordinaries (Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus Dei). There is no official English translation or equivalent to this book.

Gregorian Missal for Sundays, Solesmes, 1990. English translations next to each Latin chant, excerpted from the Graduale Romanum to include all the Sundays and feast days. Other liturgical texts (e.g. presidential prayers, Eucharistic prayers) are also included in English.

Graduale Triplex ("triple gradual"), Solesmes, 1979. Identical to the 1974 Graduale Romanum, but with early lineless neumes written in above and below each chant melody (hence the "triple" in the title, with a total of three notations for each melody). A book for specialists, but some study of it will be helpful to understand how to interpret and convey the Latin text in chants of all levels of difficulty.

Graduale Simplex ("simple gradual"), Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1975. Although intended for congregations, the scope of this collection and the fact that it is entirely in Latin makes it rather unusable for most congregations. In practical use, a handy fall-back when the choir is not able to learn the propers from the Graduale Romanum. Easy chants for Mass-entrance, Psalm, Gospel acclamation, offertory, and communion—with an easy antiphon and several pointed Psalm verses, for use at any Mass within a given season. The short, easy antiphons were taken from the Psalm antiphons of the Latin Liturgy of the Hours.

By Flowing Waters: Chant for the Liturgy, by Paul Ford. The Liturgical Press, 1999. This is an unofficial book of English chant for the liturgy, which is essentially a translation of the Simple Gradual.

Actions of the Holy See on Liturgy and Sacred Music - 1903-1974
1. November 22, 1903 - Tra le Sollecitudini (motu proprio) Pope Saint Pius X
2. December 20, 1928 - Divini Cultus (Apostolic Constitution) Pope Pius XI
3. June 29, 1943 - Mystici Corporis (Encyclical) Pope Pius XII
4. November 30, 1947 - Mediator Dei (Encyclical) Pope Pius XII
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6. Easter 1951 - *Easter Vigil restored by Pope Pius XII*
9. September 3, 1958 - Feast of Saint Pius X - Instruction on Sacred Music and Sacred Liturgy Congregation for Rites (*De musica sacra et sacra liturgia*)
11. December 4, 1963 - *Sacrosanctum Concilium* Second Vatican Council (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy)*
12. January 25, 1964 - *Sacram Liturgiam (Moto Proprio)* Pope Paul VI*
13. September 26, 1964 - *Inter oecumenici* (Instruction I on Constitution on Liturgy) Sacred Congregation for Rites
14. March 5, 1967 - *Musicam Sacram* (Instruction on Music) Congregation for Rites*
15. May 4, 1967 - *Tres abhinc annos* (Instruction II on Constitution on Liturgy) Sacred Congregation for Rites
18. April 1974 - Letter to the Bishops on the Minimum Repertoire of Plainchant Congregation for Divine Worship*

Recent Liturgical Music Instruction or Commentary for the USA
1. 1972 Music in Catholic Worship-USCCB
2. 1982 Liturgical Music Today-USCCB
4. 1995 The Snowbird Statement on Catholic Liturgical Music
5. 2003 GIRM revised edition
6. 2007 Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship-USCCB: A revision of MCW-USCCB

Useful Websites:

http://www.adoremus.org/: Society for the Renewal of the Sacred Liturgy is an association of Catholics established on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul 1995, to promote authentic reform of the Liturgy of the Roman Rite. The online Adoremus Bulletin offers extensive commentary on Church issues, particularly liturgy and music. The conservative editorials offer perspective on how the Vatican II reforms have been implemented. This site offers reprints of church documents as well as links to the USCCB and others.

http://musicasacra.com/: Home page for Church Music Association of America. Offers a lot of free chant downloads as well as traditional hymnody.

http://www.usccb.org/: The official website of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Aside from Catholic news articles, you’ll find the daily lectionary readings, the complete NAB version of the Bible, the complete Catechism, as well as church documents. Documents tend to be difficult to find on the site; try using Google or another search engine to locate them.

Other Useful Books on the topic of Liturgical Music


The History of American Catholic Hymnals Since Vatican II. Donald Boccardi, SM. 2001 GIA.