

# Did you know?

## Facts about our Faith & our Church

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### Music in Lent & Silence in the Liturgy



**The season of Lent** is a subdued and contemplative time when we are reminded of Christ's impending sacrifice on the cross, dying for our sins. A time of penitence and reflection, Lent calls not only for our own sacrifices of pleasures and delights of the physical world (*favorite foods, sweets, watching that favorite TV program each week etc.*) but for changes in the norms of the Liturgy as well. Starting on Ash Wednesday, the "Alleluia" and "Gloria" are suspended until Holy Thursday, and the Penitential Rite is not said at the start of MASS. Similarly, the music for the Lenten season adjusts too. Hymn tunes are darker, often in minor keys, texts call our attention to penitence, and the organ becomes quieter, being used only to support the singing of the hymns and responses during the MASS.

In Years past (*pre-Vatican II circa 1962*) beginning with Ash Wednesday the organ was silenced completely until the Gloria was sung at the Easter Vigil, only the human instrument (*the voice*) provided music in the Liturgy through chant and song. Over the course of Lent this year, we will make an effort to return to this tradition. Since 2013 or so, the "Agnus Dei" chant has been chanted in place of the sung "Lamb of God" and following on its success, one more part of the MASS or hymn will be done A Capella until most of the liturgy is unaccompanied until Holy Week & Easter. This is a tradition I intend implement this year, and expand on during Lenten Seasons to come.

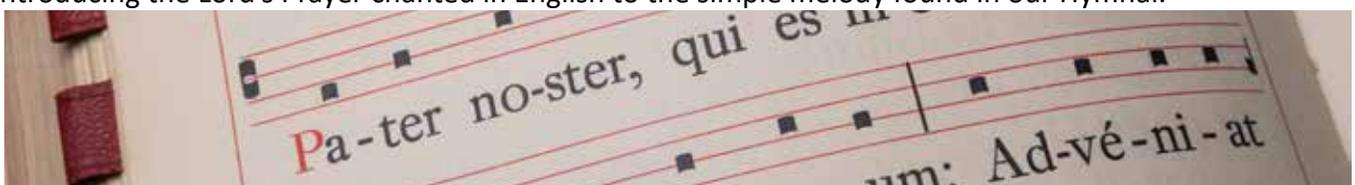
#### Chant & Latin in the Liturgy - (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*)

*41. The main place should be given, all things being equal, to Gregorian chant, as being proper to the Roman Liturgy. Other kinds of sacred music, in particular polyphony, are in no way excluded, provided that they correspond to the spirit of the liturgical action and that they foster the participation of all the faithful.[50]*

*Since the faithful from different countries come together ever more frequently, it is desirable that they know how to sing together at least some parts of the Ordinary of the Mass in Latin, especially the Profession of Faith and the Lord's Prayer, according to the simpler settings.*



During this past year under the restrictions of COVID-19, I have taken a handful of opportunities to use some chant and even a bit of Latin during the Communion procession. I would like to expand on this practice during Lent to bring a greater dignity to the weeks leading up to Easter. The above section from the GIRM mentions the use of Latin in the Ordinary of the MASS such as the Lord's Prayer. While I believe the *Pater noster* would be nice to introduce, I know it may not be received well by many just in terms of comfort in proclaiming this communal prayer. Instead, I would like to begin introducing the Lord's Prayer chanted in English to the simple melody found in our Hymnal.



**Silence in the Liturgy** - During every liturgy throughout the year, times of intentional silence take place and are to be observed by all in attendance. Silence serves to clear the mind and help make it possible to hear God when he speaks. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (*GIRM*) contains a few passages on silence during the Liturgy (and before). Below are two main items in the *GIRM* on silence.

**General Silence:** (*II Different Elements of the MASS*)

*"45. Sacred silence also, as part of the celebration, is to be observed at the designated times.[54] Its nature, however, depends on the moment when it occurs in the different parts of the celebration. For in the Penitential Act and again after the invitation to pray, individuals recollect themselves; whereas after a reading or after the Homily, all meditate briefly on what they have heard; then after Communion, they praise God in their hearts and pray to him.*

*Even before the celebration itself, it is a praiseworthy practice for silence to be observed in the church, in the sacristy, in the vesting room, and in adjacent areas, so that all may dispose themselves to carry out the sacred celebration in a devout and fitting manner."* *GIRM* - Chapter 2, section II.

**During the Liturgy of the Word:** (*III The Individual Parts of the MASS*)

*"56. The Liturgy of the Word is to be celebrated in such a way as to favor meditation, and so any kind of haste such as hinders recollection is clearly to be avoided. In the course of it, brief periods of silence are also appropriate, accommodated to the assembled congregation; by means of these, under the action of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God may be grasped by the heart and a response through prayer may be prepared. It may be appropriate to observe such periods of silence, for example, before the Liturgy of the Word itself begins, after the First and Second Reading, and lastly at the conclusion of the Homily.[59]"* *GIRM* - Chapter 2, section III, part B.

The following take on the importance of **silence during the Easter Triduum** has been published in the Parish Holy Week Program for the past few years. Some of what is written can apply to any Liturgy in the Church Year.

*"The Triduum Liturgy that makes up the end of Holy week, is one of the most beautiful Liturgies handed down from the earliest days of the Church. Beginning Thursday evening and continuing through the Easter Vigil on Saturday, it is the longest Liturgy, simply pausing at the close of each service on Thursday and Friday, and concluding with the close of the Easter Vigil.*

*The continuity of these three days is maintained by the silence that begins with the reposition of the Blessed Sacrament on Thursday night, and is only broken for the spoken or sung parts on the following nights. Every time we re-enter the Church during the Triduum, it should be treated as though you are arriving in the middle of a Liturgy or MASS that is already underway.*

*In order to maintain the sacredness of these holiest days in the Church year, it is asked that all conversation be held until away from the Church and in the parking lot. This will leave the church in respectful silence so those desiring extra time to pray, can do so undisturbed."*

Let us use this Lenten season to begin being mindful of others need for silence when in Church, be it for their silent prayer before the beginning of the Liturgy, or when leaving after Communion (*our current COVID-19 practice has done much to disrupt the necessary silence following the reception of Communion*). Our world is noisy enough these days with constant disruption from phones, emails, messages, news, nonsense, and more. Let our Church and grounds be a place of quiet escape from the outside world for the precious few moments we are here together. There will always be plenty of time to socialize elsewhere without disturbing others.

*"In the silence of the heart God speaks. If you face God in prayer and silence, God will speak to you. Then you will know that you are nothing. It is only when you realize your nothingness, your emptiness, that God can fill you with Himself. Souls of prayer are souls of great silence." - Mother Teresa*

**What would you like to know about? Submit questions or topic suggestions to Kevin Mathieu in person after MASS by email: [kevin@saintaloysiusjude.org](mailto:kevin@saintaloysiusjude.org) or by voicemail: 508-892-9950**

