

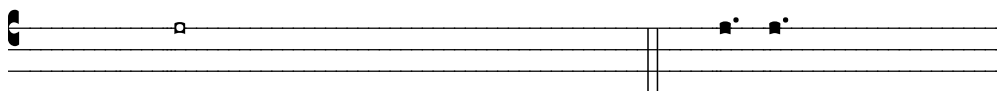
1. Let's start with a familiar example:



The sign at the far left is a clef ("key") whose graphic design swirls around a specific pitch, G. Other pitches are arranged relative to this G on lines and spaces. This approach to writing music comes from a classic way of writing Gregorian chant, which described the same Allelúia thus:

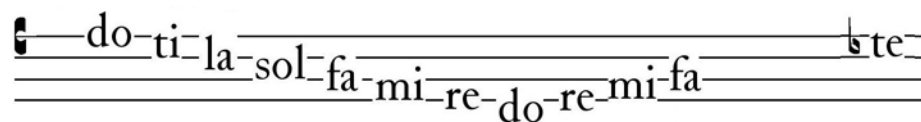


Gregorian notation uses a different clef on a different line, fewer lines overall, and some different symbols. If you know how to read it, a huge world of beautiful melody becomes available to you. Let's start by singing words on a single, unvarying pitch:



... this is singing words to a single pitch. ☒ O-kay.

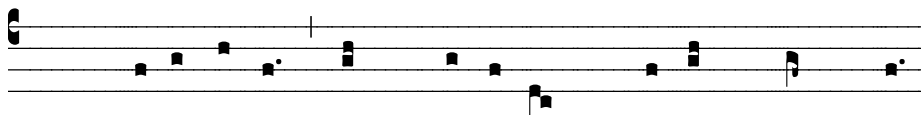
Let's give this single pitch a name: "do." Other pitches, placed on adjacent spaces and lines, have different names (this set of names is called *solfeggio*):



Let's play with these pitches (feel free to make up your own):

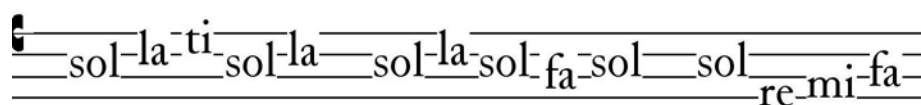


Since we want to sing actual words, let's use graphical signs called 'neumes' to indicate pitches.

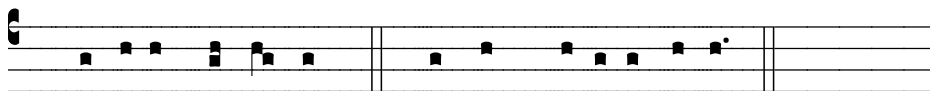


fa sol la fa, sol-la sol fa re-do, fa sol-la sol-fa fa.

A square sign is called a *punctum* and is roughly equivalent to the length of a sung syllable (one beat or “pulse”). When two punctums are stacked, the bottom note is sung first. A *tiny* punctum above or below another one is sung lightly and often indicates where to place a particular vowel or consonant; the larger note is sung first. Dotted punctums are equivalent to roughly two pulses. Those capped with a horizontal bar are warmed and lengthened slightly.

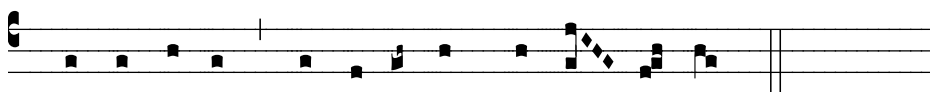


⚡ In nómine Patris, et Fí-li-i, et Spí-ri-tus Sancti. ⚡ Amen. (from the Mass)



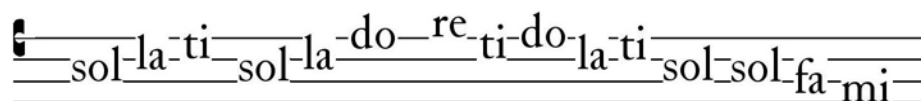
⚡ Dominus vo-bís-cum. ⚡ Et cum spí-ri-tu tu- o. (from the Mass)

Diamond-shaped notes are punctums and sung the same way, perhaps a little more lightly:



Al- le- lú-ia, al- le- lú- ia, al- le- lú- ia. (from Easter Vigil)

Please note that it is very important to sing the notes as if they were connected, or *legato*. Chant should never plod: its rhythm is flexible, nearly conversational, but always conveys a clear sense of pulse and motion. It should sound like a living thing!



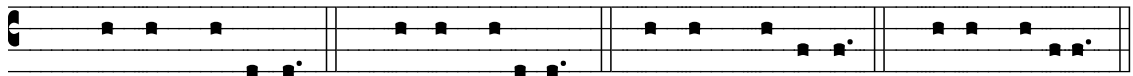
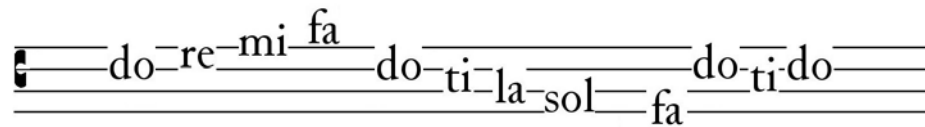
Two or more punctums set close together indicate lengthening: two equal a two-pulse duration, three equal a three-pulse duration, etc.

(from Mass XVI – In Ordinary Time During the Week)

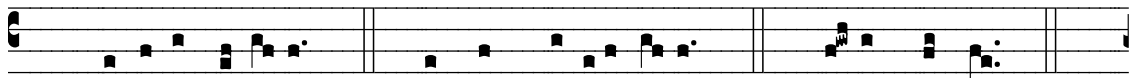
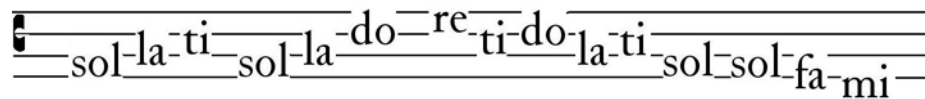


Ký-ri-e \* elé-i-son. Christe e-lé-i-son. Ký-ri-e e-lé-i-son. Ký-ri-e e-lé-ison.

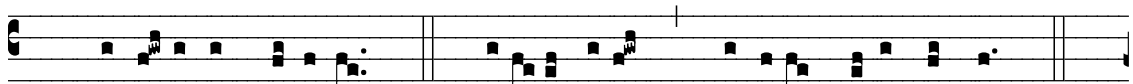
2. The wonderful thing about this way of representing melody is its flexibility: you can move the clef (reference pitch) to other lines. This keeps the pitches within the range of four lines (a comfortable range), saves space, and makes the music easier to read. For example:



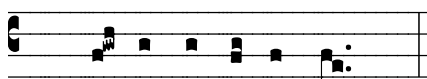
Verbum Dómi-ni. **R̃. De- o gráti- as.** Verbum Dómi-ni. **R̃. De-o gráti-as.**  
 (response to First Reading at Mass) (response to Second Reading at Mass)



**Ṽ. Dóminus vobíscum. R̃. Et cum spí-ritu tu- o. Ṽ. Sursum corda.**

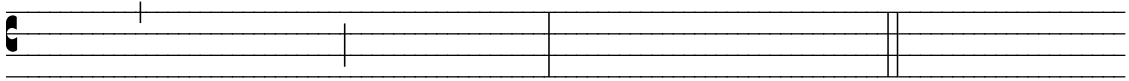


**R̃. Habémus ad Dóminum. Ṽ. Gráti-as agámus Dómino De-o nostro.**

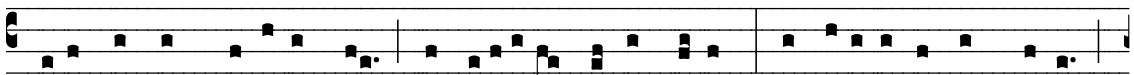


**R̃. Dignum et iustum est.** (Preface to the Eucharistic Prayer – opening dialogue)

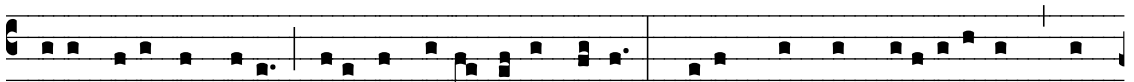
Notice that attached to the word “sursum” (above) are three notes. The middle note with its squiggly lines is called a *quilisma*. Scholarship tells us that this note is shorter in duration than those which precede and follow it, so that we are to sing it lightly, as a passing note. As for pauses for breathing:



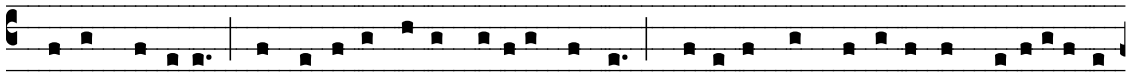
No breath      normal pause      longer pause      a longer pause, or an ending



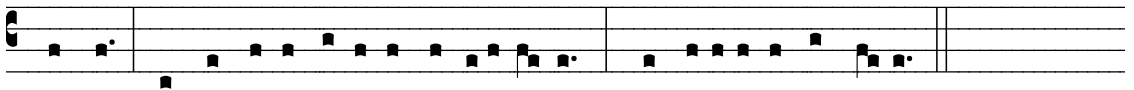
Pater noster, qui es in cælis : sanctificétur nomen tu-um; advéni-at regnum tu-um;



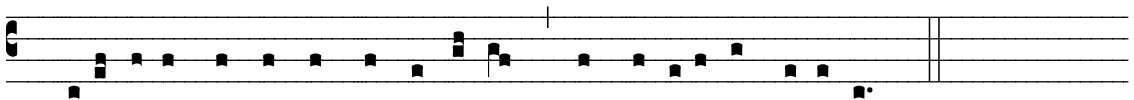
fi-at volúntas tu-a, sicut in cælo, et in terra. Panem nostrum cotidi-ánum da



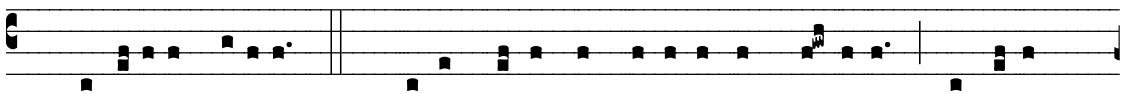
nobis hódie; et dimítte nobis débita nostra, sicut et nos dimíttimus debitóribus



nostris; et ne nos indúcas in tentati-ó-nem; sed líbera nos a ma-lo.



Qui-a tu-um est regnum, et po-téstas, et gló-ri-a in saecu-la.



‡ Mystéri-um fide-i. † Mortem tu-am annunti-ámus, Dómine, et tu-am



resurrecti-ónem confitémur, do-nec véni- as.



℣. Pax Dómini sit semper vo-bís-cum. ℞. Et cum spíri-tu tu-o.

3. You have now been learning the responses of the Mass in the 1970 Missal (the Mass of Vatican II, the “ordinary” form of the Mass). If you look in the actual Missal, you will see that the Mass is one integral prayer that is *sung*. Furthermore, if you see each Sunday Mass in the context of the entire official prayer of the Church (including *The Divine Office*), you can see how the Mass is woven into a massive and inter-related tapestry of a great variety of melodies, from pure *recto tono* singing, to the psalmody and syllabic hymns of the *Office*, from chanted dialogues of Sunday’s Mass to the Mass’s most jubilant and elaborate chants (the Gradual, Alleluia, and Offertory).

For reference, here are all the melodic threads of the Mass (check marks indicate ones you will know):

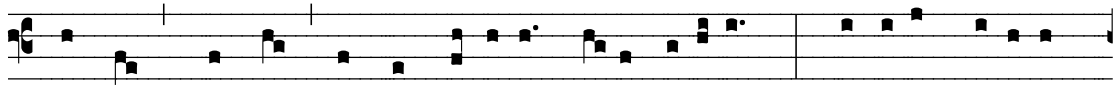
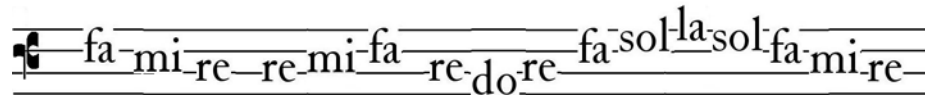
Entrance Antiphon*	Offertory Antiphon*
✓ Sign of the Cross	Prayer over the Gifts
✓ Greeting	Eucharistic Prayer:
Penitential Rite or Sprinkling	✓ - Preface (intro)
✓ Kyrie	✓ - Mysterium fidei
Gloria	- Sanctus
✓ Opening Prayer* and Response	Communion Rite:
First Reading*	✓ - Pater noster
Gradual*	✓ - Quia tuum
Second Reading*	✓ - Pax Domini
✓ Alleluia and Verse*	- Agnus Dei
Gospel*	Communion Antiphon*
(Homily)	Prayer after communion
Profession of Faith/Credo	Concluding dialogue
Prayer of the Faithful*	✓ Dismissal

\* indicates a text that varies, i.e. is ‘proper’ to the day

Notice that even the readings and prayers to the faithful are sung. They are traditionally set to simple melodic formulas that reflect their different natures: prophecy, exhortation, the voice of Christ, rising motion of prayer. They are just as well suited to singing English.

Let's go on to a few more chants and finish learning all there is to know about reading the pitches of square notation.

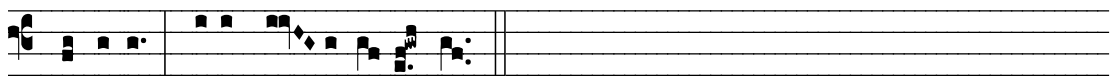
4. Sometimes instead of indicating “do,” the clef will indicate “fa.”



Sanctus, \* Sanctus, Sanctus Dóminus De- us Sába-oth. Ple-ni sunt cæ-li et



ter-ra glóri-a tu-a. Hosánna in excél-sis. Benedíctus qui venit in nó-mi-ne



Dómini. Hosánna in excél-sis.

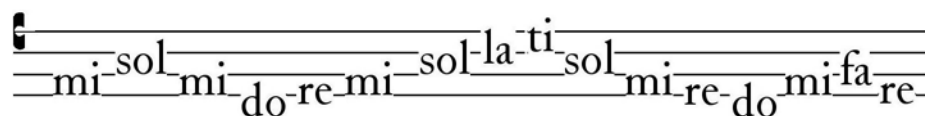
5. Let's return to our original “do” clef:



∩ I-te missa est, al- le- lú- ia, al- le- lú- ia. (*Dismissal*, from the Mass)

Ɀ De- o grá-ti-as, al- le- lú- ia, al- le- lú- ia.

However, let's ensure that we're *reading* the right notes instead of quickly memorizing a tune.



Why? Because a single chant might range around different parts of the staff: sometimes the melody will sound ‘major’ (bright), and sometimes it will sound ‘minor’ (dark). This alternation of sounds can be surprising (and often deliberate), so it’s important to read accurately.



Agnus De- i, \* qui tollis peccáta mun-di : Miséré-re no- bis.



Agnus De-i, \* qui tollis peccáta mundi : Mise-ré-re no- bis.

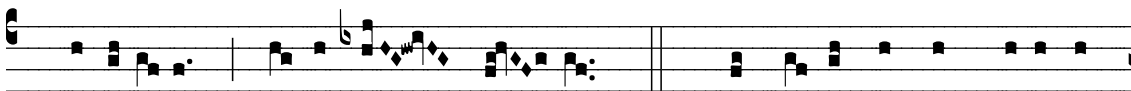


Agnus De- i, \* qui tollis peccáta mun-di : Dona no-bis pa- cem.

6. The last graphical symbol to learn is the *porrectus*, which looks like a swoosh (c.f. ‘aeternum’ below). This is a three-note neume: read it in the order left-down-up.



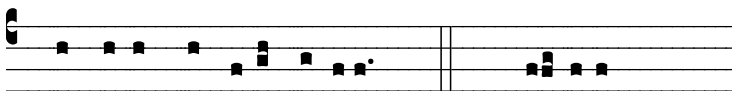
Réqui- em \* æ-tér- nam dó-na e- is Dómi- ne : et lux



perpétu- a lú-ce- at e- is. Ps. Te dé- cet hýmnus, Dé-us in



Sí- on ; et tí-bi reddétur votum in Ie- rúsa-lem. \* ex-áudi orati-ónem me-am,



ad te omnis caro veni-et. *Ant.* Réqui-em.

7. You now know how to read square note notation. Welcome to a new musical world.