

Quick Reference

Before Mass: verify the day's music, cues, and pitch help for the priest.

During Mass: watch continuously, begin promptly, and finish in time for dialogues.

Best principle: the schola serves the liturgy by singing what is required well, not by filling every available second.

Scholas' Guide to Sung Mass

This booklet is a concise adaptation of Scholas' Guide to Sung Mass, designed for practical reference and easier reading.

Formatted by Francis Koerber from *Scholas' Guide to Sung Mass* by the Latin Mass Society of England & Wales.

Purpose

A concise reference for singers and directors serving the Traditional Latin Mass, especially Missa Cantata and Solemn Mass.

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Introduction

Singers unfamiliar with the Traditional Mass may find it helpful to know not only *what* is sung but *when* it is sung. This guide is not a complete book of rubrics; rather, it offers a practical choir-loft view of the Mass and emphasizes the moments that matter most for the schola.

The guide also stresses that the schola is not required to fill every possible moment with music. After the obligatory chant is complete, reverent silence is always acceptable. Optional organ music or additional verses may be used where liturgically fitting and time permits.

General Principles

The 1962 Missal gives the schola real spaces for singing, often while the priest is praying quietly or carrying out ceremonies. Those spaces have limits, however: the schola should always finish in time for the next sung dialogue or required action.

Polyphony Notes & Director Checklist

Polyphonic settings of the Sanctus and Agnus Dei. The priest can wait for a long Kyrie, Gloria, Gradual / Alleluia, or Credo by sitting at the sedilia, but he cannot do this so freely for an overlong Sanctus or Agnus Dei. A long Sanctus can delay the Consecration; a long Agnus Dei can delay Communion of the faithful. This does not forbid such music, but it does mean the Director should exercise judgment and coordinate with the priest.

Common sense in choosing music. Some older settings reflect liturgical circumstances in which the Communion of the faithful did not occur as it commonly does today. As a result, a lengthy Agnus Dei may be awkward in present practice if it prevents the priest from proceeding appropriately.

Director's Checklist

- Confirm whether the **Gloria** and **Credo** are to be sung.
- Make sure the priest knows the Ordinary and Credo settings selected.
- Agree on what pitch prompts, if any, the priest wants and precisely when they should be given.
- Review the response tones so the schola can answer confidently.
- During Mass, keep watch for cues from the priest and servers and end cleanly for dialogues.
- Remember: obligatory text first; reverent silence is better than crowding the liturgy.

End of Mass & Seasonal Anthems

Ite, missa est / Benedicamus Domino

After the Postcommunion prayer, the priest sings either 'Ite, missa est' or, on some occasions, 'Benedicamus Domino'. The schola responds 'Deo gratias'. The blessing follows, then the Last Gospel.

Domine salvam fac

At the principal Sung Mass on Sundays in England and Wales, it is customary to sing the 'Domine salvam fac' after the Last Gospel, when the priest and servers are formed up ready to process out.

Marian anthem

Where customary, the Marian anthem proper to the season follows. It may be intoned by the priest, and the ministers may begin the procession during the singing if necessary.

Seasonal Marian Anthems

- **Alma Redemptoris Mater:** from the 1st Sunday of Advent until Candlemas, inclusive.
- **Ave Regina Caelorum:** from Candlemas until Wednesday of Holy Week.
- **Regina Caeli:** from the end of the Easter Vigil until the eve of Trinity Sunday.
- **Salve Regina:** from Trinity Sunday to the eve of the 1st Sunday of Advent.

Beginning of Mass through Gloria

Asperges / Vidi aquam

At the principal Mass on Sunday, this is intoned by the celebrant after he has arrived at the foot of the altar, knelt, and received the aspergillum. The schola takes up the chant at the asterisk. A sung dialogue and collect follow.

Introit

If there is no Asperges, the Introit may begin as soon as the priest enters. If the Asperges has been sung, the Introit may begin once it and its collect are finished. Some places delay the Introit slightly until the priest is at the foot of the altar; beginning as early as possible is helpful when a long Kyrie follows.

Kyrie

The Kyrie begins immediately after the Introit. If it is long, the priest may go to the sedilia and sit until it ends.

Gloria

When the Gloria is sung, the priest intones it at the center of the altar when ready. He then says the rest quietly and may sit while the schola finishes. The Director should confirm in advance what setting is to be sung and how the priest wishes to receive his opening pitch.

Director's practical note: Before Mass, make sure the priest knows which Mass Ordinary and Credo will be sung, and whether the Gloria and Credo are required that day.

Gradual, Credo, and Offertory

Gradual and Alleluia

The Gradual begins as soon as the Epistle is completed. Be ready, since some Epistles are very short. The same practical point applies whether the chant is a Gradual and Alleluia, a Tract, lesser and greater Alleluias, or a Sequence.

Credo

On days when it is sung, the Credo follows the Gospel or, if there is a sermon, follows the sermon. Watch whether the priest intends to preach. If he does, he will usually place or hand off his maniple before preaching and put it on again before intoning the Credo. Give his starting notes only when he is ready at the center of the altar.

Offertory

After turning to the people for 'Dominus vobiscum' and then singing 'Oremus', the priest begins the Offertory and the schola may begin the Offertory chant. With incense, there is usually ample time for the chant and sometimes for verses or a motet; without incense, time is much shorter, and it is often better to limit the music to the proper chant itself.

When to stop

The priest's 'Orate fratres' signals that the schola's time for singing is nearing its end. The schola must be finished in time for the Preface dialogue that follows.

Sanctus through Communion

Sanctus and Benedictus

At the close of the Preface, one of the servers rings the bell and the priest begins the Sanctus. The schola should sing immediately. In Gregorian chant, the Benedictus follows at once and ordinarily should be completed before the Consecration. In many polyphonic settings, the Benedictus is sung only after the Consecration of the Chalice.

Agnus Dei

After the Canon and the dialogue following the Pater noster, the Agnus Dei begins immediately. It should not delay the priest's turning to the people with the Host and saying 'Ecce Agnus Dei'.

Communion

If schola members are to receive Holy Communion, they should go at the appropriate moment so that the Communion chant can begin as soon as practicable. If they are not communicating at that moment, the Communion antiphon may begin when the priest begins distributing Communion. There is usually sufficient time for the antiphon and, if fitting, psalm verses or another brief piece.

Watch the cues

As distribution concludes, watch the ablutions, the covering of the chalice, and the transfer of the Missal. These are signs that the available musical time is ending. The singing must be complete before the next 'Dominus vobiscum'.