

# HISTORICAL-LITURGICAL ASPECTS OF THE PROCESSIONAL CHANTS OF THE EUCHARIST<sup>1</sup>

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## INTRODUCTION

The Eucharist "which is the fount and apex of the whole Christian life"<sup>3</sup> is a sacrament of unity, where communion is formed between God and man as well as between the faithful among themselves. Without the Eucharist, then, it is impossible to imagine the development of an authentic Christian and ecclesial life. The celebration of the Eucharist, however, has its own "language", which includes the proclamation of the Word of God and ritual acts, symbols, etc. Music is also an essential part of the celebration of the Eucharist, as the 112th article of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, speaks of it: „The musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art. The main reason for this pre-eminence is that, as sacred song united to the words, it forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy.“<sup>4</sup> To know this "musical language of the liturgy" it is essential to know its historical aspects as well as its current legislation, which can open paths for a better understanding of the further development of this "treasure of inestimable value."

The aim of this presentation is to deepen the knowledge of the three sung parts of the Eucharist which are linked to the processions of the faithful: the opening chant (introit), the chant for the preparation of the gifts (cantus ad offertorium) and the chant during Holy Communion (communio). Each of these chants will be discussed in terms of historical context as well as contemporary practice.<sup>5</sup>

## OPENING CHANT (*INTROIT*)

Chants of the first Christian communities, whose basic source were chiefly the psalms, were mainly performed in an antiphonal mode, where two choirs alternated. The first place in which antiphonal chant was used was Antioch. From ancient times, antiphonal singing was characterized by a melody that preceded the singing of the psalm. This melody, which we call an antiphon, usually consisted of a single verse of a psalm or other, usually biblical, text. The singing of the antiphon introduced the melody of the psalm. According to J. A. Jungmann, the antiphon was introduced as the result of a musical requirement: „in order to assure a proper intonation it seems to have been the practice in ancient times to play a short prelude on an

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<sup>3</sup> *Lumen gentium*, art. 11. [https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19641121\\_lumen-gentium\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html) (1.7.2022)

<sup>4</sup> *Sacrosanctum concilium*, art. 112.

[https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19631204\\_sacrosanctum-concilium\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html) (1.7.2022)

<sup>5</sup> *General Instruction of The Roman Missal*. London : Catholic Truth Society and Colloquium, 2005.

instrument. But since musical instruments were forbidden in Christian worship as heathen, the function had to be taken over by the human voice.<sup>6</sup>

The antiphonal chant was introduced in Rome by Pope Celestine I († 432 Rome) as the introit, that is, as the opening chant of the Eucharistic celebration.<sup>7</sup> To Pope Celestine I is ascribed the authorship of the *Liber Pontificalis*, where we find the earliest reference to the singing of the Psalm of the Introit.<sup>8</sup> The entrance antiphon became established in the liturgy especially with the development of the *schola cantorum* in the years 490-530.<sup>9</sup> Prior to this period, the celebration of the Eucharist began with a greeting by the presiding priest and readings, as St. Augustine testifies in his *De Civitate Dei* (XXII, 8, 67), where he describes Easter morning in 426.

As indicated above, the Psalms were the primary source of texts for the chants for the celebration of the Eucharist. The *introitus*, which consisted of an antiphon, a psalm and a doxology, had the function of a processional chant. The duration of the chant depended on the duration of the procession.<sup>10</sup> The singing of the introit was given by the *schola cantorum*, i.e. trained singers, not by the assembled community of the faithful. The *schola*, was divided into two choirs, which alternated after each verse.

A clear testimony to the opening chant is given by the *Ordo Romanus Primus* (OR I), which was compiled during the pontificate of Pope Sergius I (687-701). In this first description of the Pontifical Mass on Easter Sunday, the introitus is clearly the chant of the *schola*. When the Pope was ready to celebrate the Eucharist, he gave a signal to the cleric „fourth of the schola“ (*quartus scholae*), who indicated to the leader of the schola that he could begin to sing. The schola, which was not part of the procession, consisted of men and boys who were lined up in two rows. After the antiphon was introduced, the psalm was sung in an antiphonal manner. When the Pope and his assistants arrived before the altar, he greeted his assistants with the kiss of peace and signaled the schola to sing the doxology, „Glory be to the Father...“ At the words „as it was...“ (*sicut erat*) the deacons rose and venerated the altar. The Pope remained on his knees until the repetition of the verse ("usque ad repetitionem versus"), by which was meant the repetition of the antiphon.<sup>11</sup> Jungmann concludes that in the 7th century Rome did not sing an antiphon after every single verse. The repetition of the antiphon after each verse was probably only introduced under the influence of the Frankish Empire and the Gallican tradition.<sup>12</sup>

The earliest manuscripts of liturgical books for singing in the Roman rite, called Antiphonaries, dating from around 800, contain only the song-text without neums; these books do not indicate any explicit shortening of the psalm. At the turn of the millennium, signs were given for when to end the singing of the Psalms with the Gloria-Patri doxology, or, for example,

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<sup>6</sup> JUNGSMANN, J.A.: *The Mass of the Roman Rite: its origins and development (Missarum sollemnia)*, vol. I. Notre Dame, IN : Ave Maria Press, 2012, p. 321-322.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. JUNGSMANN, J.A.: *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, p. 322.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. RAFFA, V.: *Liturgia eucaristica. Mistagogia della Messa: dalla storia e dalla teologia alla pastorale pratica*. Roma : CLV-Edizioni liturgiche (100), 2003, s. 248.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. RAINOLDI, F.: *Psallite sapienter : Note storico liturgiche e riflessioni pastorali sui canti della messa e della liturgia delle ore*, s. 103.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. RAFFA, V.: *Liturgia eucaristica. Mistagogia della Messa: dalla storia e dalla teologia alla pastorale pratica*, s. 248.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. GRIFFITHS, A. (ed.). *Ordo Romanus Primus. Latin Text and Translation with Introduction and Notes*. Norfolk : Joint Liturgical Studies (JLS) 73, 2012, č. 42-51, s. 38-40.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. JUNGSMANN, J.A.: *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, p. 323.

the second verse with which to end the singing of the Psalms. One of the reasons for the shortening of the texts of the psalms was the gradual development of monophonic singing. The singing of the antiphon itself and its repetition took up no little time in performance.<sup>13</sup> With the gradual shortening of the entrance procession and the introduction of ever more extensive tropes, the psalm was reduced to a single verse, followed by the doxology Gloria Patri and again by the antiphon. The antiphon served only to frame the chant. The Introitus thus gradually began to lose the character of a processional chant.<sup>14</sup>

On the basis of a rubric from the *Ordo Missae* of the papal curia of the 13th century, when the private celebration of the Eucharist was also developing, we learn that the text of the introit was read ("perlegit introitum cum ministris") after the pope had incensed the altar.<sup>15</sup> At this point, then, there is no mention of the original processional character of the opening chant, although William Durand (1230-1296), in his *Rationale* (IV, 6), confirms the ancient tradition of chanting during the celebrant's procession from the sacristy to the altar.<sup>16</sup>

In the 16th century the verses of the psalms and the *Gloria Patri* were often composed polyphonically. In addition to chant, an organ practice of *alternatim* developed as part of the introduction to the celebration of the Eucharist, initially emphasizing the cantus firmus, but later gradually moving away from it. The *Ceremoniale Episcoporum* of 1600 allows the playing of the organ during the entrance procession, when the opening chant began only when the procession arrived at the altar.<sup>17</sup> These aspects also contributed to the fact that only one verse from the psalm of the opening chant was eventually introduced.

Although there were several reforms in liturgy and music after the Council of Trent, it was not until the Second Vatican Council that radical change was brought about. The liturgical reform after the Second Vatican Council required a modification of the order of the Mass and thus also of those parts concerning liturgical singing. The Council placed particular emphasis on the active participation of the faithful in the liturgical celebrations: "The rite of the Mass is to be revised in such a way that the intrinsic nature and purpose of its several parts, as also the connection between them, may be more clearly manifested, and that devout and active participation by the faithful may be more easily achieved."<sup>18</sup> Also The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, in connection with the opening rites, draw attention to the assembled community, saying that the purpose of the introductory rites "is to ensure that the faithful, who come together as one, establish communion and dispose themselves to listen properly to God's word and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. JUNGSMANN, J.A.: *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, p. 323.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. RAINOLDI, F.: *Psallite sapienter : Note storico liturgiche e riflessioni pastorali sui canti della messa e della liturgia delle ore*, s. 106.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. RAFFA, V.: *Liturgia eucaristica. Mistagogia della Messa: dalla storia e dalla teologia alla pastorale pratica*, s. 249, pozn. 45.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. RAFFA, V.: *Liturgia eucaristica. Mistagogia della Messa: dalla storia e dalla teologia alla pastorale pratica*, s. 249, pozn. 46.

<sup>17</sup> TRIACCA, A.M., SODI, M. (ed.) *Caeremoniale episcoporum*. Lib II, kap. VIII. Editio Princeps (1600). Città del Vaticano : Libreria editrice Vaticana, 2000, s. 166-167. In: RAFFA, V.: *Liturgia eucaristica. Mistagogia della Messa: dalla storia e dalla teologia alla pastorale pratica*, s. 249.

<sup>18</sup> *Sacrosanctum concilium*, § 50.

<sup>19</sup> *General Instruction of The Roman Missal*, § 46.

The opening chant is the first communal ritual act of the liturgical assembly. In articles 47, 48 of GIRM<sup>3</sup> briefly outlines the function and nature of this chant, its mode of proclamation, and its basic textual sources:

47. After the people have gathered, the Entrance chant begins as the priest enters with the deacon and ministers. The purpose of this chant is to open the celebration, foster the unity of those who have been gathered, introduce their thoughts to the mystery of the liturgical season or festivity, and accompany the procession of the priest and ministers.

48. The singing at this time is done either alternately by the choir and the people or in a similar way by the cantor and the people, or entirely by the people, or by the choir alone. In the dioceses of England and Wales the options for the Entrance Chant are (1) the antiphon and psalm from the *Graduale Romanum* or the *Graduale Simplex*; or (2) a song from another collection of psalms and antiphons, the text of which has been approved by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.<sup>20</sup>

If there is no singing at the Entrance, the antiphon given in the Missal is recited either by the faithful, or by some of them, or by a lector; otherwise, it is recited by the priest himself, who may even adapt it as an introductory explanation (cf. no. 31).<sup>21</sup>

Although these articles of GIRM<sup>3</sup> briefly describe the opening chant, let us open up their various aspects in more detail. Article 47 of GIRM<sup>3</sup> indicates the important role of the faithful for the Eucharistic celebration: "After the people have gathered..." Unlike the Roman Missal of 1570, whose *Ritus servandus* provides guidelines only for liturgical ministers, the GIRM<sup>3</sup> draws attention to the presence of the liturgical assembly. Philippe Robert, in his book *Singing the Liturgy (Chanter la liturgie)*, quotes Joseph Gelineau, who characterizes the opening chant as follows: „An opening hymn is a communal and festive gesture where the congregation is tied together, forms one body, and begins to celebrate by what it does. It places itself before God by what it says.“<sup>22</sup> In the opening hymn, the gathered community realizes its identity as baptized members of the Church, brothers and sisters in Christ.

Article 47 of VSRM<sup>3</sup> lists the four basic functions of the opening chant:

1. it opens the celebration,
2. foster the unity of the congregation,
3. introduces the minds of the people to the mystery of the liturgical season or celebration,
4. accompanies the incoming priest and ministers.

In practice, the demands of these four aspects of the opening chant can create a certain dynamic tension because the intensity of their presence can vary. For example, some chants may appropriately open the celebration, but less powerfully introduce the mystery of the liturgical season or celebration; or, in an effort to make the chant more conducive to the unity

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<sup>20</sup> For the U.S.: „The singing at this time is done either alternately by the choir and the people or in a similar way by the cantor and the people, or entirely by the people, or by the choir alone. In the dioceses of the United States of America there are four options for the Entrance Chant: (1) the antiphon from *Roman Missal* or the Psalm from the *Roman Gradual* as set to music there or in another musical setting; (2) the seasonal antiphon and Psalm of the *Simple Gradual*; (3) a song from another collection of psalms and antiphons, approved by the Conference of Bishops or the diocesan Bishop, including psalms arranged in responsorial or metrical forms; (4) a suitable liturgical song similarly approved by the Conference of Bishops or the diocesan Bishop.“ (*A Commentary on the General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, Collegeville, Minnesota : Liturgical Press, 2007, art. 48, p. 136-137.)

<sup>21</sup> *General Instruction of The Roman Missal*, n. 47, n. 48.

<sup>22</sup> „Un chant d'ouverture est un geste communautaire et festif où l'assemblée se noue, prend corps, commence à célébrer par ce qu'elle fait. Elle se situe devant Dieu par qu'elle dit.“ (ROBERT, Ph.: *Chanter la liturgie*. Paris: Les Editions de l'Atelier/Les Editions Ouvrières, 2000., s. 28)

of the faithful, the chant lasts longer than is necessary to accompany the incoming priest and his assistants, etc.

Article 48 of GIRM<sup>3</sup> points out four ways of introducing the opening chant. Two of these involve alternate singing (between the choir and the people or between the singer and the people) and two are without alternation (singing by the people alone or by the choir alone). The emphasis on the singing of the assembly is evident. The singing of the choir, without the active involvement of the people, is the last alternative. In addition, it is worth noting that article 48 does not consider the possibility of introducing solo singing (without alternating with the assembly) or purely instrumental music without singing.

In the background of this article resonates the 40th article of the GIRM<sup>3</sup>, which emphasizes and highly values the singing of the gathered people. This article also indicates the primary place of the singing of liturgical ministers, especially those parts of the celebration of the Eucharist where the ministers enter into dialogue with the people or where they are to sing with the people:

40. Great importance should therefore be attached to the use of singing in the celebration of the Mass, with due consideration for the culture of peoples and abilities of each liturgical assembly. Although it is not always necessary (e.g., in weekday Masses) to sing all the texts that are in principle meant to be sung, every care should be taken that singing by the ministers and the people is not absent in celebrations that occur on Sundays and on holy days of obligation.

In the choosing of the parts actually to be sung, preference should be given to those that are of greater importance and especially to those which are to be sung by the priest or the deacon or the lector, with the people responding, or by the priest and people together.<sup>23</sup>

Article 48 of GIRM<sup>3</sup> examines possible sources from which the opening chant may draw. It gives as the first possibility the use of an antiphon with a psalm from the Roman Gradual, *Graduale Romanum*.<sup>24</sup> Another option is to use the Simple Gradual, *Graduale Simplex*.<sup>25</sup> The use of the Roman Gradual, however, presupposes trained singers or a schola. Because of the difficulty of the antiphons in this gradual, it cannot be assumed that the congregation would be involved in its singing. Unlike the Roman Gradual, the Simple Gradual contains simpler and shorter antiphons with more verses of psalms. The Simple Gradual offers fewer chants, but these may be repeated more frequently over a period of time. For example, for the thirty-four weeks of the "season through the year," the Simple Gradual gives eight options for the opening chant and other processional chants.<sup>26</sup> Since all the chants of the two graduals are naturally in Latin, they are probably not commonly used in parishes, but they are the source material and source for the texts of the new compositions in the vernacular languages.

It should be mentioned that the antiphon, which is given in the Roman Missal, is not intended to be sung, but to be recited, in case the opening chant is not sung. Since this antiphon is not intended for singing, there is no verse from the Psalm or *Glory to the Father* given for it.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *General Instruction of The Roman Missal*, n. 40

<sup>24</sup> *Graduale Romanum. Graduale sacrosanctae Romanae Ecclesiae de tempore et de sanctis*. Solesmis, 1979.

<sup>25</sup> *Graduale simplex in usum minorum ecclesiarum*. Città del Vaticano : Libreria editrice Vaticana, 1999<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. *Graduale simplex in usum minorum ecclesiarum*, s. 215-252.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. AINSLIE, J.: The Entrance Song – Antiphon or hymn? In: *Music and Liturgy*, 348, vol 39, No 1, May 2013, s. 53.

Finally, the article 48 of GIRM<sup>3</sup> indicates that other chants appropriate to the liturgical day or liturgical season may be used as part of the opening chant. Although hymn singing is the primary practice in some countries, according to Father Gelineau, responsorial singing is the most vernacular and simplest form of singing<sup>28</sup> that promotes active participation of the assembly. Also the form of the litanies, although rarely used, corresponds to the processional character of the opening chant.<sup>29</sup>

Articles 47 and 48 of the GIRM offer us several stimuli for reflection: the textual background, the mode of performance, and especially the active participation of the faithful in singing in the context of different countries. One of the important functions of the opening chant is that it "foster the unity of those who have been gathered."<sup>30</sup> According to Paul Turner, the absence of the faithful from the communal singing may signal their disunity with one another.<sup>31</sup>

### CHANT DURING THE PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS (*CANTUS AD OFFERTORIUM*)<sup>32</sup>

The first report of singing accompanying a procession with gifts comes from North Africa, from the time of St. Augustine (354-430). Apparently at the same time, singing for the preparation of the gifts was also introduced in Rome. Although the name *offertorium* refers primarily to the ritual act of offering gifts by the people and the clergy, from the 7th century onwards the name was also used to refer to the chant during the bringing and presentation of the gifts.<sup>33</sup>

The 7th-century *Ordo Romanus Primus* testifies that the singing that accompanied the offering of the gifts was stopped after the gifts had been presented and after the pope had signaled to the schola to stop singing.<sup>34</sup> Silence followed, indicating the beginning of the priestly liturgical act. By the end of the Middle Ages, the sense of such silence was lost, and the singing of the antiphon was extended as far as the preface.<sup>35</sup>

According to Jungmann „at first the offertory chant probably had the same antiphonal design as the chant at the introit: the schola, divided into two choirs, sang a psalm alternately, with an antiphon as prelude.<sup>36</sup> The psalm varied from celebration to celebration, taking into account, as far as possible, the church year with its festivals and seasons.“<sup>37</sup> Compared to the

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. GELINEAU, J.: *Les chants de la messe dans leur enracinement rituel*. Paris : Les éditions de CERF, 2001, s. 42.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. GELINEAU, J.: *Les chants de la messe dans leur enracinement rituel*, s. 40.

<sup>30</sup> *General Instruction of The Roman Missal*, n. 47

<sup>31</sup> Cf. TURNER, P.: *Let us pray. A Guide to the Rubrics of Sunday Mass*. Collegeville : The Liturgical Press, 2006, p. 36.

<sup>32</sup> Patrick Regan, in his theological commentary on the *Ordo Missae*, points out the inconsistency in naming of this chant even in official Church documents. Cf. REGAN, P.: *The preparation of the Gifts. Theology of the Latin Text and Rite*. In: FOLEY, E. (ed.) *A Commentary on the Order of Mass of The Roman Missal*. Collegeville, Minnesota : Liturgical Press, 2011, p. 21-212; FOLEY, E., MITCHELL N. D., PIERCE, J. M. (ed.) *A Commentary on the General Instruction of the Roman Missal*. Collegeville - Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2007, p. 124.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. JUNGSMANN, J.A.: *The Mass of the Roman Rite: its origins and development (Missarum sollemnia)*, vol. II. Notre Dame, IN : Ave Maria Press, 2012, p. 26, footnote 1. The name *offerenda* was also used in some manuscripts.

<sup>34</sup> „Et pontifex, inclinans se paululum ad altare, respicit scolam et annuit ut sileant.“ (GRIFFITHS, A. (ed.). *Ordo Romanus Primus*, n. 85, s. 48.)

<sup>35</sup> Cf. WITCZAK, M.: The preparation of the Gifts. History of the Latin Text and Rite. In: FOLEY, E. (ed.) *A Commentary on the Order of Mass of The Roman Missal*, s. 202.

<sup>36</sup> *Antiphona ad offertorium*.

<sup>37</sup> JUNGSMANN, J.A.: *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, p. 28.

introit, the doxology of the *Gloria Patri* was not sung during the singing of the offertory. However, antiphonal chant was not the only form of *offertorium*. The 9th-century Antiphonary of Compiègne (Compendiensis) offers us a rare example of an ancient Roman Offertorium, beginning with the words "Exaltabo te,"<sup>38</sup> which has a responsorial form:

„Exaltabo te,<sup>39</sup> Domine, quoniam suscepisti me, nec delectasti inimicos meos super me.  
[*Responzorium:*] Domine clamavi ad te et sanasti me.  
V. I. Domine abstraxisti ab inferis animam meam, salvasti me a descendentibus in lacum.  
[*Responzorium:* Domine clamavi ad te et sanasti me.]  
V. II. Ego autem dixi in mea abundantia non movebor in aeternum Domine in voluntate tua praestitisti decori meo virtutem.  
[*Responzorium:*] Domine clamavi [ad te et sanasti me].“<sup>40</sup>

In responsorial form, the offertory chant has appeared in the choral books since the early Middle Ages. The number of psalm verses fluctuated between one and four, depending on the length of the offertory procession. This chant was usually longer than the introit, because as late as the end of the first millennium, the whole congregation continued to take part in the offertory every Sunday. Only from the 11th century onwards is there a noticeable decline in the Sunday procession, which was gradually limited to the major feasts. Related to the decline of the procession with gifts was the omission of verses in the singing of the offertory. Thus the chant was gradually reduced to an antiphon. By the 12th century the verses of this chant are often absent, although exceptions appear by the end of the Middle Ages. Despite the reduction of verses of the psalm to antiphon, composers often gave it rich polyphonic elaborations and compositions, especially on feast days. Thus the antiphon was lengthened and became a connecting link with the preface.<sup>41</sup>

The GIRM<sup>3</sup> in its article 74 only very briefly refers to singing for the preparation of gifts:

74. The procession bringing the gifts is accompanied by the Offertory Chant (cf. no. 37 b), which continues at least until the gifts have been placed on the altar. The norms on the manner of singing are the same as for the Entrance Chant (cf. no. 48). Singing may always accompany the rite at the offertory, even when there is no procession with the gifts.<sup>42</sup>

We have already analyzed Article 48, where we have perceived the emphasis on the singing of the assembly and the importance of the communal character of the opening chant. For the preparation of the gifts the Roman Missal does not provide an antiphon as it does for the opening chant.

If chant is not sung or played instrumental music during the preparation of the gifts, the preparation is done in silence and the words „*Benedictus es, Domine, Deus universi*” are recited aloud by the priest. In contrast to the introit, the chant for the preparation of the gifts can be fully replaced by appropriate instrumental music, or the liturgical chant intended for the soloist could be sung. Although the chant for the preparation of the sacrificial gifts is essentially a

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<sup>38</sup> This offertory is also found in the *Graduale Romanum* in the context of the 17th Sunday, where, however, only the first verse is given. The offertory mentioned above is also indicated for Ash Wednesday. (*Graduale Romanum*, p. 313, p. 67.)

<sup>39</sup> The text of the Offertory is based on Psalm 30:2-4. 7-8, with the 3rd verse repeated as a refrain.

<sup>40</sup> HESBERT, R. J.: *Antiphonale Missarum Sextuplex*, Rome : Herder, 1935, 37b, s. 51.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. JUNGSMANN, J.A.: *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, p. 29-30.

<sup>42</sup> *General Instruction of The Roman Missal*, n. 74.

processional chant, article 74 states that „singing may always accompany the rite at the offertory, even when there is no procession with the gifts.” Thus, singing is not necessarily associated only with the procession and the bringing of the gifts. Although the article 74 affirms that the chant in preparation of the gifts is sung „until the gifts have been placed on the altar,” this chant or instrumental music usually continues for a longer period.

The liturgical reform after the Second Vatican Council does not specify the precise texts that should be sung during the preparation of the gifts. It is interesting, that the texts of the Latin antiphons do not explicitly refer to the Eucharist, nor do they emphasize the bread and wine or the sacrifice. Lawrence J. Johnson, in his study of the structural elements of the Mass order, emphasizes that the texts of the hymns for the preparation of the gifts should avoid „texts that speak of offering apart from the action of Christ.”<sup>43</sup> Jesus Christ is the only sacrifice in the Christian liturgy. Based on the *Graduale Romanum*, the texts for the preparation of the gifts, like the *introit* or *communio*, are based on Holy Scripture, especially the Psalms. Most of the texts of the antiphons and psalms sung for the preparation the gifts do not have predetermined thematic areas. Some texts relate to the theme of the feast. Only a small number of texts are thematically related to the sacrifice, for example: „Domine Deus, in simplicitate cordis mei laetus obtuli universa,”<sup>44</sup> „Reges Tharsis et insulae munera offerent,”<sup>45</sup> „Hostias et preces tibi Domine laudis offerimus.”<sup>46</sup>

The texts of the hymns for the preparation of the gifts are generally intended to contain a celebratory or thanksgiving character.

#### CHANT DURING HOLY COMMUNION (*COMMUNIO*)

The chant that accompanies the Holy Communion of the faithful is the oldest processional chant of the Eucharistic celebration.<sup>47</sup> The antiphonal mode of singing during Communion was introduced in the time of St. Augustine, in the 4th century, in North Africa. In chant during the communion, also called *communio*, the people responded with an antiphon to the singing of a psalm chanted by the singer. As early as St. John Chrysostom (349-407), in his commentary on Psalm 144, mentions that the people responded during Communion with the verse, "The eyes of all look expectantly to You, And You give them their food in due season." <sup>48</sup> St. Ambrose (333/340-397), in his work *De mysteriis*, confirms that particular verses from the psalms 42, 102 and 23 were used during the Holy Communion:

8.43. The cleansed people, rich with these adornments, hastens to the altar of Christ, saying: I will go to the altar of God, to God Who makes glad my youth; <sup>49</sup> for having laid aside the slough of ancient error, renewed with an eagle's youth, <sup>50</sup> it hastens to approach that heavenly feast. It comes, and seeing the holy altar arranged, cries out: You have prepared a table in my sight. David introduces the people as speaking, where he says: The Lord feeds me, and nothing shall be wanting to me, in a place of good pasture has He placed me. He has led me forth by the water of

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<sup>43</sup> JOHNSON, L. J.: *The Mystery of Faith. A study of the Structural Elements of the Order of the Mass*. Washington, D. C. : The Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, 2017<sup>5</sup>, p. 61.

<sup>44</sup> *Graduale Romanum*, s. 401.

<sup>45</sup> *Graduale Romanum*, s. 58.

<sup>46</sup> *Graduale Romanum*, s. 675.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. JUNGSMANN, J.A.: *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, vol. II., p. 392.

<sup>48</sup> Psalm 144 (145):15; Cf. CRISOSTOMUS, *In Ps. 144 expositio*. I (PG 55, 464). In: JUNGSMANN, J.A.: *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, vol. II., p. 392.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Psalm 42:4.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Psalm 102:5.



refreshment. And later: For though I walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me. Your rod and Your staff have comforted me. You have prepared in my sight a table against them that trouble me. You have anointed my head with oil, and Your inebriating cup, how excellent it is!<sup>51</sup>

St. Ambrose also mentions Psalm 23 in the context of Holy Communion in his work *De sacramentis*, where in the fifth catechesis he explains to the newly baptized the deeper meaning of receiving the Body of Christ:

3. 12. So you came to the altar and received the Body of Christ. Listen again what sacraments you have received. Listen to the words of saint David. He saw these sacred mysteries in the spirit beforehand, rejoiced, and said that he lacked nothing more.<sup>52</sup> Why? Because he who receives the body of Christ will not hunger forever.<sup>53</sup>

3. 13. Every time you heard the twenty-second<sup>54</sup> Psalm, you didn't understand it. Just see how it harmonizes with the mysteries of heaven. The Lord feeds me, and I lack nothing in the place of abundant food where He has brought me. He hath led me to refreshing water, he hath saved my soul. He has brought me into the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me. 'Your rod and your staff, they have comforted me.'<sup>55</sup> The rod is power, the staff is suffering. That is, the eternal Divinity of Christ, but also his bodily sufferings. By the first He created, by the second He redeemed. You have spread before me a table opposite to those who oppress me. You have anointed my head with oil, and how great is your inebriating cup.<sup>56</sup>

3. 14. So you have come to the altar and you have received the grace of Christ. You have received the heavenly mysteries...<sup>57</sup>

St. Jerome (347-420) notes that the participation of the people was in the singing of the responsory of the 33rd (34th) psalm, where the text of the ninth verse was popularly repeated: „Taste and see that the Lord is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him.”<sup>58</sup> St. Jerome mentions this verse, in connection with the Eucharistic communion and the singing of the psalmist, also in his letter 71.<sup>59</sup>

This psalm was used during communion in the Christian East as well as in the West. St. Cyril of Jerusalem mentions it in his fifth catechesis: „You hear then the voice of the one singing the psalms, who invites you with divine melody to partake of the Holy Mysteries and says, Taste...”<sup>60</sup> St. Ambrose also mentioned it in his work *De mysteriis*:

9.58 „Wherefore, too, the Church, beholding so great a grace, exhorts her sons and her friends to come together to the sacraments, saying: Eat, my friends, and drink and be inebriated, my brother. What we eat and what we drink the Holy Spirit has elsewhere made plain by the prophet,

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<sup>51</sup> Cf. Psalm 23 (22), 5.1-2. 4-5. St. AMBROSE, *De mysteriis* (VIII, 43).

In: <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3405.htm> (11.8.2022)

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Psalm 23,1.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. John 6:35.

<sup>54</sup> Ambrose uses the numbering of the Psalms according to the LXX. According to the Hebrew numbering, this is the Psalm 23.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Psalm 23:1-4.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Psalm 23:5.

<sup>57</sup> St. AMBROSE, *De sacramentis* (5, 3, 12-14; own translation)

<sup>58</sup> Psalm 33 (34):9. „Quotidie coelesti pane saturati dicimus: Gustate et videte quam suavis est Dominus.“ (HIERONYMUS, *In Isaiam comment.* II, 5, 20 (PL 24, 86 D); Cf. JUNGSMANN, J.A.: *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, vol. II., p. 392.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. *Ep.* 71, 6; (PL 22, 672). In: RAFFA, V.: *Liturgia eucaristica. Mistagogia della Messa: dalla storia e dalla teologia alla pastorale pratica*, s. 573.

<sup>60</sup> St. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, *Catech. myst.*, V, 20 (Quasten, Mon., 198). In: Cf. JUNGSMANN, J.A.: *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, vol. II., p. 392, note 6.

saying, *Taste and see that the Lord is good, blessed is the man that hopes in Him*. In that sacrament is Christ, because it is the Body of Christ...“<sup>61</sup>

St. Augustine (354-430) emphasized verse 6 (5) of Psalm 34 with which he directs the faithful to the table of the Lord: „Look to him, and be radiant; so your faces shall never be ashamed.“<sup>62</sup>

Some Eastern liturgies used, as a responsory to the communion hymn, the acclamation of the *Alleluia*. This was the case, for example, in connection with the 148th Psalm in the Armenian liturgy, or in association with the 150th Psalm in the Coptic liturgy.<sup>63</sup> In addition, the Eastern liturgies used the 115th Psalm.<sup>64</sup> Other biblical texts were also later used during the communion chant.<sup>65</sup>

Initially, the communion singing was done by the participants and assembly. Later, this singing was entrusted to the *schola cantorum*. This was related not only to the development of melodies, but also to the expansion of used texts. Thus, in addition to psalms, hymns were also used during the liturgy, as evidenced, for example, by the hymn *Sancti venite, Christi corpus sumite*, which is found in the Bangor Antiphony<sup>66</sup> under the title *Ymnum quando communicarent sacerdotes*.<sup>67</sup>

According to *Ordo Romanus Primus* „as soon as the pope starts giving communion in the senatorial area,<sup>68</sup> the choir, alternating with the subdeacons,<sup>69</sup> begins the communion antiphon. This continues until communion has been given to the people. Then, the pope signals to them to sing: ‘Glory by to the Father...’and then, having repeated the verse, they stop singing.“<sup>70</sup> The communion chant had the same structure as the opening chant, the introit, where after the opening antiphon the psalm was chanted antiphonally. The conclusion of the psalm was followed by the doxology, the *Gloria Patri*, which was again followed by the antiphon as heard at the beginning.

The *Agnus Dei*, which was introduced into the liturgy in the seventh century as a chant for the breaking of the bread, appears in some Carolingian sources as early as the beginning of the ninth century as a chant for communion or even for the kiss of peace.

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<sup>61</sup> St. AMBROSE, *De mysteriis* (IX, 58). In: <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3405.htm> (12.8.2022)

<sup>62</sup> AUGUSTINUS, *Serm.* 225,4 (PL 38, 1098).

<sup>63</sup> Cf. JUNGSMANN, J.A.: *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, vol. II., p. 393.

<sup>64</sup> RAINOLDI, F.: *Psallite sapienter : Note storico liturgiche e riflessioni pastorali sui canti della messa e della liturgia delle ore*, s. 200.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. RAFFA, V.: *Liturgia eucaristica. Mistagogia della Messa: dalla storia e dalla teologia alla pastorale pratica*, s. 573.

<sup>66</sup> The Bangor Antiphony (*Antiphonarium Benchorensis*) is a late 6th-century medieval manuscript containing the Latin liturgical chants used in Bangor Abbey, in present-day Northern Ireland. It is the oldest surviving liturgical book of the Celtic rite.

<sup>67</sup> “Sancti venite, Christi corpus sumite, / sanctum bibentes quo redempti sanguinem. Salvati Christi corpore et sanguine, / a quo refecti laudes dicamus Deo. Hoc sacramento corporis et sanguinis / omnes exuti ab inferni faucibus. Dator salutis Christus, Filius Dei, / mundum salvavit per crucem et sanguinem. Pro universis immolatus Dominus / ipse sacerdos existit et hostia. Lege praeceptum immolari hostias / qua adumbrantur divina mysteria. Lucis indultor et salvator omnium / praeclaram sanctis largitus est gratiam. Accedant omnes pura mente creduli, / sumant aeternam salutis custodiam. Sanctorum custos rector quoque Dominus / vitae perennis largitor credentibus. Caelestem panem dat esurientibus / de fonte vivo praebet sitientibus. Alfa et Omega ipse Christus Dominus / venit, venturus iudicare homines.“ (LODI, E. (ed.). *Enchiridion euchologicum fontium liturgicorum*. Roma : C.L.V. Edizioni liturgiche, 1979, s. 1102, n. 2584.

<sup>68</sup> I.e. sanctuary (author's note).

<sup>69</sup> The second part of the choir (*schola cantorum*) seems to have consisted of subdeacons.

<sup>70</sup> „Nam, mox ut pontifex coeporit in senatorio communicare, statim scola incipit *antiphonam ad communionem* per vices cum subdiaconibus et psallunt usquedum communicato omni populo, annuat pontifex ut dicant ‘Gloria Patri’: et tunc repetito versu quiescunt.“ (GRIFFITHS, A. (ed.). *Ordo Romanus Primus*, n. 117, s.56-57.

As was the case with the opening chant, from the tenth century onwards the psalm of the communion chant was shortened or omitted. Gradually from the communion chant remained only the antiphon, which was in the thirteenth century given the name *Communio*.

During the High Middle Ages, the participation of the faithful in Holy Communion declined significantly. Instead of the faithful entering into Christ's sacrifice by receiving the Lord's body and blood, the Mass became for the faithful a mystery of God's descent to be admired and contemplated from afar in adoration. Since the Eucharist was not accessed by many of the faithful even on feast days, the reason for the singing of communion gradually disappeared. The frequency of receiving the Eucharist decreased so dramatically that IV. Lateran Council in 1215 was forced to prescribe the obligation to receive the Eucharist at least once a year. It was not a lack of piety that was to blame, but rather a disproportionately frightened reverence for the sacrament. We might have expected the singing during Communion to disappear altogether, since it was intended to accompany the Communion of the people and not the Communion of the priest. However, the chant was included after the priest's communion as a kind of symbol of the expected communion of the people. In a further development, the chant was understood as a thanksgiving, and hence it was called *antiphona post communionem*, or simply *postcommunio*.<sup>71</sup>

After the Second Vatican Council, the basic guidelines for processional chant during Holy Communion are formulated in the GIRM<sup>3</sup> in Articles 86 and 87:

86. While the priest is receiving the Sacrament, the Communion chant is begun. Its purpose is to express the communicants' union in spirit by means of the unity of their voices, to show joy of heart, and to highlight more clearly the 'communitarian' nature of the procession to receive Communion. The singing is continued for as long as the Sacrament is being administered to the faithful. If, however, there is to be a hymn after Communion, the Communion chant should be ended in a timely manner.

Care should be taken that singers, too, can receive Communion with ease.

87. In the dioceses of England and Wales the options for the Communion chant are as follows: (1) the antiphon from the *Graduale Romanum*, either with or without the psalm; (2) the antiphon with the psalm from the *Graduale Simplex*; (3) a song from another collection of psalms and antiphons,<sup>72</sup> approved by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. It is sung either by the choir alone or by the choir or a cantor with the people.<sup>73</sup>

If there is no singing, however, the Communion antiphon found in the Missal may be recited either by the faithful, or by some of them, or by a lector. Otherwise the priest himself says it after he has received Communion and before he distributes Communion to the faithful.<sup>74</sup>

One of the first recommendations of the GIRM<sup>3</sup> in article 86 relates to the communal or social character of Holy Communion. Although the communion of the Lord Jesus touches each believer personally, yet this liturgical act has a communal character. Since the unity of voices also better expresses the unity of the communicants, the singing of the people is preferred.

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<sup>71</sup> Cf. JUNGSMANN, J.A.: *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, vol. II., p. 397.

<sup>72</sup> The Slovak version of the GIRM indicates that another "suitable chant" may be used. This hymn does not have to be a psalm or an antiphon, but, for example, a hymn.

<sup>73</sup> For the U.S.: „In the dioceses of the United States of America there are four options for the Communion chant: (1) the antiphon from the *Roman Missal* or the Psalm from the *Roman Gradual* as set to music there or in another musical setting; (2) the seasonal antiphon and Psalm of the *Simple Gradual*; (3) a song from another collection of psalms and antiphons, approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops or the diocesan Bishop, including psalms arranged in responsorial or metrical forms; (4) a suitable liturgical song chosen in accordance with no. 86 above. This is sung either by the choir alone or by the choir or cantor with the people.“ (*A Commentary on the General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, Collegeville, Minnesota : Liturgical Press, 2007, art. 87, p. 189-190.)

<sup>74</sup> *General Instruction of The Roman Missal*, n. 86, n. 87.

GIRM<sup>3</sup> in the article 87 offers several possibilities for sources for the text of chant during the communion. In the first place, the article mentions the *Graduale Romanum*, which contains 163 antiphons for communion. Of these antiphons of the Roman Gradual, 69 are psalm antiphons, 67 are gospel antiphons, 21 are other biblical antiphons, and 6 are non-biblical antiphons.

The document of U.S. conference of Catholic bishops, *Sing to the Lord*, also offers some guidelines for singing during Holy Communion: „In selecting a Communion song suitable for the Eucharistic banquet in which God’s blessing are bestowed so abundantly, one should look for text that have themes of joy, wonder, unity, gratitude, and praise. Following ancient Roman liturgical tradition, the Communion song might reflect themes of the Gospel reading of the day. It is appropriate to select a Communion processional song that reflects the liturgical action, i.e., eating and drinking the Body and Blood of Christ.“<sup>75</sup> The document *Sing to the Lord* recommends those psalms which could be used in the responsorial style, or songs used with easily memorized refrains: “The refrains will generally need to be limited in number and repeated often, especially at the outset, so that they become familiar to the faithful.”<sup>76</sup>

If the communion lasts longer, it is appropriate to alternate the singing of the people with the singing of the choir or soloist. „Instrumental music may also be used to foster a spirit of unity and joy“.<sup>77</sup>

In the historical part of this presentation, we pointed out the richness of the texts of the Psalms that were associated with participation in the Eucharistic meal. These were especially Psalms 23, 34, 147, etc. These psalms, as well as other hymns that express the joy of participating in the Eucharistic banquet and wonder of sharing in the Lord’s Supper can appropriately enrich the repertoire of communion chant.<sup>78</sup>

An important aspect of communion chant is its processional nature. The chants during communion are not adoration chants by their nature. According to Paul Turner „songs of adoration are not appropriate, because they disengage singers from the communitarian nature the procession,“<sup>79</sup> which is emphasized in GIRM<sup>3</sup> in article 86. The chants during Communion are meant to lead to a fuller participation in the life of the Lord Jesus and to a deeper understanding of Holy Communion. The chants thus open up a deeper sense of the mission that the believer receives through participation in the body and blood of Christ.

Article 86 of the GIRM<sup>3</sup> notes that "care should be taken that singers, too, can receive Communion with ease."<sup>80</sup> This minor remark clearly expresses the fact that musicians and singers are full and proper members of the congregation. The liturgical ministry of musicians and singers should not cause them to be excluded from participation in the Eucharistic banquet. Since the singing for communion is to begin when the priest receives the Blessed Sacrament, singers and musicians should be allowed to receive communion at or near the end of the procession.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> *Sing to the Lord. Music in Divine Worship*, art. 191, s. 55.

<sup>76</sup> *Sing to the Lord. Music in Divine Worship*, art. 192, s. 55.

<sup>77</sup> *Sing to the Lord. Music in Divine Worship*, art. 193, s. 55.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. *Sing to the Lord. Music in Divine Worship*, art. 194, s. 55.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. TURNER, P.: *Let us pray. A Guide to the Rubrics of Sunday Mass*, s. 136.

<sup>80</sup> *General Instruction of The Roman Missal*, n. 86.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. *Sing to the Lord. Music in Divine Worship*, art. 195, s. 56.

Finally, the GIRM<sup>3</sup> in its 88th article also suggests silence or the chant that follows Holy Communion: „When the distribution of Communion is finished, as circumstances suggest, the priest and faithful spend some time praying quietly. If desired, a psalm or other canticle of praise or hymn may also be sung by the entire congregation.“<sup>82</sup> The singing after Communion should draw the attention of the congregation to the mystery of Holy Communion in which the faithful have partaken. By a hymn of thanksgiving or a hymn of praise, the faithful become more deeply aware of the gift they have received. Article 88 suggests the possibility of observing silence after Holy Communion, which is part of the liturgical celebration and about which the GIRM<sup>3</sup> speaks more in its 45th article.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, in this presentation we offered a historical context that helps to understand the three processional chants of the Eucharist: opening chant (*introit*), chant during the preparation of the gifts (*cantus ad offertorium*) and chant during Holy Communion (*communio*). We have paid some attention to the textual background of the chants as well as to the way they are performed. The GIRM guidelines, to which we have also given adequate attention, are essential for the contemporary practice of the chants and their liturgical-theological understanding.

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<sup>82</sup> *General Instruction of The Roman Missal*, n. 88.

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