

RESPONSORIAL PSALMS FOR THE EUCHARIST

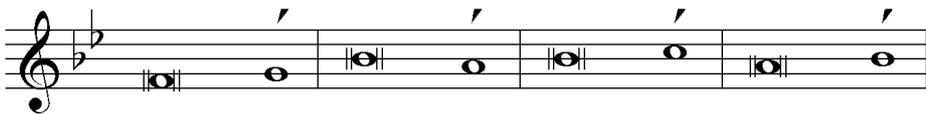
INTRODUCTION

These settings have been written during the past few years as need has arisen for responsorial psalms to be sung at the Eucharist in the chapel of the Franciscan friary at Hilfield and elsewhere. It is hoped that they may be of use in parishes and elsewhere where groups of worshippers want to sing the psalm at the Eucharist.

Most of the psalms and responses are those set in *The Revised Common Lectionary*, (*RCL*) though some are taken from *Exciting Holiness* (*EH*) or from *Lent Holy Week Easter* (*LHWE*). Those for Ordinary Time (Propers 4-28) are, unless otherwise indicated, from the related set of readings (Track 2). Shorter versions of the responses are sometimes offered in these sources, and often have been chosen here. The text of the psalms is that in *Common Worship*. Provision is made for most occasions during the three year cycle.

The settings are meant to be sung in unison and are suited to unaccompanied singing. Accompaniments are, however, provided. They may give support to singers and help them to keep in tune. In the refrains accompaniments should give a clear lead to the congregation. But for the psalm verses they should be light and sustained. They work best when the chords are held and the black notes in the melody left to the singers.

The basic principle of chanting the psalms is that each section or half-verse is sung on a reciting note with an inflection or change of note on the last accented syllable, e.g., Ps. 47. 1, 2:



Clap your hands together, all you peóples
O sing to God with shouts of jóy.
For the Lord Most High is to be féared;
he is the great King over all the eárh.

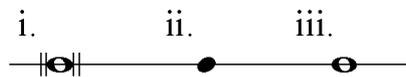
Here the accent marks the last stressed syllable and the change of note.

Most of the tones, however, contain four notes in each section. e.g.,



In shorter verses some sections of the tone have to be omitted: such omissions are indicated – e.g. [omit 2 & 3]

Three kinds of note are used in the tones:



- i. is the reciting note;
- ii. black notes are passing notes (see note 1 below).
- iii. marks the final accent of each section;

The final stress in each section is marked by an accent in the text. The passing notes are sung to the two syllables immediately preceding the final accent. This is made clear by placing dots (corresponding to the black notes) over each of these syllables in the text. Thus

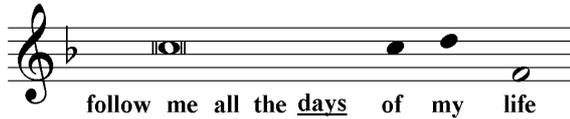
Clap your hands together, àll yòu peóples; * O sing to God with shòuts òf jóy.

Note–

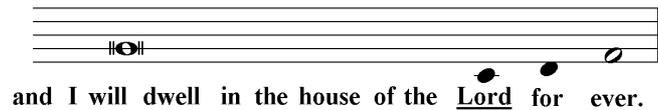
1. Some psalms are provided with simpler tones with only a reciting note and an inflection in each section. Here the last note in each section still coincides with the final accent in each line. The dots over the text should be ignored: in most cases they have been left, in case tones which follow the more usual pattern are preferred. .

2. Psalms or canticles should neither be dragged nor rushed, but sung with meaning and with the emphasis of good, clear, reading. The music is designed to carry and express the words. It should never distort them, but allow them to have their proper emphasis.

3. A change of note does not imply an accent. The first of the black notes should not be stressed unless it coincides with an accented syllable - thus:



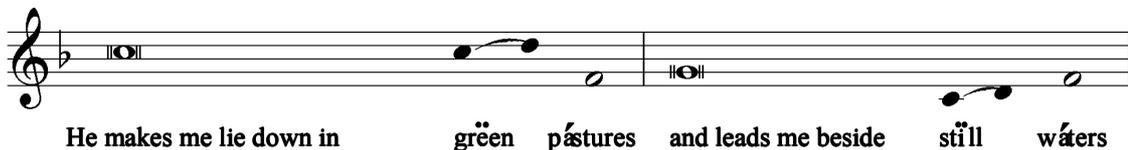
but



4. Syllables which follow the final accent are sung lightly on the same note, e.g., shepherd, name's sake, comfort me, trouble me, heritage for us, Abraham.

5 While care should be taken in pronouncing every syllable, it is important that unaccented syllables should not be overstressed. It makes for smoother recitation if heaven is pronounced 'heav'n', and so it is printed in the text. Words like 'marvellous' and 'glorious' are better treated as almost two syllables, and 'sanctuary' as three, without undue stress on the lightest syllables ('marvellous', 'glorious' or 'sanctuary'), and the pointing always focuses the stress on the first syllable of such words. The apostrophe is only used in the word 'heav'n', but singers need to be sensitive and avoid the ungainly exaggeration of unstressed syllables, without going to the other extreme of reducing a word like 'family' to 'fam'ly'.

6. A strong syllable immediately in front of the final accent needs space for its proper emphasis, and is therefore sung to the two black notes. For example, 'green' and 'still' (Ps. 23.2) are strong syllables adjacent to another accent. Two dots placed over them show that they are sung to two notes, thus:



7 Occasionally in short sections it is necessary to omit the reciting note. This is indicated by --- at the beginning of the line: for example,

--- *Allelúia. Ps 104. 37*[File 36]

8 The melody of each response is given at the end of the psalm so that it can be printed on service sheets for the use of congregations.

Brother Reginald SSF
October 2011

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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