

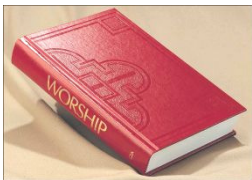
Tridentine Community News

January 28, 2007

Hymnals

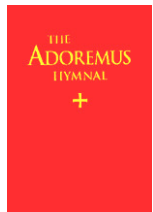
Following last week's discussion of hymns, no doubt some of you may have been wondering why we continue to distribute much of our music within the weekly Latin/English Propers Handout. It is obviously inconvenient to provide music this way. The short answer is that we have been evaluating various hymnals for consideration. Today, we will discuss the hymnals that are available today, and why our thinking has led us to one particular book.

It goes without saying that a hymnal for a Tridentine Mass community must contain a broad selection of traditional hymns. Many hymnals assembled over the last 40 years simply don't provide the breadth of classical church repertoire that we require.



Two "conservative" hymnals are ubiquitous: On the U.S. side of the river, GIA's *Worship III* (not to be confused with its modern hymn-supplemented sister, *Ritual Song*), is omnipresent. In Canada, you cannot escape *Catholic Book of Worship* ("*CBW*") *II* (not to be confused with the gender-neutral and PC-lyriced *CBW III*). Either *Worship III* or *CBW II* could provide most of the hymns we need, but they possess virtually no Latin Ordinaries (Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus Dei). The majority of our photocopying expense is attributed to printing the same, limited number of Gregorian Masses over and over; any hymnal we consider simply must include the Gregorian ordinaries.

The eclectic *Collegetown Hymnal* is an interesting mix of traditional and modern compositions. However, too much space is devoted to modern hymns, and there are few Latin Ordinaries.



Much publicity has been given to the *Adoremus Hymnal*. This is a marvelous book for a Novus Ordo Latin Mass community, with a number of Ordinaries in Latin. But it is rather thin and lacking in quantity of hymns.

The best modern hymnal of all, *Hymns, Psalms, & Spiritual Canticles*, is presently out of print. Replete with beautiful hymns, Ordinaries, and even English chant settings of the Novus Ordo, it would be an excellent choice for us. But while a new edition is promised, it will not be issued until after the complete set of new translations of the Novus Ordo Mass Propers are issued. We can't wait that long. Earlier editions of this hymnal are traded like rare coins and are virtually impossible to find.

Despite advertising to the contrary, Solesmes' *Liber Cantuális* is not really a hymnal. It only contains Latin Ordinaries, plus psalms and a few Latin hymns. No Solesmes books meet our needs.

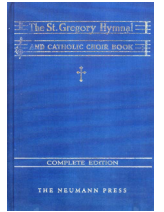
The Catholic Hymn Book, published by the Brompton (London) Oratory, is perhaps the most eclectic of all, with many hymns not seen in most other books. But its style of printing the music at the top of the page and lyrics at the bottom of the page is unfamiliar to

North American eyes and awkward to follow. We need hymnals that encourage people to sing.

Then there are the older hymnals:

The *Pius X Hymnal* is actually the predecessor to *Hymns, Psalms, & Spiritual Canticles*, and is long out of print.

The *St. Gregory Hymnal*, originally compiled for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, is still available new. It remains popular with choirs (and unpopular with people in the pew) for its unique arrangements of well-known hymns, but its ugly typesetting make it unacceptable for today's congregations.



The "Old" (1924) and "New" (1958) editions of the *St. Basil Hymnal* have been reprinted, but the old edition has poor typesetting quality, while the new edition is thin and lacking in quantity of hymns. Both are impressive for their broad selection of Latin hymns, however.

A few hymnals exist that provide lyrics but no music, for instance the *Westminster Hymnal*. These cannot be considered.

One of the newest books to hit the market is the *Traditional Roman Hymnal*. This one is somewhat controversial, because its publisher is Angelus Press, a part of the Society of St. Pius X. However, on close inspection, it contains almost everything we could ask for: A relatively broad selection of hymns, a complete set of Mass Ordinaries, and music for the Aspérages, Vidi Aquam, and Benediction.



After months of studying the market, we have come to the conclusion that the *Traditional Roman Hymnal* is the one for us. It is not perfect; no hymnal is. We will still need to supplement its contents on occasion with music from other sources.

Our hesitation because of the identity of its publisher is comparable to the pause that using a "Protestant Hymn" might give us, as we discussed last week. Ultimately, we must cast prejudices aside and strive for the best possible music. No other hymnal currently in print rivals this one. To address any concerns, we will place a disclaimer sticker inside each hymnal, indicating that our use of this book makes no statement other than our belief that it is the best hymnal presently available for a Tridentine Mass community.

Most of these hymnals are available for your inspection. Come to the sacristy after Mass if you are interested in looking through one.

One good thing about purchasing hymnals: They will pay for themselves by reducing the amount of photocopying we must do, not to mention giving a respite to the fingers of those who fold the handouts each week.