

## chanting the psalms

*Parts of the Psalm Tones*

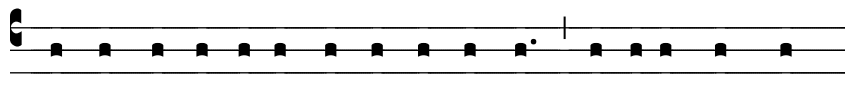
The tone for singing a Psalm should correspond to the modality of the chant melody with which it is sung.

There are as many common tones for the Psalm as there are modes for chant melodies, that is, eight, to which are added the special tones, noted on pp. 571-72.

Each tone consists of a *reciting tone*, a *pause* (if there is a place in the verse for a pause), and *cadences*. The *mediant cadence* occurs at the middle of a verse ; the *final cadence*, at the end of a verse.

1. RECITING TONES. — The repeated notes before the mediant cadence, and between the mediant cadence and the final cadence, indicate the reciting tone or tones. The syllables of the text should move along at a brisk but decorous speed. Intelligibility of the text should be the ruling criterion.

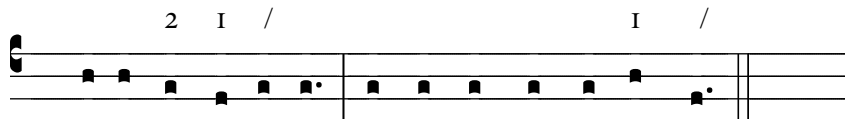
2. PAUSE. — If the first half of the verse is longer, it is divided into two parts. The division is marked by a *pause* (†) :



He has sent de-liv-er-ance to his peo-ple † and established his . . .

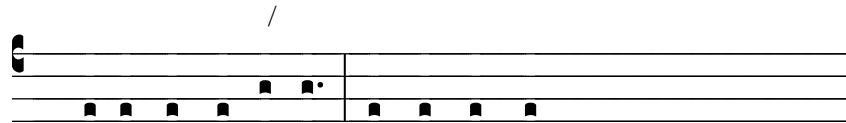
The pause indicates a slight prolonging of the preceding syllable, but no change in pitch.

3. CADENCES. — The mediant and final cadences consist of one accent. There may be one or two preparatory notes before the accent :



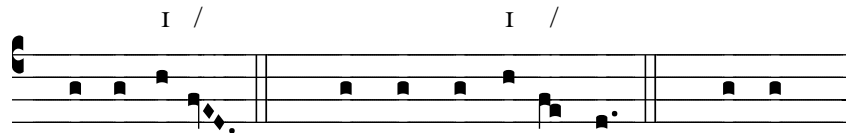
. . . cov-e-nant for év- er. \* Ho- ly his name to be féared.

Some cadences have one accent, but not preparatory notes :

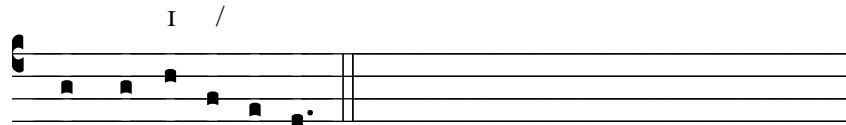


... cov-e-nant for év- er. \* Ho- ly his name ...

4. SPECIAL CADENCES. — Mode I D \* and the Tonus Peregrinus have a special final cadence. The melody may be accomodated to the text in one of three ways :



... ev- er ín mind. ... the lands of the ná-tions. ... in your



midst, O Je- rú- sa-lem.

## *Pointing the Psalms for Chanting*

In order to prepare a text for chanting, the following may prove helpful :

1. SPEAK THE TEXT. — Begin by speaking the text in an expressive manner in order to become sensitive to its inherent stress patterns.

2. DETERMINE THE FINAL ACCENT. — Determine the final accent of the mediant and final cadences, and then count back one and two preparatory syllables, as the tone may require. When a particular text is open to interpretation as to which syllable carries the final accent, follow the direction of the choirmaster.

3. BE SENSITIVE TO THE TEXT. — Avoid stressing unimportant syllables, definite and indefinite articles and, in so far as possible, prepositions.

## *Practical Helps for Chanting*

1. ANTIPHONAL CHARACTER OF PSALMODY. — Psalmody is essentially antiphonal in character. Two choirs, or a cantor and choir (or congregation), alternate in chanting the Psalms.

2. EVEN, RHYTHMIC, FORWARD MOVEMENT. — Each half verse should, as a rule, be sung on one breath. Only in the case of very long verses may the recitative be interrupted momentarily for breath. This is indicated by a pause (†). Singers should strive for an even, forward movement.

3. ENUNCIATION EVEN AND WELL BOUND TOGETHER. — The musical enunciation of the various syllables should be even and well bound together—*legato*. Choppy pronunciation of the words ruins the beauty of psalmody. A rule of thumb : *Never lengthen a syllable when you merely wish to strengthen it (accent) ; and never shorten one when you merely wish to reduce its tone (volume).*

4. NATURAL CRESCENDO AND RITARDANDO. — Let a natural crescendo of intensity rather than of speed mark the recitative up to the final accent. The note or notes following the last accented note in all cadences should be sung softly and with a very slight *ritardando*.

5. COMFORTABLE PITCH. — The pitch of the reciting tone(s) of the psalmody should be adapted to the vocal requirements of the singers. As a general rule, it should not be so high as to cause strain or discomfort, or so low as to make the singing heavy and lacking in brightness.

6. SING WITH ANIMATION. — The psalms should be sung with animation. Dragging should not be permitted.

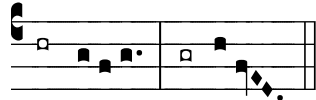
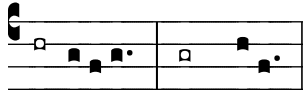
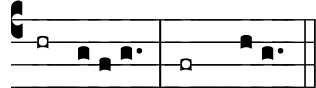
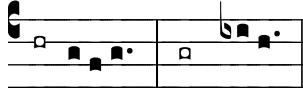
7. PAUSES AT THE CADENCES. — The pauses at the cadences greatly beautify psalm singing. The middle pause at the end of each half verse indicated by the asterisk (\*) must be well defined and long enough for a deep breath.

The exact observance of this pause adds immeasurably to the beauty, dignity, and spirituality of psalmody. A silence of four beats, during which the singers count 1-2-3-4, each beat as long in duration as a syllable of the text of the recitative portion of the psalmody just completed, is adequate. The pause after the final cadence of each beat is two beats in duration (1-2), only half as long as the pause after the mediant cadence.

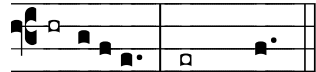
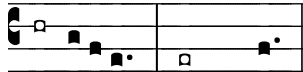
As the singers become accustomed to the alternation of chanting, breathing, chanting, rest, consciousness of counting beats falls away. A restful, natural rhythm results. Body, mind and soul begin to be in harmony. Prayer deepens.

psalms tones


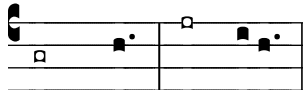
First Mode

|     |                                                                                   |     |                                                                                    |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I D |  | I f |  |
| I g |  | I a |  |

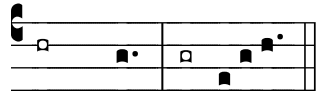
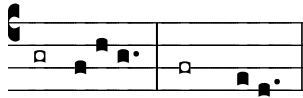
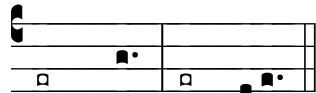
Second Mode

|      |                                                                                   |      |                                                                                    |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| II D |  | II A |  |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

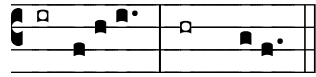
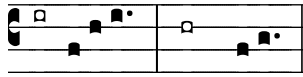
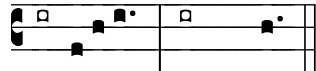
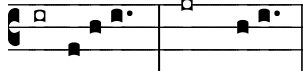
Third Mode

|       |                                                                                    |       |                                                                                     |
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| III g |  | III a |  |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

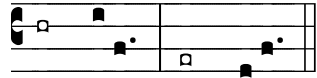

Fourth Mode

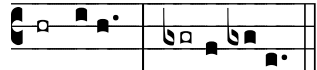
|      |                                                                                     |      |                                                                                      |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| IV a |  | IV d |  |
| IV E |  |      |                                                                                      |

*Fourth Mode « altered »*

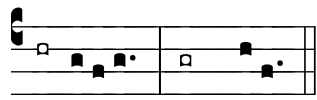
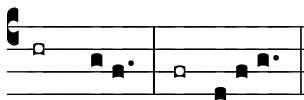
|      |                                                                                     |        |                                                                                      |
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| IV A |  | IV A * |  |
| IV c |  | IV d   |  |

**Ordinary****Fifth Mode**

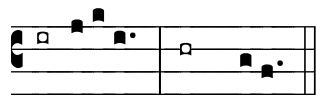
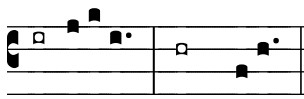
V a  V c 

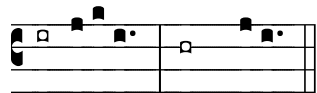
V g 

**Sixth Mode**

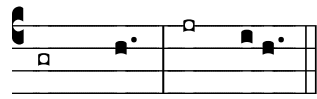

VI f  VI g 

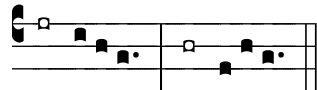
**Seventh Mode**

VII a  VII c 

VII d 

**Eighth Mode**

VIII a  VIII c 

VIII G 

***Tonus Peregrinus***

t. pereg. 

***Tonus Irregularis***

t. irreg. 