

A weekly reflection on Sacred Music & the Liturgy

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If you have been attending Mass at Sacred Heart over the last few years, particularly the 11:00 AM Gregorian Mass, you have probably heard the singing of the Proper Antiphons—the Introit, Offertory, and Communion—which are among the most ancient traditions of the Roman Rite. Drawn principally from Sacred Scripture, especially the Psalms, these texts are appointed by Holy Mother Church for each individual Mass, just as the readings are, and help reveal the distinctive character of each Mass. Unlike a hymn chosen for the Mass, the Propers are given to us by the liturgy itself. The Church’s traditional musical setting of these texts is found in Gregorian Chant, meaning that taken from the *Graduale Romanum*, which the Second Vatican Council recognized as being especially suited to the Roman Rite and deserving “pride of place” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 116). We also utilize the singing of the Propers in English, singing them just as we would a Responsorial Psalm, singing them together with the cantor. In singing the antiphons, therefore, we do more than provide beautiful music to accompany the liturgy: we sing the liturgy itself, joining our voices to the prayer, sacrifice, and musical tradition of the Holy Mass.