**Ministry of Cantor**

**Definition of Terms**

AGNUS DEI—known in English as the *Lamb of God*, this litany is sung while the priest fractions the consecrated host. “Lamb of God” is the only invocation to be used, although the litany may continue as long as needed to accompany the breaking of the consecrated bread. It is sung at least 3 times, with the final phrase “grant us peace.”

AMBO/LECTURN/PULPIT—the sacred space from which the word of God is proclaimed. It is reserved for the readings, the responsorial psalm and the Easter Proclamation (Exsultet). It may also be used for the homily and the Universal Prayer.

ANTIPHON—this is a short verse, usually from Scripture, which may be sung as the Entrance Chant or Communion Chant at Mass. Antiphons are also recited or sung at the beginning and conclusion of psalms and canticles in the Liturgy of the Hours.

ANTIPHONALLY—the back and forth alternation of singing or reciting verses of a psalm, hymn or text between groups or a cantor and a group.

ASSEMBLY—the members of the Body of Christ gathered together for liturgy.

BOOK OF THE GOSPELS—a separate book from the Lectionary that contains the Gospel readings used at Mass and is carried in procession.

CANTICLE—a hymn found in Scripture that is part of the Liturgy of the Hours and is sometimes used as the responsorial psalm at Mass.

CHANT—any form of vocal music in which the notes sung are not assigned any rhythmic value nor do they follow a rhythmic meter. “Gregorian chant,” erroneously attributed to St. Gregory the Great, is a particular style of chant used in the Middle Ages that is given pride of place in the Church’s sacred liturgy.

EUCHARIST—comes from a Greek word meaning “to give thanks”. Another name for the Mass or the consecrated bread and wine.

EUCHARISTIC ACCLAMATIONS—the acclamations sung by the assembly throughout the Eucharistic Prayer that include the *Holy, Holy (Sanctus)*, *Memorial Acclamation*, and *Amen.*

EUCHARISTIC PRAYER—the great prayer of thanksgiving at Mass in which bread and wine are consecrated, thus becoming the Body and Blood of Christ and offered to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION—the *Alleluia* or another acclamation during the season of Lent that announces the high point of the Liturgy of the Word—the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

GLORIA—a great hymn of praise to the Trinity sung on feasts and solemnities except during the seasons of Advent and Lent.

KYRIE—although sometimes included in the penitential act, the *Kyrie* is a litany of praise to the Risen Lord, imploring his mercy.

LEADER OF SONG—a person who animates and leads the assembly in singing. This is one function of the cantor’s role.

LITANY—a prayer with a series of responses done in a call-response format, usually by a leader and a group. Litanies were traditionally used to accompany processions. The *Kyrie, Agnus Dei* and *Litany of the Saints* are examples of litanies.

LITURGY—official public worship of the Church, of which Eucharist is first and foremost.

MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION—the Eucharistic Acclamation following the Words of Institution and “the mystery of faith” invitation by the priest. There are three different options: “We proclaim your death…” “When we eat this bread…” and “Save us, Savior of the world…”

NEUME—precursors to modern musical notation, these are notes used in traditional chant music.

PASCHAL SACRIFICE—Christ offering himself on the cross for the salvation of the world. Based on our Jewish heritage, Christ, by sacrificing himself on the cross, becomes our “Passover” (Pasch) Lamb and frees us from the bondage of sin and death.

PRELUDE—music played or sung before the liturgy that is not actually part of the rite itself.

PRESIDER—person appointed to lead communal worship in accordance with the laws of the Church. A bishop or priest is the presider of the Mass.

PSALM TONE—a simple melody or musical phrase to sing the verses of the psalm or another hymn text

PSALMIST—the ministry of proclaiming the psalm through singing. Often this role is carried out by the cantor.

REFRAIN—a sung lyric or phrase that is sung after the verse of a song.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM—the psalm or canticle that is proclaimed after the First Reading at Mass. It is a response to the First Reading, so it should have a similar theme and can be done in a variety of ways, however, the response sung by the assembly is the most common.

SACRISTAN—a person who handles the preparations of vessels, linens, books, and other liturgical items before Mass. He or she may oversee the attendance of all liturgical ministers scheduled and may also communicate any special notices or instructions to these ministers before Mass.

SACRISTY—a room attached to a church, usually near the altar, where the clergy and lay ministers vest for Mass and where all the liturgical vessels and other items are kept.

SANCTUARY—the sacred space around the altar usually set apart in some way from the rest of the church building. The ambo is usually located in the sanctuary.

SANCTUS—the Latin word for “holy” and refers to the *Holy Holy Holy* acclamation during the Eucharistic Prayer

SEQUENCE—one of several ancient Christian hymns that are sung after the Second Reading on certain feasts and solemnities in the liturgical year. The sequence is mandatory on Easter Sunday and Pentecost.

TABERNACLE--A cupboard or boxlike receptacle, usually locked, for the exclusive reservation of the Blessed Sacrament. A lit sanctuary lamp is usually located nearby indicating that the Blessed Sacrament is reserved inside.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER—also known as the Prayer of the Faithful or the General Intercessions, these are the prayers offered to God by the baptized faithful addressing the needs and concerns of the Church, the world, the nation, community and the parish. These may be read or chanted by the cantor.