

TRAINING CANTOR TRAINERS + Detroit, MI 2010

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Cantor Formation Program Models

I. Extensive Training Program for Parish Cantors sponsored by Diocese or Local Deanery

- 8-Sessions held on Saturday from 9:30-3:00
- The formation program should be designed for both beginning and advanced parish cantors.
- The program should allow participants to deepen their understanding of the role and ministry of the Cantor in current worship practice.
- The program should allow for individual coaching in voice skills.
- The program should be designed to develop the pastoral and liturgical skills of the cantor.
- Sessions will focus on the following areas:
 - Liturgical competence: Theology of Worship, The Liturgical Year, Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of the Eucharist, Liturgy of the Hours, Other Rites, Triduum Liturgies
 - Musical competence: Basic Theory and Music Fundamentals (if needed)
 - Scripture study: Psalms and Canticles
 - Voice Skills: Individual Vocal Training
 - Animation practicum

II. Parish Training Program

- Monthly sessions that focus on the above areas, but also:
 - A formation program that highly recommends or requires participation
 - A program that helps aid the “discernment” of a cantor’s gifts
 - A program that goes beyond “rehearsal of the music”
 - A program that provides formation of body, mind, spirit principles
- Program employs regular feedback to cantor with regard to musical preparedness, facial and emotional communication, feedback mechanisms that aid in the proclamation skills of the cantor
- Program aids in forming a small Christian community of cantors; aids in eliminating the “diva-divo” issues.
- If the parish musician is limited in some of the areas of formation, i.e. proper vocal are scriptural training, outside resources can be employed for an even broader experience.

BODY

Yoga Exercises for Singers

- Close eyes/focus at the brow point, comfortable seating
- Three diaphragms – pelvic floor, diaphragm, throat diaphragm
- Breathe into sides
- Breath into back – bending forward in chair
- Breath of Fire – naval point
- Tongue out (good for jaw relaxation)
- Tension in Tone – “clicking the tongue” lalalala (3 minutes)
- Three diaphragms – pelvic floor, diaphragm, throat diaphragm
- Lips – whistle breathe on inhale and exhale

GENERAL VOCAL PRINCIPLES

- Vocalization is necessary for the instrument to be released, activated, stretched and trained (we are athletes!)
- Each vocalization should have a specific goal; no time for mindless activity
- 10-15 minutes daily is a good start
- Engage the body in vocalization
- Exercises should begin in the middle register; then explore the extremes
- Engage the light singing mechanism first and work it down – vowels only
- Warm up the emotions

VOCAL MECHANICS OF SINGING

I. POSTURE/BODY POSITION

- Tall, erect posture – “royalty”
- Feet are grounded and not more than shoulder width apart; one foot slightly ahead of the other, weight on the forward foot
- Knees are relaxed and not locked; use glutes to hold yourself up
- Aware of spinal support – upward stretch
- Chest is elevated and chin tucked into chest; arched; balance head on the neck
- Face, jaw, tongue, lips relaxed
- Eye focus
- Arms relaxed and hanging at the sides of the body

II. BREATHING (BODY)

Inhalation

- Fill in an imaginary inner tube around the waist
- Suck in through a straw
- Series of sniffs
- Imagine a belt of noses around the waist and breath in
- “Home Alone” astonishment
- Rhythmic breathing on a set of sniffs – increase the number
- Rhythmic breathing on a selected consonant, i.e. t or d
- Inhalation from both the nose and the mouth
- We feel the air enter from the naval point; the diaphragm lowers as the intercostals muscles stretch outward
- Avoid tightening the stomach muscles
- We should study our anatomy and know what body parts are involved in the process of singing

Exhalation

- Do not let the lungs completely empty before taking the next breath
- Blow out candles one at a time
- Slow, leaking sound
- Fix on a spot on the wall (laser beam)
- After the lungs have filled, the resistance must begin; we hold back the air
- Let in, set, spin

Exercises: Lip Trills, i.e. motorboat, staccato and pulsed exercises

III. RESONANCE (HEAD)

- Physiology includes tongue, jaw, lips, mouth, palates, nasal/sinus cavities, eyes
- Yawn-sigh
- Relaxation of jaw; blah, blah, blah
- Raising the soft palate
- Sound rides on well-shaped vowels
- Italian vowel sounds are most effective for singing (they can be shaped to fit any style of music
 - AH (A) as in *father*
 - EH (E) as in *fed*
 - EE (I) as in *feet*
 - OH (O) as in *fought*
 - OO (U) as in *food*
- Fish face

- Inner smile
- Breath of clean air
- Diphthongs
- Working the *passagio*

IV. RANGE

- Think like an operatic singer – “I love to sing” on 5-8-5-3-1
- Exercises that encompass a large scale range

V. ARTICULATION

- Consonants should be short and crisp – move quickly to the vowel sound
- Relaxation of tongue, teeth and lips

VI. SINGING HEALTH/LESSONS/TEACHERS

- Best resource for singing teachers is the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS)
- Be a wise consumer; know what you expect from a teacher; hold an audition
- Difference between teacher and coach
- Determine a period of study
- Practice, practice, practice

The Singer's Companion by Brent Monahan www.limelighteditions.com

MIND

Liturgical –*The role of music is to serve the needs of the Liturgy and not to dominate it, seek to entertain, or draw attention to itself or the musicians (STL 125)*

“Sing To The Lord”– Things Cantors need to know about their role in the liturgy.

Entrance Song – text and music(144)

Kyrie Eleison (146)

Gloria (149)

Responsorial Psalm (146-160)

Gospel Acclamation (161-164)

Sequence (165-166)

Creed (170)

Prayer of the Faithful – mentions litany (171)

Agnus Dei (188)

Communion Chant or song (189)

Musical Forms and Repertoire

During which part of liturgy(ies) do we experience these forms?

- Hymns and Songs
- Acclamations
- Responses
- Responsorial Pieces
- Litanies

Ritual Music

- We collectively do it more than once or twice; falls into a weekly or yearly cycle.
- Music ought to BE the liturgy rather than mere ornamentation
- Assembly must be integral to the musical experience
- Criteria of text

A few notions about music choices.....

- Cantors are often asked to choose music beyond the psalm
- Cantors sometimes not consulted re: choice of psalm
- Cantors can help determine the parish repertoire of psalmody as well as other portions

Musical Leadership and Repertoire

Helping People Sing

- Hospitality – do we welcome their song?
- Musical Quality
- Singability
- Consistency
- Teaching
- Acoustics and Arrangement
- Instruments and Amplification
- Start with Acclamations

Experiments to Try....

- Look at the music used at Sunday liturgies over the last year.
- What music does the assembly know by heart?
- Try some liturgies without cantor cueing the assembly on all parts
- Try different kind of choir
- Encourage everyone involved with liturgical musical leadership to its importance and possible qualities
- Arrange “field trips” for Sunday worship to churches in your area with strong singing
- Plan for a capella singing on a regular basis
- Consider the range of “musical leadership” beyond parish liturgies

***Examination of Conscience for Cantors (based on Sing to the Lord)
Pastoral Music Notebook, July 2009***

- *Do I view my ministry as “a valued and integral part of the overall pastoral ministry of the parish or diocese” (52)?*
- *Do I serve with the sense of professionalism and of ministry that complement one another (48-53)?*
- *Do I foster the active participation of the liturgical assembly (45)?*
- *Do I value collaboration with the other music ministers in my parish as well as with the pastor, pastoral staff, and congregation (47)?*
- *Do I develop my musical skills and those of other liturgical musicians (50,56)?*
- *Do I take time to practice and put resources into my continuing formation as a musician (43, 50, 56)?*
- *Do I promote a variety of musical styles – chant, music from our past, and music of contemporary composers – along with the music of various cultures (55, 57-60, 72-75, 81-83)?*
- *Am I willing to be stretched to deepen my pastoral skills (50)?*
- *Do I understand my service as a ministry rooted in baptism (49, 52)?*
- *Do I take time to seek holistic formation in human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral dimensions (51)?*
- *Do I understand that the role of “psalmist” or “cantor of the psalm” is distinct from that of cantor (35)?*
- *Do I understand that as psalmist I proclaim the Word of God (35)?*
- *Do I proclaim the text with “clarity, conviction and sensitivity” (35)?*
- *Do I proclaim the text with sensitivity not only to the text but also to the musical setting and to those who are listening (35)?*
- *Do I understand why the responsorial psalm is sung “from the ambo or another suitable place” (36)?*
- *Do I understand the difference between serving as cantor and as leader of congregational song (37)?*
- *Am I familiar with the several duties of the cantor (37)?*
- *As leader of congregational song, do I sing with the entire gathered assembly (38)?*
- *Do I understand that my voice should not be heard above the congregation (38)?*
- *Do I lead from a place where I can be seen and in ways that help the assembly find its voice (38-39)?*
- *Do I use the microphone only when needed for the assembly to hear the verses of a psalm or song (38)?*
- *Do I step away from the microphone when the assembly is singing and is the voice to be heard (38)?*

- *Am I visible to the assembly when needed, without drawing attention away from the liturgical action (39)?*
- *Do I understand why the cantor leads “from a conveniently located stand, but not from the ambo,” when exercising my ministry (40)?*

The Psalms – Entrusted to the Cantor

What do the psalms have to say to us in this century?

- In 1971 The Church issued the General Instruction for the Liturgy of the Hours – it reminded us of the musical nature of psalmody
 - #103: The psalms are not readings or prose prayers, but poems of praise. All the psalms have a musical quality that determines their correct style of delivery
 - #269: Especially the psalms....are lyrical in form and do not yield their fuller meaning unless they are sung
 - #121: Their rhythm must be clear, and “different psalms may be sung in different ways for a fuller grasp of their spiritual meaning and beauty” depending upon “language used and especially by the kind of celebration.

Psalms in Early Christian Liturgy

- used in Jewish liturgy at the time of Christ though unclear about exact details
 - especially in terms of psalmody in the synagogue – the ordinary experience of corporate worship for most Jews in occupied Palestine as well as in the Diaspora.
- Use of psalmody in the Temple
 - Psalm 105 used during morning prayer
 - Psalm 96 in the evening
 - Psalm 24 on the first day
 - Psalm 48 on the Monday
 - Psalm 82 on Tuesday
 - Psalm 94 on Wednesday, July 18, 2007
 - Psalm 81 on Thursday
 - Psalm 93 on the eve of Sabbath
 - Psalms 38/91 on Sabbath
 - Psalms 135/136 used on Passover

- Many of the prayers used in the first three centuries of Christian worship were taken directly from or adapted from prayers used in the synagogue.
 - we know that the use of psalmody in synagogues in the early Christian centuries was the singing of the psalm in alternation between soloist and congregation.
 - In Christian worship it came to be known as responsorial psalmody.
 - Antiphonal psalmody – alternate verses were sung in turn by two choruses
 - through-composed settings – texts of the psalm verses recited or sung from beginning to end without repetition or alternation
- Primary difference between Jewish and Christian use of psalmody – not the way the psalms were chanted as the way the texts were interpreted.
- Christians assigned a Christological re-reading to the psalms: General Instruction LH: “The Fathers of the Church saw the whole psalter as a prophecy of Christ and the Church”
 - Ps.22:2 (“My God, why have you abandoned me?”)
 - Ps. 31:6 (“Into your hands I commend my spirit”)
 - Both placed on the lips of Jesus by Gospel writers
 - Ps. 34: 9 (Taste and see how good the Lord is) anticipating the Eucharist.
 - psalms were used as “proof texts” to substantiate their claims about Jesus.

Structure of the Book of Psalms

- Collection of 150 poems in the Hebrew scriptures; divided into 5 sections. Each book ends with a thanksgiving to God and Psalm 150 serves as a conclusion to the entire book as well as to the 5th section
- correlates to the 5 books of the Pentateuch or Torah; the psalms reflect and enhance the teaching of these books
- Superscriptions: to whom is the authorship of the psalm attributed:
 - 74 attributed to King David (either for or by him)
 - 12 to Solomon
 - 1 to Moses
 - 32 to other individuals
 - 31 anonymous
- psalms were composed over a long period, from the time of Exodus to the time of the return to Jerusalem in 538 BCE
- We think of the Bible as God speaking to God: psalms are people speaking to God in eloquent poetry

- psalms are the prayerbook of the Hebrew scriptures and we connect to our ancestors in faith when we pray them
- Jesus often quoted the psalms.....*ask when*
- 2/3 of psalms are laments: life is like that
- Laments take three forms:
 - This is a mess and it's Your fault (Ps. 44)
 - This is a mess and it's our enemies' fault
 - This is a mess and it's our fault

The Psalms as they Reflect the Covenant

- Main themes of Creation and Exodus: CREATE/SAVE: Justice/Deliverance
 - psalms demand justice
 - hold God accountable when they think God is absent
 - try to get a rise out of God

Evocative Language

- **captures our imagination by communicating through such things as simile, metaphor, ambiguity, hyperbole**
 - psalms express life at the extremes
 - when we praise it is with glad abandonment and unrestrained exuberance
 - when lamenting it is with anguished insistence and unqualified cantor
 - language of POETRY

HOW DO WE USE THE PSALMS AS CANTORS

Thomas Merton – “ The psalms are made up of cries of wonder, exultation, anguish or joy. The very concreteness of their passion makes some of them seem disjointed and senseless. Their spontaneity makes them songs without plan, because there are no blue prints for ecstasy.

-One of the best ways to learn to appreciate the Psalms is to acquire a habit of reciting them slowly and well.

-...we begin to find out that certain ones fit our own condition and our own experience better than others. This recognition of a special appropriateness for our own lives, in particular Psalms, is an actual grace of God.

Gradual Psalms (119-133) – full of light and confidence. They are supposed to have been the favorite songs of pilgrims traveling to the earthly Jerusalem before the time of Christ. (Psalm 121----I rejoiced when I heard them say....let us go to the house of the Lord)

Psalms 25, 53, 55 (appropriate for suffering injustice and calumny)

Psalm 27 (help in affliction)

Ps. 62, 38, 40, 31, 54, 58 (mystery of interior and spiritual trial)

Ps. 2, 2, 11, 13, 5, 52, 49 – (sufferings and struggles of society, prayers for peace and help in times of persecution like our own)

Ps. 6, 37, 31, 50, 101, 129, 142 (penitential psalms)

Ps. 15, 22, 32, 33, 26, 118, 122, 45, 141, 124) – psalms of joy and praise

Ps. 109 – (triumphant Christ, life over death)

Ps. 95-99 (eschatological - second coming of Christ)

SPIRIT

Pastoral

- ❖ Hospitality
 - Music at Funerals
 - Music at Weddings

Good Morning and welcome to St. _____ Catholic Church.

This morning we celebrate the funeral rites for _____

The _____ family has chosen the music for the funeral and it is their desire for all to join in song and prayer. We have provided a worship aid that has the listings of the hymns and psalms we will be singing. Would you look please at the back page where you will find the ***Song of Farewell***. Since this is music that we will all sing together at the conclusion of the liturgy, I would like to sing this refrain for you. Sing.....Now will you please join me.....Sing. We will sing this refrain several times and you will know when to come in when I raise my arms in invitation. Our Entrance song is _____ # _____ in our hymnal. Would you please stand and face the entrance to the church.

We gather in great joy this morning/afternoon/evening to witness the marriage of _____ and _____. They have chosen the music for this celebration and it is their sincere wish that you join in song and prayer. In the worship guide provided by the couple, you will find the music for the responsorial psalm. Since we will all be singing that together I would like to sing the refrain for you and then I will ask you to join me. *Sing.....* Could we try that once again? (if needed!) *Sing.....* You will know when to sing this refrain when I raise my arms in invitation. Please stand and face the entrance of the church for procession.

Other Issues of Hospitality

- ❖ Teaching new music
- ❖ Cantor as Listener
- ❖ Other Issues: People/Places/Things

Spiritual

Lectio Divina

First time reading: Ask all to listen attentively for the **word or phrase** that stands out to them in the reading.

Share only the **word or phrase** with the person next to you or the group

Second time reading: Listen attentively to the same reading. Tell the person or group what the word or phrase that stood out to you **means to you**.

Third time reading: Listen attentively to the same reading.

Share with the group how this word or phrase **comforts or challenges** you?

USEFUL LINKS FOR CANTORS:

www.nats.org - National Association of Teachers of Singing (U.S.)

www.netwellness.org/healthtopics/ent/voice.cfm - Vocal Health

www.vocalist.org.uk

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio1/onemusic/startingout/vocalp07.shtml>

<http://borntosing.com/crazy001.htm>

www.nyee.edu/pdf/voice-vocal-warm-ups.pdf - Warm-ups

dictiondomain.com - Everything you want to know about language diction. vocalpower.com - Resource site for all things vocal.

[Connecting Voices](http://ConnectingVoices.com) - A resource of articles, information and talk for the vocal community.

[Vocalist International](http://VocalistInternational.com) - Internet resource and database for singers.

musicstaff.com - Leading music teacher directory.

privatelessons.com - Find a private music teacher in your area.

BOOKS

Psalm Study

Sing A New Song: Irene Nowell

\$21.95

Liturgical Press

The Lord's Song in a Foreign Land: Thomas Wahl

\$16.96

Liturgical Press

The Message of the Psalms: Brueggemann

Augsburg Press

The Cultural World of the Prophets: Pilch

\$11.95

Liturgical Press

Liturgical Documents

The Music Documents: Music in Catholic Worship & Liturgical Music Today

#LD-1

\$5.95

NPM Publications

General Instruction of the Roman Missal

#LD-4

\$12.95

NPM Publications

Introduction to the Order of mass

#LD-5

\$9.95

NPM Publications

Cantor Formation

Cantor Basics, Revised Edition

#PR-1

\$14.95

NPM Publications, OCP

Handbook for Cantors

#PR-2

\$10.00

NPM Publications, Liturgy Training Publications

Guide for Cantors

\$5.95

Liturgy Training Publications

Psalmist and Cantor

#LFR-6

\$7.00

NPM Publications

NPM Publications

www.npm.org

Liturgy Training Publications

www.LTP.org

Oregon Catholic Press

www.ocp.org

A Commissioning Prayer Service for Cantors

Leader: Let us sign ourselves with the sign of our faith. In the name of the Father,
+and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Brothers and sisters, we stand in awe in the presence of our God, who has generously poured out the gift of music upon us. As member of the Body of Christ, we often give that Body ways to express its joy, its pain, its grief, and its wonder. For this we are forever grateful to God.

Sing “Take, O Take Me As I Am”

A Reading from the Book of Colossians

Colossians 3:12–17

As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

The word of the Lord.

Sing “Take, O Take Me As I Am”

INTERCESSIONS

Leader: Sisters and brothers, God calls us to use our talents to help build the kingdom of God here on earth. As musicians, we help bring that kingdom to a reality by creating rhythms and sounds that give God’s people a taste of the life to come. Let us praise God.

O God, you are the giver of every good gift.

All: Thank you for the gifts you have so generously given us.

Leader: O God, you created the music of nature that fills the earth.

All: Help us be attuned to the music of creation that surrounds us.

Leader: O God, you filled your people, Israel, with a song of praise and thanksgiving.

All: May their song uphold us in our ministry.

Leader: **O God, you gave voice to the psalmist.**

All: May the singing of psalms continue to inspire us.

Leader: **O God, you sent your Son to be your song of mercy and salvation.**

All: May his song be on our lips and in our hearts.

Leader: **O God, you bless us with voices to sing; with mouths, hands, and feet to play instruments; with ears to hear and to refine our skills.**

All: Bless us, O God, as we make a joyful sound to your name.

CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: Let us pray.

**O God of wonder,
you have created us in your own image and likeness.**

In you is the very beauty of music itself.

**Keep our hearts faithful to the call
we received in baptism:**

**to bring a song of hope to those who despair;
a song of comfort to the sorrowing;
a song of elation to the joyful;
and a song of healing to the sick.**

**We ask this in the name of your Son and our song,
our Lord Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit.
You are one God forever and ever.**

All: Amen.

Sing "Take, O Take Me As I Am"

Leader: **Friends, let us greet each other with a sign of peace and encouragement for our ministry as cantor.**