

The Chants

The Proper of the Mass includes the scriptural texts that change daily with the liturgical calendar. The Proper texts that are sung by the choir are the chants. Each Mass Proper has five chants — the Entrance, the Psalm, the Gospel Acclamation, the Offertory and the Communion chant. They have been part of the Mass since the earliest centuries, and are meant to be sung, though some may be spoken.

Chants may take different forms which are set forth in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM; the official resource for how to properly execute the Roman Rite of the Mass.)

The GIRM offers four options for the Entrance, Offertory and Communion chants which include traditional chants and other options.

Guidance is provided in several sections, for example, no.48/Entrance (and similar for Offertory and Communion) — in order of preference:

I. *the antiphon from the Missal or the antiphon with its Psalm from the Graduale Romanum, as set to music there or in another setting;*

II. *the antiphon and Psalm of the Graduale Simplex for the liturgical time;*

III. *a chant from another collection of Psalms and antiphons, approved by the Conference of Bishops or the Diocesan Bishop, including Psalms arranged in responsorial or metrical forms;*

IV. *another liturgical chant that is suited to the sacred action, the day, or the time of year, similarly approved by the Conference of Bishops or the Diocesan Bishop."*



The Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time:

Entrance Antiphon:

Save us, O Lord our God! And gather us from the nations, to give thanks to your holy name, and make it our glory to praise you.

Responsorial Refrain:

I will sing of your salvation

Gospel Acclamation:

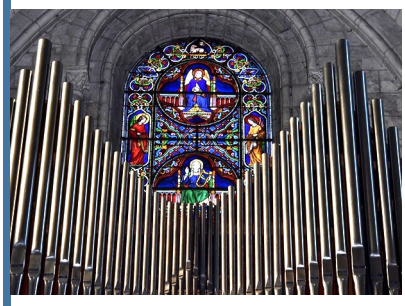
The Lord sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives.

Communion Antiphon:

Let your face shine on your servant. Save me in your merciful love. O Lord, let me never be put to shame for I call on you.

Additional insights:

- **The Graduale Romanum** is the Church's official book for the choir.
- **"Antiphons"** were traditionally sung by multiple choirs, with one choir in the front of the church, and would sing the refrain, while another choir would be in the rear and chant the verses, creating a back and forth "call and response" or "antiphonal" effect. The antiphons were adopted from Hebrew worship and were introduced into Western civilization by St. Ambrose in the 4th Century.
- **The hymn** was an option offered through Vatican II as the antiphons and chants, at that time, did not have English versions (nor musical settings). In the absence of English options, hymns filled the void, which had already been part of the low Mass for decades. Since that time, English settings have been made available.



- **After Vatican II,** the Roman Missal included spoken antiphons for Entrance and Communion to be recited if there was no music.
- **At St. John Neumann Church,** in Masses that are not sung, the Entrance, Responsorial Psalm and Communion antiphons are spoken by the lector and/or congregation as guided by the Roman Missal; the Gospel Acclamation and Offertory are omitted as they should be sung. At Masses that have a cantor, the Responsorial Psalm and Alleluia are sung, while hymns are selected for the others, rather than an antiphon.

Sources: www.antiphonrenewal.com; parish.saintbrendan.org/antiphons-what-are-they/; www.ncronline.org/news/spirituality/scripture-life/using-antiphons-liturgy; www.canticanova.com