**Sacred Heart Catholic Church Choir**

**Book III**

**(Passiontide, Holy Week, Requiem and Nuptial chant and music)**

Sacred Heart is a parish in the arch-diocese of Cincinnati

Entrusted to the Oratorian Community

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**LATIN PRONUNCIATION**

Guidelines for use

Like many other languages, the most important concept to pronouncing Latin is understanding its vowels.

English has 5 basic vowels:

* **A**
* **E**
* **I**
* **O**
* **U**

Latin has the same vowels which are generally pronounced:

* **AH**
* **AY**
* **EE**
* **OH**
* **OOH**

The above vowel sounds correspond to the **LONG** vowel sound. There are also **SHORT** vowel sounds which occur on occasion for certain vowels:

* **--**
* **EH**
* **IH**
* **UH**
* **--**

When pronouncing Latin, the first thing is to break the word into component syllables. The rule is that every vowel = one syllable, although there is an exception when vowels form diphthongs. Some examples with standard vowels:

* **In-tro-i-bo** = 4 syllables IH-N – – TR-OH – – EE – – B-OH
* **Fi-li-i** = 3 syllables F-EE – – LEE – – EE
* **Cir-cum-de-de-runt** = 5 syllables C-IH-R – – C-OOH-M – – D-AY – – D-AY – – R-OOH-NT
* **A-a-ron** = 3 syllables AH – – AH – – R-OH-N
* **Se-di-sti** = 3 syllables SAY – – DEE – – STEE
* **Re-tri-bu-am** = 4 syllables R-AY – – TR-EE – – B-OOH – – AH-M

Sometimes, vowels combine to form diphthongs. Examples of diphthongs:

* **OE** = AY **COELI** = CH-AY – – L-EE
* **AE** = AY **CAECILIA** = CH-AY – – CH-EE – – L-EE – – AH
* **EU** = OH **EUGE** = OH – – J-AY
* **AU** = OW **LAUDA** = L-OW – – D-AH (OW as in ouch, OW, that hurts)
* **UI =** EE **QUI** = KW-EE
* **UO** = OH **QUOTIDIE** = KW-OH – – T-EE – – DEE -- AY
* **UE** = AY **QUOQUE** = KW-OH – – KW-AY

Diphthongs are two vowels together that use one sound. From examples above, we’ve seen instances of two vowels with two sounds – – AA in Aaron, ii in Filii for example. There is also a case where two vowels together have a blended consonant / vowel sound:

* **IU** = Y-OOH **CUIUS** = C-OOH – – Y-OOH-S(e)

Long vowel sounds, short vowel sounds, diphthongs and blended vowel sounds are not always clearly defined, particularly when singing Latin. There are many variants of Latin as well – each with different sets of rules governing how to pronounce words. French Latin; German Latin, Grammatical Latin; Ecclesiastical Latin (the one we use). But even within a given “style” or “variant”, different people have different perspectives and different rules.

Short vowel sounds occur because of euphony – a process of relaxing standard rules because of easier usage. For example, trying to say **In Principio** with all long vowels for the I’s is something that people actually using the language would have quickly adjusted. Instead of:

EE-N PR-EE-N – – CH-EE – – P-EE – – OH

It would have been shortened to:

IH-N PR-IH-N – – CH-EE – – P-EE – – OH

It is a difference between a purely academic understanding and a practical application. Almost always, the vowel sounds will be long, but there are obvious exceptions. If unsure, always use the long vowel sound, and then find out for sure. This is also where the blended sound of IU comes from (say CUI – US and compare to CUIUS with above rule).

Once the vowels are understood, the rest will fall quickly together – consonants are more straight-forward.

* C preceding E, I, AE, OE = CH **COELI** = CH-AY – – LEE  
  otherwise, as we pronounce C **MISERICORDIA** = M-EE – – Z-EH – – R-EE – – C-OH-R – – DEE – – AH
* CC = C **ECCE** = EH – – CH-AY

**ECCLESIA** = AY – – C-L-AY – – Z-EE – – AH

* CH = K **CHERUBIM** = K-EH – – R-OOH – – B-EE-M
* SC = SH **DESCENDIT** = D-AY – – SH-EH-N – – D-EE-T
* G preceding E, I, AE, OE = soft **REGINA** = R-AY – – J-EE – – N-AH  
  otherwise, hard G **EGO** = AY – – G-OH
* GN = like G-N-Y **AGNUS** = A-G – – N-Y-OO-S(e)
* H = K in two words **NIHIL** and **MIHI** = N-EE – – K-IH-L and M-EE – – K-EE  
  otherwise, silent **HAGIOS** = AH – – G-EE – – OH-S(e)
* J – often written as I = Y **IAM** = Y-AH-M

**ALLELUIA** = AH – – L-AY – – L-OOH – – Y-AH

**IACOB** = Y-AH – – C-OH-B

* R – flipped or rolled
* S = S at beginning of word **SAECULA** = S-AY – – K-OOH – – L-AH
* S typically = Z in middle of word **MISERERE** = M-EE – – Z-AY – – R-AY – – R-AY
* S = S(e) at end of word **AGNUS** = A-G – – N-Y-OO-S(e)
* SC = SH **DESCENDIT** = D-AY – – SH-EH-N – – D-EE-T
* T = T **SANCTUS** = S-AH-N-K – – T-OOH-S(e)
* TH = T **CATHOLICAM** = C-AH – – T-OH – – L-EE – – C-AH-M
* TI before a vowel = T-S-EE **PATIENTIA** = P-AH – – T-S-EE – – EH-N – – T-S-EE – – AH  
  otherwise = T-EE **OMNIPOTENTIS** = OH-M – – N-EE – – P-OH – – T-EH-N – – T-EE-S(e)

Other consonants are typically as in English. Doubled consonants are treated as single consonants.

So, one would NOT breathe at either *a* or *b* above.

When examining text (like the psalm text for vespers or matins), start by looking at the syllables, then apply the consonant / vowel sounds as described above.

When examining words for syllabification, vowels don’t start syllables EXCEPT when they are at the beginning of a word or when they follow another vowel. Otherwise, consonants always start the syllables. When there are two consonants, the two consonants typically are associated with separate syllables, but occasionally are sounded as one (usually doubled consonants, for example).

Examples of syllabification:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Omnipotentis | Om—ni—po—ten—tis |
| Factorem | Fac—to—rem |
| Plenitudine | Ple—ni—tu—di—ne |
| Accepimus | A—cce—pi—mus |
| Scabellum | Sca—be—llum |
| Splendoribus | Splen—do—ri—bus |
| Secundum | Se—cun—dum |
| Melchisedech | Mel—chi—se—dech |
| Torrente | To—rren—te |
| Propterea | Prop—te—re—a |
| Conquassabit | Con—qua—ssa—bit |
| Usque | Us—que |
| Occasum | O—cca—sum |
| Laudabile | Lau—da—bi—le |
| Suscitans | Su—sci—tans |
| Inopem | In—o—pem |
| Collocet | Co—llo—cet |
| Participatio | Par—ti—ci—pa—ti—o |
| Idipsum | I—dip—sum |
| Diligentibus | Di—li—gen—ti—bus |
| Abundantia | A—bun—dan—ti—a |
| Quaesivi | Quae—si—vi |
| Aedificaverit | Ae—di—fi—ca—ve—rit |
| Sederitis | Se—de—ri—tis |
| Sagittae | Sa—gi—ttae |
| Excussorum | Ex—cu—sso—rum |
| Eloquium | E—lo—qui—um |
| Velociter | Ve—lo—ci—ter |
| Crystallum | Cry—sta—llum |
| Liquefaciet | Li—que—fa—ci—et |