

SUNG READINGS IN THE ORDINARY FORM OF THE MASS

The following are detailed instructions on how to sing readings during Mass in the Ordinary Form, in English, using given formulas from the *Liber Usualis*. We keep in mind the differences and particularities of the English language, yet keep a faithfulness to the original tones and melodic formulas.

We will use the readings for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception as our example. Before we begin, let us agree on some terminology:

Title tone – Title of the reading and its appropriate response in the case of the Gospel.

Flex – A literary pause used only in the prophecy tone

Metrum – A literary pause used only in the Epistle

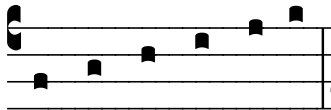
Full Stop – End of sentence, employed in all readings

Interrogation – A question within a reading, often in quotations

Conclusion – The method we use to end the reading

Reciting Tone – The tone we always begin with and gravitate toward

Literary accent – natural speaking accent of a syllable



These are the six pitches that will be used throughout.

FA-SOL-LA-SI-DO-RE

Other terms will be used and explained in full as we proceed. We begin with the first reading.

Tones for the Prophecy

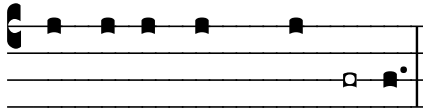
THE PROPHECY TONE

Title Tone – The title tone is announced on a pitch that is chosen to be comfortably within our range, deriving from our natural speaking voice. Perhaps we would do well not to use the word chosen, but rather, a tone that is but a natural extension of our speaking voice. After all, it has been said that singing is but sustained talking.

We then assign DO to be this reciting tone. (see pitches above) This will be our gravitational tone in which we will always come back to after melodic ascents and descents.

The title of the first reading (also called the Old Testament, or the Prophecy) is announced on this reciting tone. At the end of the title, we melodically descend by a fifth after the final word accent.

DO title DO...**DO** – FA
 DO title DO...**DO** – FA – FA



A read-ing from... **Gen-** i -sis

After a pause, we continue with the reading on the reciting tone (DO). As we continue, we will come to punctuation marks, question marks, quotations and other grammatical happenings. The following are melodic tools which we will use.

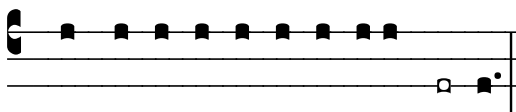
Flex – The flex is made toward the middle of each sentence, often at a comma or a semi colon. Its function is to provide a melodic break from the reciting tone, so as to help render the text more intelligibly and increase comprehension with the congregation. Therefore, it can freely omitted at will if the sentence is short. If good sense allows, several flexes may be employed or not employed, as for example in a lengthy sentence with several commas. One should rely on their good artistic judgment. When it is used in the prophecy tone, the voice is lowered by one half step (DO-SI) on the final syllable (of the phrase being ‘flexed’).



Af-ter the man, A-dam, had ea-ten of the tree,

Full Stop – The full stop is used at the end of a sentence and is accomplished by lowering the voice a fifth, descending after the final accent. (DO-FA) One will notice instantly the melodic similarity between the title tone and the full stop. *The full stop is used for periods and exclamation points but never questions (interrogations). These are treated separately.

DO – FA
DO – FA FA

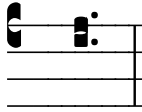


be-cause I was na-ked so I hid my-self.

Interrogation – The interrogation formula is the same for all sung readings. The final accent of the interrogation is always a podatus, two notes melodically ascending (SI-DO)

on one syllable and is approached by (SI-LA-SI) each on respective syllables. Should the question be short and not require all the available tones (SI-LA-SI- and SI-DO) then, logically, we only use what we need, thinking hierarchically from right to left.

(SI - DO)?



SI – (SI DO)?

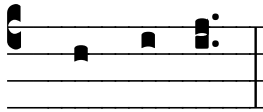


Why?

why, Lord?

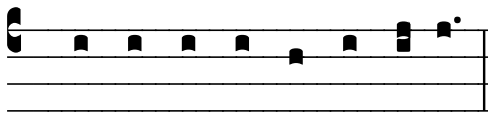
*These two examples do not appear in the readings for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

LA – SI – (SI DO)?



where are you?

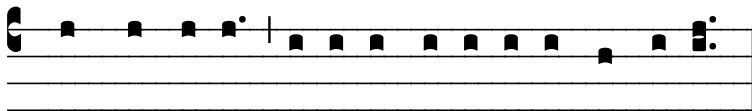
SI – LA – SI – (SI – DO) – DO



Who told you that you were na-ked?

We approach the interrogation formula on SI, descending one half step from our reciting tone. Once we are on SI, we finish the formula. We never ‘flex’ during an interrogation. For example, if the interrogation be composed of two phrases, separated by a comma in which we felt a need for a literary pause, we would use the reciting tone for the first phrase and then descend to SI for the second phrase.

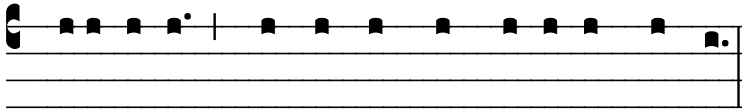
In the case of a longer phrase with flex – “first half of question, second half of question?” DO....., SI..... SI – LA – SI – (SI – DO)?



How can this be, since I have no re- la-tions with a man?

*since the phrase “*How can this be,*” is so short, we may opt not to use the flex formula and instead simply pause. If we had chosen to ‘flex on that word, The second half of the interrogation would remain the same.

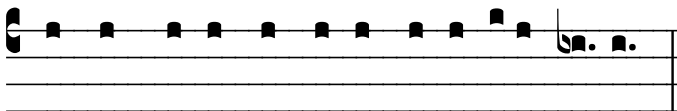
Quotation – Quotations are treated as any other sentence or phrase within the reading. If the quotation has a period we use a full stop. We can employ flexes and interrogations as needed. What needs to be remembered is that the phrase *before* the quotation is never flexed. For example, *Then God said,* would simply be done on the reciting tone without any melodic change. This applies as well to the Epistle and the Gospel.



The man re-plied, “The wo-man whom you put here with me,

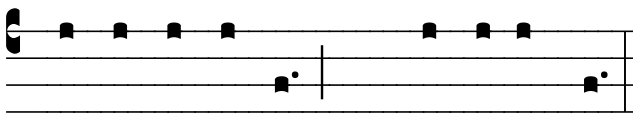
Final Formula – The final formula is accomplished in the following method and is used on the final phrase or sentence of the reading. First we find the final two literary accents (bolded in the following example). On the second to last of those, we raise our voice to RE and continue back to DO and then on the final literary accent we descend to SIb and complete the word on this tone. We keep in mind that the formulas are employed in such a way the reading sounds natural, and not contrived in any way.

DO...(RE – DO – **SIb** – SIb)
 DO...(RE – DO – DO – **SIb** – SIb)
 DO...(RE – DO – **SIb** – SIb - SIb)
 DO...(RE – DO- DO – **SIb** – SIb - SIb)



Be-cause she be-came the mo-ther of **all** the **li**-ving

Verbum Domini – In English, we then close the reading with “The Word of the Lord” to which the people dialogically respond “Thanks be to God”. We melodically close in the same way be began by descending a fifth from our reciting tone DO to FA on the word ‘Lord’. The congregation will echo back “Thanks be to God” starting on your DO and descending to FA on ‘God.’ It would be advised in the beginning of a parish’s usage of sung readings to ensure that the congregation is taught this.



The word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

We keep in mind that the formulas are employed in such a way that the readings sound natural, and not contrived in any way. The English language is full of nuances and exceptions, unlike the Latin language from which these formulas were originally designed. Therefore, it cannot be overstressed that proper preparation for sung readings will be required. If a choice between faithfulness to a formula perceived to be etched in stone and text intelligibility is confronted, the latter should always be chosen.

Listening Example: Sung Prophecy

A reading from the book of Genesis..

After the man, Adam, had eaten of the **tree**, **flex**
The Lord God called to the man and asked him,
“Where are you?” **interrogation**
He answered, “I heard you in the **garden**; **flex**
but I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid myself.” **full stop**
Then he asked, “Who told you that you were naked? **interrogation**
You have eaten, then, from the tree of which I had forbidden you to eat!” **full stop**
The man replied, “The woman whom you put here with **me**— **flex**
She gave me fruit from the tree, and so I ate it.” **full stop**
The Lord God then asked the woman,
“why did you do such a thing?” **interrogation**
The woman answered, “The serpent tricked me into it, so I ate it.” **full stop**
Then the Lord God said to the **serpent**: **flex**
“Because you have done this, you shall be banned from all the animals and from all the
wild **creatures**; **flex**
On your belly shall you crawl, and dirt shall you eat all the days of your life. **full stop**
I will put enmity between you and the woman,
And between your offspring and **hers**; **flex**
He will strike at your head, while you strike at his heel.” **full stop**
The man called his wife Eve,
Because she became the mother of **all the living**. **final formula**

The word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

Tones for the Epistle

THE EPISTLE TONE

Title Tone – The title tone for the sung Epistle is announced starting on our comfortable reciting tone, which again we shall call DO. We will then announce the reading on this tone until we get to the words ‘*to the*’. On the words ‘*to the*’, we employ a melodic ascent via a podatus of DO RE on the word *to* and we descend a minor third to SI on the word *the*. We thus have:



A re-a-ding from the let-ter of Saint Paul *to the E-phe-sians*

DO...(DO-RE on the word *to*) (SI on the word *the*)

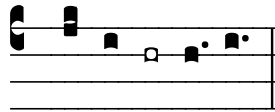
We are now ready to announce the object of the Epistle; to whom the letter is addressed. Our formula for this is LA – SI – (SI if needed) with accent being on LA. If the accent of the word is not on the first syllable, we then use SI to approach. We could thus have:

LA – SI
Romans



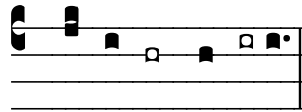
to the Ro-mans

SI – LA – SI
Galations



to the Ga-la-tians

SI – LA – SI – SI
Corinthians



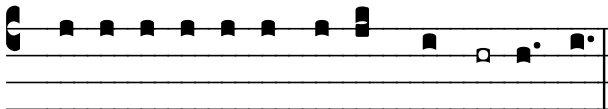
to the Co-rin-thi-ans.

Full Stop – The full stop is used at the end of a sentence and is accomplished in a melodically similar way that we sang the words '*to the*' in the title of the Epistle. We first locate the final two literary accents (bolded in the following example) in the sentence in question. On the second to last literary accent, we melodically ascend on that syllable from our reciting tone to RE via a podatus. We then descend down a minor third to SI and continue there until our next literary accent, which will be on LA. Our final syllable will be SI.

DO...(DO-RE) SI – LA – SI

DO...(DO-RE) SI - SI – LA – SI

The final LA may need to be lengthened. Best aesthetic judgment should be used.



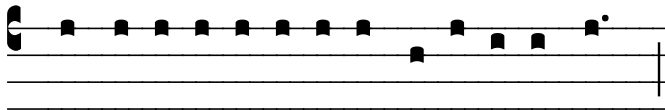
To be ho-ly and with-out **ble**-mish be-**fore** him

Metrum – The metrum in an Epistle functions similarly to the flex of the prophecy. It is used where there is a sense of literary completion as at a comma or semi colon and may therefore be employed as necessary. Good sense will dictate its usage. *The difference is

that flexes may be employed mid sentence and metrum may not. And since Epistles were traditionally sung recto tono, one tone, the variance we are discussing honors its recto tono heritage and character.

To employ the metrum, say at a comma, we find the final two literary accents (bolded in the following example before the comma). The syllable directly before the first accent is sung on LA (of course descending from DO) and then our first accent is sung on DO, descending then to SI. This is the second to last accent: **DO** to SI. The final literary accent is then sung on **SI** and then ending on DO, reversing the melodic direction of the previous accent.

DO...LA- **DO** – SI – **SI** – DO.
DO...LA- **DO** – SI – **SI** – DO – DO.
DO...LA- **DO** – SI – SI – **SI** – DO.
DO...LA- **DO** – SI – SI – **SI** – DO - DO.



With e-ve-ry spi-ri-tual bles-sing **in** the **hea**-vens,

Interrogation – The interrogation formula is the same for all sung readings. See the above information in the Prophecy portion of this manual.

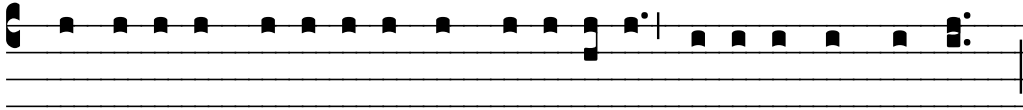
Quotation – Quotations are treated as any other sentence or phrase within the reading. If the quotation has a period we use a full stop. We can employ metrum and interrogations as needed. What needs to be remembered is that the phrase *before* the quotation is never flexed. For example, *Then God said,* would simply be done on the reciting tone without any melodic change. This applies as well to the Prophecy and the Gospel.

Final Formula – The final formula is composed of two parts, and is accomplished using the following method: First we identify the final two phrases. On the final literary accent of the second to last *phrase* of the reading, we use a podatus; a melodic ascent of LA to DO on that syllable, continuing on DO if need be.

DO...(LA-DO) – DO

On the final literary accent of the final phrase we again use the podatus; melodically ascending formula on that syllable. This time we use SI and DO, continuing if need be on DO.

SI...(SI-DO) – DO



So that we might e-xist for the praise of his **glo-ry**, we who first hoped in **Christ**.

If either of the accents are one syllable words, one may wish to lengthen each of the notes. Again, good artistic judgment and intelligibility should prevail over slavishly formulaic adherence.

Verbum Domini – In English, we then close the reading with “The Word of the Lord” to which the people dialogically respond “Thanks be to God”. We melodically close descending a minor third from our reciting tone DO to LA on the word ‘Lord’. The congregation will echo back “Thanks be to God” starting on your DO and descending to LA on ‘God.’ This gives the Epistle a melodic and aesthetic distinction from the Prophecy tone. It would be advised in the beginning of a parish’s usage of sung readings to ensure that the congregation is taught this.



The word of the Lord Thanks be to God

Listening Example: Sung Epistle

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians

Brothers and sisters:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
Who has blessed us in Christ

With every spiritual bles-**sing in the heavens, metrum**

And he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world,

To be holy and without **blemish before him. full stop**

In love he destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ,

In accord with **the favor of his will, metrum**

For the praise of the glory of his grace that he granted us **in the beloved. full stop**

In him we were also chosen, destined in accord with the purpose of the One who accomplishes all things according to the **intention of his will, metrum**

*So that we might exist for the praise of his **glo-ry, final formula part 1***

*We who first hoped in **Christ. final formula part 2***

The word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Tones for the Gospel

THE GOSPEL TONE

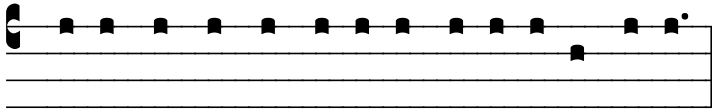
The Gospel tone is the simplest of the three. Though there are actually three varying formulas, we will look only at the first and most common.

Title tone - We begin dialogically on our reciting tone (reco tono) with the words: *The Lord be with you...R/ and also with you.* – All on DO.



The Lord be with you And al-so with you.

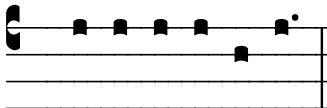
A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke



A read-ing from the Ho-ly Gos-pel ac-cor-**ding** to Luke

Here we go to **LA** on the syllable **-ding**. We return to DO immediately to finish the Title. This would apply regardless of the evangelist.
...according to Luke (John, Mark)

The people would the respond *Glory to you, O Lord.*



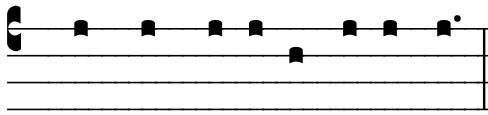
Glo-ry to you, O Lord.

Again, it is worth mentioning that a parish would do well to teach the sung responses thoroughly in the process of using sung readings.

Flex and Metrum – the Gospel is unique in that it does not have a flex or a metrum. Where we would use such melodic formulas, we simply stop the tone in a literarily sensible place. No melodic inflexions are used.

Full Stop – The full stop, again, is employed at the end of a sentence or punctuation mark (Except the interrogation of course). To use a full stop one need only find the syllable fourth from the end and sing LA, a minor third descent, instead of DO. We return to DO, our reciting tone, immediately to complete the sentence. A note worth

mentioning: Using the fourth to last syllable might at times feel awkward and unnatural, but use of this formula adds greatly to the Gospel tone’s unique aesthetic quality. A rendering would be lacking were we to employ something of our own devices.



Most High will o-**ver** sha-dow you.



Be-hold, I am the hand-**maid** of the Lord.

Interrogation – The interrogation formula is the same for all sung readings. See the above information in the Prophecy portion of this manual.

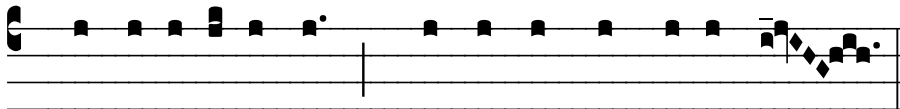
Quotation – Quotations are treated as any other sentence or phrase within the reading. If the quotation has a period we use a full stop.

Final Formula – The final formula has one nuance. We locate the second to last literary accent (bolded in the following example) and on that accent use the melodic formula LA-SI-DO, lengthening LA slightly before the ascent (quilisma). This is the only three note nuem or formulaic note grouping used for sung readings. We then stay on DO, using DO even for the final accent of the Gospel. It is worth noting that we may wish to lengthen also the second to last DO in the example of a two-syllable word. Intelligibility and a feeling of natural speech should prevail.



Then the an-gel de-**par**-ted from her.

Verbum Domini – In English, we then close the reading with “*The Gospel of the Lord*” to which the people dialogically respond “*Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ*”. We melodically ascend to RE from DO on the word ‘of’ via a podatus and return to DO. The congregation will echo back “*Praise to you, Lord, Jesus Christ,*” recto tono until the word ‘*Christ*’, in which they will sing the most melodically ornate syllable of the entire liturgy of the word. *Christ* is sung on SI and then uses the following nuem:



The Gos-pel of the Lord Praise to you, Lord, Je-sus Christ.

SI – DO-SI-LA-SOL-LA-SI-LA. (the initial SI is held slightly)

Seemingly difficult, with charitable patience and practice, a congregation can learn to sing and love this beautiful ornate ending to the sung readings.

Listening Example: Sung Gospel

The Lord be with you
And also with you

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, **O** Lord.

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth,
To a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David,
And the virgin's **name** was Mary. **full stop**
And coming to her he said, "**Hail**, full of grace! The **Lord** is with you." **full stop**
But she was greatly troubled at what was said
And pondered what sort of **greeting** this might be. **full stop**
Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary,
For you have found **fa**-vor with God. **full stop**
Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son,
and you shall **name** him Jesus. **full stop**
He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High,
And the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father,
And he will rule over the house of Jacob forever,
And of his Kingdom there **will** be no end. **full stop**
But Mary said to the angel,
"How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" **interrogation**
And the angel said to her in reply,
"The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
And the power of the Most High will **over** shadow you. **full stop**
There fore the child to be born will be called holy, **the** Son of God." **full stop**
And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is
the sixth month for her who was called barren;
For nothing will be **impossible** for God."
Mary said, "Behold, I am the **handmaid** of the Lord. **full stop**
May it be done to me according to your word." **full stop**
Then the angel **departed** from her. **final formula**

The gospel **of** the Lord

Praise to you Lord Jesus **Christ**.