

INTRODUCTION

The present book is an expanded version of a text that first appeared in 1997. In many instances, the additional music found in this new edition has been sung during the last decade or so by the community in Ottawa, Canada that uses this book most frequently. Until now this music was on separate sheets. With the depletion of the previous printings of the Vespers book and the need to produce a new edition, it was time to add this additional music. Unfortunately, this means that the pagination of this new edition does not correspond to that of previous editions. Another significant addition is the names of martyrs and confessors beatified by Blessed John Paul II during his pastoral visit to Ukraine in June 2001. These have been added to the Lytia petition. This petition also includes the names of North American Catholic saints. Naturally, if Lytia is served in a community where these blessed and saints are not commemorated, their names are omitted. Consequently, they appear in brackets and smaller fonts.

As regards the translation: it is provisional. None of the Catholic Churches of the Byzantine Tradition, including the Ukrainian Greco-Catholic, has promulgated a fully official English translation of the divine office. The present translation was chosen for use at the Sheptytsky Institute two decades ago because it is part of a series of volumes, published by the Basilian Sisters of Uniontown, Pennsylvania, that contains much of the divine office for services throughout the year. It was thus the most convenient text for a community that prays the liturgy of the hours almost every day. Also, the aforementioned Basilian Sisters' edition is dependent on the Slavonic *Recensio ruthena*. This recension, published by the Roman Apostolic See beginning in the 1940s, obliges the Byzantine-Ruthenian Church – and also the Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church. It thus behoves the latter to employ publications based on that recension.

However, another factor commends the Uniontown *Office of Vespers*, which forms the core of the present volume. The English version of the Psalms found there is based on the Septuagint, that is, the Greek Old Testament. For Churches of the Byzantine tradition the Septuagint is the Old Testament (though the Masoretic Hebrew text is also valued). And while we still await a more poetic – and thoroughly accurate – English rendering of the Septuagint Psalms, the translation reproduced here from the Uniontown publication is adequate, especially as it avoids interpretive paraphrasing. Incidentally, after the appearance of the *Office of Vespers*, subsequent Uniontown editions (e.g. *The Office of Matins*, *The Festal Menaion*, etc) adopted the Grail Psalter. This was entirely understandable in view of the latter's outstanding literary qualities. However, the Grail Psalter is not based on the Septuagint. We mention this here only because the question occasionally arises as to the different psalm translations found in the Uniontown series.

In the present volume, a few of the texts set to music (e.g. the Dvoretzky “Tranquil Light,” or the Carpathian “Song of Simeon”) differ from other translations of the same hymns found here. This is due to the nature of the musical setting. Normally one would want to avoid such discrepancies. However, because as noted above, the Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church does not yet possess a single official English translation of these hymns, there was no reason to alter the received versions, especially as in the case of the Dvoretzky setting the composition requires a metred version.

As regards the Ukrainian text in the present book, usually two translations are found side-by-side. This, too, reflects the current situation in the Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church. Our reproduction of both of them is simply intended – paradoxically as that may seem – to make the book more practical: one can never be sure in advance which of the two translations will actually be used in a given community. Thus both are provided. Incidentally, as regards the English texts found in parallel columns, for Ukrainian Greco-Catholics, the translation in the right column (“1988 UC Liturgicon”) is the official version, and should always be used in their Churches.

A note regarding alternating chant, and forming two “choirs” during services: Owing to the simple nature of the alternating plainchant used in the Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church, it has become customary to enrich the variation of sound by having men and women form two separate “choirs.” This allows women’s voices to resonate more fully. Thus we ask that if possible men stand on the right – before the icon of Christ, and women on the left – before the icon of the Mother of God. During certain parts of the service both “choirs” come together in the middle of the church. This is an ancient way of adding solemnity to particularly important parts of the service. It almost always coincides with moments when the holy doors are open, or are about to be opened. This practice was retained in Western Ukraine for centuries. To this day, cantors sometimes descend into the middle of the church for solemn parts of the service even when there is only *one* “choir.”

A note regarding “tempo” during the services: While certain chants or compositions are more lyrical and demand a slower pace, most chants should be sung more quickly than is sometimes the case when congregational singing is practiced. Please follow the cantors in maintaining a vibrant pace. Dragging should be avoided, especially as the text itself frequently calls for dynamism.

A note regarding posture: In spite of the fact that it is traditional to stand during most of the service, when needed one can sit, and even remain seated during the entire service if fatigue or illness mandate it.

A note regarding children's participation in divine worship: Children are not “the future of the Church”; they are its *present*. Thus, without, of course, returning to the days of unbending discipline during services, children should nonetheless be taught that they too are called to pray and worship. While not inordinately restricting their movement, they should be encouraged to follow the service. Childhood is when they will learn the demeanour and behaviours that will remain with them for the rest of their lives.

A note regarding the first “Amen” and the initial chants: The first “Amen” is the church’s solemn affirmation that she indeed blesses God and is committed to immersing herself in the prayer of her Spouse, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, those leading the singing should have determined among themselves *in advance* which melody will be used for the first “Amen,” so that it is sung with appropriate solemnity – and without confusion.

Also, if there is a sufficient number of singers to form two “choirs,” then it is *the first choir that begins* “Glory be to You, our God, glory be to You.” Otherwise, *the priest* becomes “the first choir,” and it is he who begins the chanting of “Glory be to You, our God, glory be to You.” The priest then continues as “choir A” until the beginning of Psalm 103.

A note regarding the announcing of page numbers: Our worship is a copy of the unceasing worship offered in the heavens. Thus, we avoid drawing attention in inappropriate ways to the seams that hold together the different parts of the service. Consequently, the announcing of page numbers – which must be done if we expect the congregation to participate – is performed in such a way that it *blends into the service*. The only way to do this is to *sing out* the page number, rather than interrupting the singing in order to *say* the number in a speaking voice. The most effective way to do this is for the cantor to sing (for example): “Page 34 – In the 3rd tone, ‘O Lord, I have cried to You, hear me.’” Announcing the page number first, gives the assembly time to find the page while the tone is being announced. Note that throughout history prokeimenon tones, for example, were announced in order to facilitate the assembly’s participation. As late as 1690, the liturgicon of Metropolitan Zhokhovsky contains rubrics for the announcing of the tones. Now that the laity are given booklets at almost every service, there is simply no way to expect them to participate without such instructions.

