

**THE CATHOLIC HYMNAL: CONTAINING  
HYMNS FOR CONGREGATIONAL AND  
HOME USE AND THE VESPER PSALMS,  
THE OFFICE OF COMPLINE, THE  
LITANIES, HYMNS AT BENEDICTION, ETC.**

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The Catholic Hymnal: Containing Hymns for Congregational and Home Use and the Vesper Psalms, the Office of Compline, the Litanies, Hymns at Benediction, Etc. by Alfred Young

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**ALFRED YOUNG**

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## WHY SHOULD THE PEOPLE SING?

THE reason will be found in the reply which must be made to the question: Why does the Church direct and oblige the faithful to be assembled congregationally for divine worship?

The answer is, in general, that they should pray *together*. But what special kind of prayer can they and should they pray *together*, which would be a common prayer in which all ought to join? Unquestionably the Prayer of Praise. No matter whether it be Holy Mass, Vespers, or a devotional meeting, the first and chief purpose of a religious assembly is the expression, both by voice and ceremonial, of Divine Praise. Whatever kind of prayer the people may make in church, as individuals, on their own account, and as called forth by their own peculiar necessities or singular spiritual relation with God, one thing is sure: the purpose of their being assembled together, and the one which takes precedence of all other purposes and privileges, is that they unite in praising God with a common ceremonial and a common utterance. The praise of all the people offered to God by a representative body of the worshipping Church, gathered together in the name and by the authority of Christ, is the divine idea of public worship intended to be realized by the Catholic Church; and therefore, if the people do not unite as one body in their ceremonial acts and in their words of worship, that idea is frustrated in a greater or less degree.

This is just as true for a Low, or said, Mass, at which the people are assembled on days of obligation, as for a High, or sung, Mass, or for the service of Vespers, either said or sung. The Church accommodates herself to circumstances, and is, therefore, contented, when better cannot be done, with having an altar-boy give all the responses at Low Mass, and with the singing of a few persons in choir at a High Mass or Vespers; but if the divine idea of public religious service could be perfectly realized on all these occasions, no one could deny that such a perfect pattern of Catholic divine worship would demand that the whole congregation assembled together should unite in saying the Responses to the priest at Low Mass, the Gloria in Excelsis, the Credo, the Sanctus, and Agnus Dei with him, and in singing the same at High Mass; and at Vespers that they should take an alternate, or antiphonal, part in the chanting.

Therefore it should be the earnest desire of every intelligent Catholic to see this perfection of worship aimed at, and all should heartily join in every prudent effort made to accomplish it in such a degree as time and circumstances may permit. The writer of this is suggesting no new or unthought-of reform. Many years ago a writer in the *Dublin Review* thus alluded to the subject, then under discussion: "Shall we ever see the day when, on entering a Catholic Church during service-time, we shall be struck, not with the dampening spectacle of a congregation partly composed of unbelievers in the act of enjoying the pleasure of a Sunday concert, while the remainder, with closed books in their lap or by their side, wait patiently or impatiently till the prolonged and a hundred times repeated "Amen" of the Gloria or the Creed deigns to come to an end; but with the refreshing sight of an unmixed body of true worshippers, learned and ignorant, high and low, rich and poor, unostentatiously led by a select choir, *engaged in heartily singing the praises* of Him in whose house of worship they are assembled? To so consoling and *truly Catholic* a state of things should all our reforms tend; for it will only be when it is established that we shall be able to taste the sweetness as well as delight in the beauty, and feel the grandeur, of that Congregational Singing which so many desire."

For further development of the subject the reader is referred to the pages of the *Catholic World* magazine for July and December, 1887, and March, April, May, and September, 1888.

## “Why do we want Congregational Singing?”

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Because we wish to see our churches crowded by the same persons of all classes, not only at the Holy Mass, but also at Vespers and at other special devotional exercises. Something must be offered which will arouse a general interest in all classes alike. **Congregational Singing** will do this. It has a special power of attraction which at once makes any religious meeting a *popular service*.

**WE WANT CONGREGATIONAL SINGING**, because it is eminently the most truly Catholic as well as being, artistically, the most sublime, soul-inspiring form of church singing possible. Nothing could be grander or more impressive than a whole congregation responding to the priest and alternating with the choir the verses of the Kyrie Eleison, the Gloria in Excelsis, the Credo, the Sanctus and the Agnus Dei. Nothing more appropriate than that they should sing the Responses and alternate verses of the Psalms and Hymns at Vespers and devoutly join in the Tantum Ergo at Benediction.

**WHY DO WE WANT THE CONGREGATION TO SING ENGLISH HYMNS?** Read the preface of this Hymnal. We have and need many special devotional exercises. There is nothing ordered for the choir to sing at these services, and when they try to supply the need, experience proves they make sorry work of it, singing all sorts of musical *morceaux*, which, if not out of tune, are generally out of season, and wholly unintelligible to the congregation, instructing and edifying nobody.

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## Do you want Congregational Singing?

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This is the way to obtain it.

**THE FIRST THING TO DO** is to buy enough Hymnals to supply the whole congregation, not less than half as many books as there are sittings in the church, or one Hymnal to every two persons. It is still better to have as many books as there are people.

Do not wait for the people to buy them. It is not their tradition; it is a “new departure.”

Let them be bought and charged to church expenses, and stamped with the name of the church, with the warning:

**“Property of this Church—Not to be taken away.”**

If some person who has the right sort of appreciation of the spiritual good to be accomplished offers to keep the church supplied with books, let him pay for them. It will be a good work.

One hears plenty of objections to this *first thing to do*.

***"None, or next to none, of our people sing."***

I answer, Then it is high time to begin, or they will die without once having the chance to experience the spiritual joy and elevation of spirit that comes by singing the praises of God.

***"But they cannot read a note of music."***

That may be true now, but very many can be easily taught to read well enough to be aided by the notes, and *they* will guide others who can read the words.

There are fewer people than is generally supposed who cannot sing. Let everybody have a book, let them be heartily encouraged to try, and it will be found that very few will fail entirely. Not one will fail to bring out a few notes in some popular, telling chorus.

Listening to the sublime, soul-lifting volume of sound going up to heaven from the great congregation, the most timid will be moved by a holy envy to join their voices with the rest. ***And they will do better every time.***

***THE SECOND THING TO DO*** is to secure the services of a leader, a man who has a strong voice, who loves the work, and who will take an especial pride in making the singing a signal success. He need not be a learned musician. He has only to sing the *tune*, the leading air, which all the people have to sing. The more personal magnetism he possesses ***as a leader***, the better. He will know how by his example, his glance, his gesture, to make people sing who never sang before, and who never believed they could sing a note.

Let him stand on a platform as high as the pews, and face the congregation during the singing, and let the people be gradually encouraged to stand also. They will surely sing better and with more enthusiasm.

Large churches in cities can readily secure the services of such a leader. An advertisement, followed by an offer of reasonable compensation, will speedily obtain one.

***"But,"*** says the objector, ***"there is no such a person in our small town."***

To which I answer that, however small your town may be, some one can be found who ***will learn to act as leader if he is wanted, and a reasonable salary is offered for his services.***

***THE THIRD THING TO DO*** is to let the organist understand distinctly that congregational singing is to be "a special feature" in the church, and he must do all he can to co-operate with pastor, leader, and people to make it a success.

If a competent leader can be found, do not accept the offer of the organist to get along without one. No organist can play and lead a congregation at the same time.

***THE FOURTH THING TO DO.***—Stop all singing in the choir when the people sing, until the people sing well enough to have it all their own way.

Meanwhile, let the choir-singers mingle in the congregation and help those about them. Shut the choir gallery to all but the organist.

***THE FIFTH THING TO DO.***—Call the people together one or two evenings in the week, and let the leader or organist teach the hymns to them. The leader should sing one line at a time, the people singing it after him, and repeating one line after another until the whole tune is learned. If you have not tried this plan, their rapid progress will surprise you.

Separate rehearsals might be given to the children in the Parochial and Sunday Schools; but care must be taken by the leader not to let them do all the singing in church.

A Choral Union or a Singing Society, which the better singers might be invited to join, would help to make the whole project popular, it being understood that its members must all attend the meetings of the people, but not sitting in a body in the church.

**AN IMPORTANT SUGGESTION.**—There is nothing like enlisting the hearty sympathy of intelligent persons to further the success of a work like this. Extend an invitation to a certain number of the most influential members of the congregation to attend a private meeting. Lay out the whole plan before them. Solicit their personal effort. Our people are not the ones to shirk any good work that they are asked to support.

In many places, personal friends of the congregation who are not Catholics would be glad to come to the devotional services and help the singing, if they were invited, and have cause to bless God all their lives for having accepted that invitation.

“Sing joyfully to God, all the earth: come in before His presence with exceeding great joy. Go ye into His gates with praise, into His courts with hymns, and give glory unto Him” (Ps. xcix.).

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## NOTICES FROM THE PRESS.

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“Father Young is an experienced musician, and, from the length of time he has been in charge of the music in one of the most devout churches of New York, has had ample time to become a perfect master of Congregational singing. His music is nearly always simple and easy, and it possesses that peculiar character which tends to fix the *tune* in the memory. All the tunes are set in harmony for four voices. We strongly urge the clergy interested in popular music and hymn-singing to procure without delay this valuable addition to our repertory of congregational music.”—*The Dublin Review*.

“THE CATHOLIC HYMNAL issued by Rev. Alfred Young should become known and popular in all our churches where correct congregational singing is aimed at. In convents and schools, also, the work will be most useful. An authorized Hymnal, issued by a Commission appointed by the Bishops, is much needed. Father Young’s collection might, we think, be included in any such a Hymnal.”—*Liverpool (England) Catholic Times*.

“*Devotional fitness* is a marked characteristic of the tunes we find in ‘THE CATHOLIC HYMNAL,’ and we are sure that both the invention of the melodies and the composition of the harmonies will be found worthy the attention of musical scholars and amateurs who are devoted to the study and enjoyment of this particular department of musical literature. The introduction of such a work cannot fail of giving a decided impetus to the desirable project of congregational singing. The selection of subjects appropriate to the different seasons and to special doctrines is ample, and evidently made with a view to cultivating the taste for hymns of a character marked by refined as well as by devout sentiment, and the orthodox expression of Christian faith and exalted spiritual truths.”—*Catholic Review*.

“Father Young’s HYMNAL is a most interesting volume.”—*New York Sun*.

“Introduce congregational singing into our churches and the result will be marvellous. In Father Young’s HYMNAL every hymn is good—the metre is good, the English is good, the thoughts are good. It is a pleasure to be able to say that his work *meets the wants of the times*.”—*N. W. Chronicle*.



**The Catholic Hymnal.**



POPULAR EDITION.

Issued with a view to encourage Congregational Singing.

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THE TUNES BY

REV. ALFRED YOUNG,

Priest of the Congregation of St. Paul the Apostle.

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THE WORDS ORIGINAL AND SELECTED.

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