



NATIONAL
**Eucharistic
Revival**

**Step-by-Step Walk Through the Mass
Do This in Remembrance of Me,
Part 4: Opening Hymn
By FR. LUKE SPANNAGEL**



Now that we have reminded ourselves of our Baptism (holy water), given reverence to Jesus present in the tabernacle (genuflection), and quietly said our prayers of preparation, we are ready to stand for the Introductory Rites. For most parishes, these rites will begin with a hymn or the Entrance Antiphon.

There is no doubt that everyone has their “special way” of singing during the Mass. Some really belt out the song, whether they have a pleasant voice or not. Some lightly mumble the words so that even if they had a microphone, you could barely hear them. Some seemingly know the songs so well that they don’t even open the books! Some must have such a deep interior connection with God that they don’t even sing out loud—just in their hearts!

Let us pray

Why do we sing? Looking back in our history and to the Jewish roots of our liturgy, we see that music and singing is an important part of our prayer together. Singing is one of the most fitting praises for God, since it involves the body and soul even more than speaking. (Singing is a lot more work than speaking!) When we sing, we use our whole beings to praise God. The *General Instruction for the Roman Missal* explains the importance of singing:

“The Christian faithful who come together as one in expectation of the Lord’s coming are instructed by the Apostle Paul to sing together Psalms, hymns, and spiritual canticles (cf. Col 3:16). Singing is the sign of the heart’s joy (cf. Acts 2:46). Thus St. Augustine says rightly, ‘Singing is for one who loves,’ and there is also the ancient proverb: ‘Whoever sings well prays twice over’” (*GIRM*, no. 39).

Given these admonitions, “Great importance should therefore be attached to the use of singing in the celebration of the Mass” (*GIRM*, no. 40).

At the beginning of Mass, the most common options for the “Entrance Chant” are an Entrance Hymn or Entrance Antiphon. The purpose of singing at this time is “to open the celebration, foster the unity of those who have been gathered, introduce their thoughts to the mystery of the liturgical time or festivity, and accompany the procession of the Priest and ministers” (*GIRM*, no. 47). The Entrance Hymn or Antiphon helps us to “get into” what we are about to do; it helps us set aside everything else that is going on in our lives and helps us to prepare our hearts to praise God and participate in the Mass. This singing especially reminds us that we are a community, because it is the first act that we all do together at the Mass.

I often hear individuals say, “I feel self-conscious because my voice is terrible!” To quote our Lord, Pope St. John Paul II, and many others: “Be not afraid!” God gave you the voice you have, and in singing praise to him, you are offering the gifts (or lack thereof) that he gave you. So, pick up that hymnal and join the song!