

Ecclesiastical Latin

Ecclesiastical Latin refers to the pronunciation and usages of Latin by the Catholic Church. In some respects, such as pronunciation, it differs from the Latin spoken by Caesar, Seneca and Cicero, called Classical Latin. Classical Latin is what classics departments in major universities teach, and is also the Latin taught on language tapes, unless Ecclesiastical Latin is specified. A characteristic difference would be the pronunciation of *regina coeli*. In Classical Latin the "g" is hard and the "c" sounds like "k". In Ecclesiastical Latin, which is defined as Latin spoken as Italian would be pronounced in Rome, the "g" is soft and the c has a "ch" sound.

The following pronunciation table is adapted from the *Liber Usalis*, one of the former chant books for Mass and Office. Its introduction to Gregorian Chant is also invaluable.

Vowels

- A** *A* is pronounced as in the word *Father*, never as in the word *can*. We must be careful to get this open, warm sound, especially when *A* is followed by *M* or *N* as in *Sanctus, Nam*, etc.
- E** *E* is pronounced as in *Red, men, met*; never with the suspicion of a second sound as in *Ray*.
- I** *I* is pronounced as *ee* in *Feet*, never as *i* in *milk* or *tin*.
- O** *O* is pronounced as in *For*, never as in *go*.
- U** *U* is pronounced as *oo* in *Moon*, never as in *custom*.
- Y** *Y* is pronounced and treated as the Latin *I*. (see above)

The pronunciation given for **i**, **o**, **u**, gives the approximate quality of the sounds, which may be long or short; care must be taken to bring out the accent of the word. e.g. *mártyr* = *márteer*.

Double Vowels As a general rule when two vowels come together each keeps its own sound and constitutes a separate syllable.

e.g. *diéi* is *di-é-i*; *fílii* is *fil-i-i*; *eórum* is *e-ó-rum*.

OU The rule of each keeping its own sound applies to **OU** and **AI**.

AI e.g. *prout* is *pro-oot*; *coutúntur* = *co-oo-toón-toor*; *áit* is *ah-eet*.

AE However, **AE** and **OE** are pronounced as one sound, like **E** above.

OE e.g. *caelum*

AU The two vowels form one syllable but both vowels must be distinctly

EU heard. The principle emphasis and interest belongs to the first which must

AY be sounded purely. If on such a syllable several notes are sung, the

vocalization is entirely on the first vowel, the second being heard only on the last note at the moment of passing to the following syllable.

EI **EI** is similarly treated only when it occurs in the interjection:
Hei = *Hei* , otherwise, *Mei* = *mé-i*, etc.

QU **U** preceded by **Q** or **NG** and followed by another vowel as in words like
NGU *qui* and *sanguis*, keeps its normal sound and is uttered as one syllable with the vowel which follows : *qui*, *quae*, *quod*, *quam*, *sanguis*. But notice that *cui* forms two syllables, and is pronounced as *koo-ee*. In certain hymns, on account of the metre, this word can be treated as one syllable.

Consonants

C coming before **e**, **ae**, **oe**, **i**, **y** is pronounced like *ch* in *Church*
e.g. *caelum* = *che-loom* ; *Cecília* = *che-cheé-lee-a*

CC before the same vowels is pronounced *T-ch*.
e.g. *ecce* = *et-che* ; *siccitas* = *seét-chee-tas*.

C **SC** before the same vowels is pronounced like *Sh* in *shed*
e.g. *descendit* = *de-shén-deet*

Except for these cases **C** is always pronounced like the English **K**
e.g. *cáritas* = *káh-ree-tas*

CH is always like *K* (even before **E** or **I**)
e.g. *Cham* = *Kam*, *máchina* = *má-kee-na*

G before **e**, **ae**, **i**, **y**, is soft as in *generous*
e.g. *mági* , *génitor* , *Regína*

G **GN** has the softened sound given to those letters in French and Italian.
e.g. (French) *agneau* , *signor* , *monsignor*

The nearest English equivalent would be **N** followed by **y**.

e.g. *Regnum* = *Reh-nyoom* ; *Magnificat* = *Mah-nyeeé-fee-caht*

H is pronounced **K** in the two words *nihil* (*nee-keel*) and *mihi* (*mee-kee*)
H and their compounds. In ancient books these words are often written *nichil* and *michi*. In all other cases **H** is mute.

J, often written as **I** (e.g. *juris* or *iurus*), is treated as **Y**, forming one sound with the vowel which follows it.

e.g. *jam*, *iam* = *yam* ; *alleluia* = *allelóoya* ; *major* = *ma-yor*

When with another consonant, care must be taken not to omit this sound. It must be slightly rolled on the tongue (*carnis*). Care must be taken not to modify the quality of the vowel in the syllable preceding the **R**.

R e.g. *Kyrie*: Say *Kée-ree-e* **not** *Kear-ee-e*
sapere: Say *sáh-pe-re* **not** *sah-per-e*
diligere: Say *dee-lée-ge-re* **not** *dee-lee-ger-e*

S S is hard as in the English word *sea*, but is slightly softened when coming between two vowels. e.g. *miseri-córdia*

T T is like the English **T**, except as below.

TI standing before a vowel and following any letter (except **S**, **X**, **T**) is pronounced *tsee*.

T e.g. *patientia* = *pa-tsee-én-tsee-a*
gratia = *grá-tsee-a*
constitutio = *con-stee-tú-tsee-o*
laetitia = *lae-tée-tsee-a*

TH is always simply **T**. e.g. *Thomas, catholicam*

X is pronounced **ks**, slightly softened when coming between vowels.

e.g. *exercitus*

X **XC** before **a, ae, oe, i, y** = **KSH**.

e.g. *excélsis* = *ek-shél-sees*

Before other vowels **XC** has the ordinary hard sound of the letters composing it.

e.g. *excussorum* = *eks-koos-só-room*

Y A Latin vowel, pronounced like **I**.

Z **Z** is pronounced **dz**. *zizánia*.

B, D, F, K, L, M, N, P, Q and V: Pronounced as in English

Double consonants must be clearly sounded. *bello* = *bel-lo* ; *terra* = *ter-ra*

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1. Kyrie

Ky ri e /e le i son /Chri ste /e le i son/
Kee-ree-eh /eh-leh-ee-sohn /Kree-steh /eh-leh-ee-sohn

2. Gloria

Glo ri a /in /ex cel sis /de o /Et /in /te rra/pax /ho mi ni bus /
Gloh-ree-ah / een / ex-chel-sees / deh-oh / Eht/ een / teh-rah / pahx /oh-mee-nee-boos /

Bo nae /vo lun ta tis / La u da mus /te /be ne di ci mus /te/
Boh-neh / voh-loon-tah-tees/ Lah-oo-dah-moos/ teh / beh-neh-dee-chee-moos / teh /

A do ra mus /te / glo ri fi ca mus /te/Gra ti as/a gi mus/ti bi/
Ah-doh-rah-moos / teh / gloh-ree-fee-cah-moos / teh / Grah-tsee-ahs / ah-jee-moos /tee-bee /

Prop ter /magn am /glo ri am /tu am/Do mi ne /de us/rex /coe les tis/
Prohp-tehr / mahn-yahm / gloh-ree-ahm / too-ahm /Doh-mee-neh / deh-oos / rex / cheh lehs-tees /

De us /pa ter /om ni po tens/Do mi ne /fi li /u ni ge ni te /Je su /Chri ste /
Deh-oos / pah-tehr / ohm-nee-poh-tenz / Doh-mee-neh /fee-lee / oo-nee-jeh-nee-teh /Yeh-zoo /Kree-steh

Do mi ne /de us/ A gnus /de i /fi li us/pa tris /
Doh-mee-neh / deh-oos / Ahn-yoos / deh-ee / fee-lee-oos / pah-trees /

Qui to llis /pe cca ta /mun di / Qui / se des /ad / dex ter am / Pa tris /
Kwee / toh -lees / peh-cah-tah / moon-dee / Kwee / seh-dehz / ahd / deh-x-teh-rahm / Pah-trees /

/ Su sci pe /de pre ca ti o nem /no stram /
Soo-shee-peh / deh-preh-cah-tsee-oh nehm / noh-strahm /

Mi se re re / no bis / Quo ni am /tu / so lus /sanc tus /
Mee-seh-reh-reh / noh-bees / Kwoh-nee-ahm / too / soh-loos / sahnk-toos

Do mi nus / al tis i mus /Je su /Chri ste /
Doh-mee-noos / ahl-tiss-ee-moos / Yeh-zoo / Kree-steh /

Cum / sanc to /spi ri tu /in /glo ri a /de i /pa tris /A men /
Koom / sahnk-toh / spee-ree-too / een / gloh-ree-ah / deh-ee / pah-trees / Ah-mehn /

3. Credo

Cre do /in /u num /de um /pa trem /om ni po ten tem /
Cre-doh /een / oo-noom / deh-oom / pah-trehm / ohm-nee-poh-tehn-tehm /

Fac to rem /coe li /et /te rrae/Vi si bi li um /om ni um /et /in /u num /
Fahk-toh-rehm / cheh-lee / eht / teh-reh / Vee-zee-bee-lee-oom / ohm-nee-oom / eht / een / oo-noom /

Do mi num / Je sum / Chri stum /fi li um /de i /un ni ge ni tum /et /ex /Pa tri
Doh-mee-noom / yeh-zoom / kree-stoom / fee-lee-oom /deh-ee / Oo-nee-jeh-nee-toom /eht/ ehx/ pah-treh

Na tum /an te /om ni a /se cu la/De um /de /de o /lu men /de /lu min e /
Nah-toom / ahn-teh /ohm-nee-ah /seh-coo-lah / Deh-oom / deh / deh-oh / loo-mehn / deh / loo-meen-eh /

De um /ve rum /de /de o /ve ro /Ge ni tum / non / fac tum /
Deh-oom /veh-room / deh / deh-oh / veh-roh / Jeh-nee-toom / nohn / fahk-toom /

Con sub stan ti a lem / pa tri /Per / quem /om ni a / fac ta / sunt /
Cohn-soob-stan-tsee-ah-lehm / pah-tree / Pehr / kwehm / ohm-nee-ah / fahk-tah / soont /

Qui / prop ter / nos / hom in es /et /prop ter / no stram / sa lu tem /
Kwee / prohp-tehr / nohs / ohm-een-ehs / eht / prohp-tehr / noh-strahm / Sah-loo-tehm /

De scen dit /de /coe lis /
Deh-shehn-deet / deh / cheh-lees /

Et / in / car nar tus / est / de / spi ri tu / sanc to / Ex / Ma ri a / vir gi ne /
Eht / een / kah-nah-toos / ehst / deh / spee-ree-too / sahnk-toh / Ehx / Mah-ree-ah / veer-jee-neh /

Et / ho mo / fac tus / est / Cru ci fix us / e ti am / pro / no bis /
Eht / oh-moh / fahk-toos / ehst / Croo-chee-feex-oos / eh-tsee-ahm / proh / noh-bees /

Pa ssus / et / se pul tus / est / Pro no bis / sub / Pon ti o / Pi la to /
Pah-soos / eht / Seh-pool-toos / ehst / Proh-noh-bees / soob / Pohn-tsee-oh / Pee-lah-toh /

Et / re su rrex it / ter ti a / di e / se cun dum / scrip tu ras /
Eht / reh-zuh-rehx-eet / tehr-tsee-ah / dee-eh / seh-koon-doom / screep-too-rahsh /

Et / a scen dit / in / coe lum / se det / ad / dex te ram / pa tris
Eht / ah-chehn-deet / een / cheh-loom / seh-deht / ahd / deh-x-teh-rahm / pah-trees /

Et / it er um / ven tu rus / est / cum / glo ri a / Ju di ca re / vi vos /
Eht / eet-ehr-oom / vehn-too-roos / ehst / koom / gloh-ree-ah / Yoo-dee-kah-reh / vee-vohs /

Et / mor tu os / Cu jus / re gni / non / e rit / fi nis /
Eht / mohr-too-ohs / Koo-yoos / rehn-yee / nohn / eh-reet / fee-nees /

Et / in / spi ri tum / sanc tum / do mi num / et / vi vi fi can tem /
Eht / een / spee-ree-toom / sahnk-toom / doh-mee-noom / eht / vee-vee-fee-cahn-tehm /

Qui / ex / pa tre / fi li o que / pro ce dit / Qui / cum / pa tre / et / fi li o /
Kwee / ehx / pah-treh / fee-lee-oh -kweh / proh-cheh-deet / Kwee / koom / pah-treh / eht / fee-lee-oh /

Si mul / a dor a tor / et / Con / glo ri fi ca tor / qui / lo cu tus / est
See-mool / ah-dohr-ah-tohr / eht / Cohn / gloh-ree-fee-kah-tohr / kwee / loh-koo-toos / ehst /

Per / pro phe tas / Et / in / u nam / sanc tam / ca tho li cam /
Pehr / proh-feh-tahs / Eht / een / oo-nahm / sahnk-tahm / kah-toh-lee-kahm /

Et / a po sto li cam / e ccle si am / Con fit e or / u num / bap tis ma /
Eht / ah-poh-stoh-lee-kahm / eh-kleh-zee-ahm / Kohn-feet-eh ohr / oo-noom / bahp-tees-mah /

In / re miss i o nem / pe cca to rum / Et / ex pec to / re su rrec ti o nem /
Een / reh-meess-ee-oh-nehm / peh-kah-toh-room / Eht / ehx-pehk-toh / reh-zoo-rehk-tsee-oh-nehm /

Mor tu o rum / Et / vi tam / vehn tu ri / sae cu li / A men
Mohr-too-oh-room / Eht / vee-tahm / vehn-too-ree / seh-koo-lee / Ah -mehn /

4. Sanctus

Sanc tus / sanc tus / sanc tus / do min us / de us / sa ba oth /
Sahnk-toos / sahnk-toos / sahnk-toos / doh-meen-oos / deh-oos / sah-bah-oh /

Ple ni / sunt / coe li / et / te rra / glo ri a / tu a /
Pleh-nee / soont / cheh-lee / eht / teh-rah / gloh-ree-ah / too-ah /

Ho sa nna / in / ex cel sis / ho sa nna /
Hoh-zah-nah / een / ex-chel-sees / hoh-zah-nah /

5. Benedictus

Be ne dic tus / qui / ve nit / in / no mi ne / do mi ni /
Beh-neh-deek-toos / kwee / veh-neet / een / noh-mee-neh / doh-mee-nee /

6. Agnus Dei

Agn us / de i / qui / to llis / pe cca ta / mun di / Mi se re re / no bis /
Ahn-yoos / deh-ee / kwee / toh-leees / peh kah-tah / moon-dee / Mee-zeh-reh-reh / noh-bees /

Do na / no bis / pa cem /
Doh-nah / noh-bees / pah-chehm /