



GREGORIAN CHANT NETWORK CHANT TRAINING WEEKEND:
FURTHER INFORMATION

Cantemus Domino, gloriose enim magnificatus est. (Ex 15:1)

Who is the Weekend for?

The GCN Chant Training Weekend has two tutors so it can address the needs of beginners and more experienced singers, and can on occasion divide up students by interest. Notably, it can address the skills useful for leaders of a chant schola, such as conducting. For all, it will consider vocal technique, singing together (pitch, tuning, blend), psalmody, and the interpretation of chant.

As a network of scholas and choirs singing chant, the GCN has a special concern with supporting singers as *groups*. For this reason, it offers large discounts to two or three or more singers attending the course from a single schola (if registered with the GCN): for details, see below. The hope is that what the singers learn at the course can immediately be put into practice with their schola as a whole. In this way, as well as by teaching the skills necessary to leading a choir, the GCN hopes to support the development of scholas.

Confidence and experience with Chant cannot be conveyed to singers in a single weekend; it has to be seen as a gradual and cumulative process. Many participants come back for successive weekends and take part in other courses in the course of the year. Reiteration of good practice and exposure to new interpretations and techniques keeps singers advancing and keeps the chant interesting.

Professional and amateur, male and female, those with experience and without, those used to singing the Extraordinary or the Ordinary Form, Catholics and non-Catholics, are all welcome.

For ideas about advance preparation, see below.

Dates

Our using the Oratory School means that the Chant weekend must take place during their school holidays; it also varies to avoid the weekends of Easter and Palm Sunday. Accordingly, when Easter is earlier, it takes place Friday to Sunday of the weekend of Low Sunday; when Easter is later, it takes place Friday to Sunday of the weekend before Palm Sunday (in the older calendar this is Passion Sunday).

In 2019 the dates will be 5-7th April.

The Venue and Accommodation

The Oratory School was founded in 1859 by Bl John Henry, Cardinal Newman. It is set in extensive grounds with lawns, playing fields, and woods, in the countryside between Reading and Oxford.

Its boarding houses are modern and comfortable. Rooms sometimes have wash-basins but are not *en-suite*.

The food is served in a central dining room with a canteen, and is consistently of a high standard.

The School's location is:

The Oratory School, Woodcote, South Oxfordshire RG8 0PJ ([click for a map](#))

Catholic clergy and seminarians

We particularly welcome Catholic clerics (priests and deacons) and seminarians, and may be able to arrange tuition on the singing of those parts of the liturgy sung by the clergy. If clerics are able and wish to act as sacred ministers in the celebration of High Mass in the Extraordinary Form, it may be possible to arrange this as well. Please contact the organisers in advance on either topic.

Our Tutors

Mr Dominic Bevan is a recent graduate of the Royal College of Music, and an experienced singer of both chant and sacred polyphony. Dominic sings professionally in a variety of Catholic and secular contexts.

Fr Guy Nicholls of the Birmingham Oratory is the founder and Director of the Newman Institute of Liturgical Music in Birmingham. He is the editor of the ongoing project, the *Graduale Parvum*.

Liturgy over the Weekend

One of the features of the Chant Training Weekend is that participants sing at 'live' liturgies with a congregation, other than themselves, thanks to its collaboration with the St Catherine's Trust. These liturgies are in the Extraordinary Form (the Traditional, Latin liturgy of the Catholic Church), and include Mass, Vespers, Compline, Benediction, and chants and hymns for a paraliturgical devotion (Stations of the Cross or a Marian procession).

The basic principles of chant, and many of the actual chants, can of course be found in the Ordinary Form, and to an extent in other liturgical Rites and Usages.

The Gregorian Chant Network

The GCN was founded in 2010, and has the support of the Latin Mass Society, the Association for Latin Liturgy, Una Voce Scotland, the Newman Institute of Liturgical Music in Birmingham, the Schola Gregoriana of Cambridge, and the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham.

It has its own website: <http://gregorianchantnetwork.blogspot.com>

The Chant Training Weekend is sponsored by the Latin Mass Society, which offers discounts to its own members as individuals, and it is administered by the St Catherine's Trust.

To register a choir or schola, which sings at least some Chant for the Catholic liturgy, with the GCN, email chantnetwork@googlemail.com

All it requires is filling in a form about it and submitting it to the GCN by email. There is no fee.

The St Catherine's Trust Family Retreat

The GCN Chant Training Weekend, while having separate accommodation and teaching rooms, shares the Oratory School site with the St Catherine's Trust Family Retreat, and singers on the course sing at the liturgies of the Retreat.

The Retreat first took place in 2006. It began to be combined with a chant training weekend in 2009, led by the late Nick Gale, then Director of Music at St George's Cathedral, Southwark.

The St Catherine's Trust wanted to design a retreat which parents could attend with their children, and where adults could attend the talks while younger children were doing another, appropriate activity. It has taken place over the years in Ardingly College, Ratcliffe College, and the Oratory School.

Some of the families attending the Retreat have a family member attending the Chant Weekend.

Ideas for advance preparation

Participants who are new to chant, or any singer wishing to learn more in advance of the Weekend, should have a look at one or more of the many resources on Gregorian Chant which exist on the internet and elsewhere.

Those familiar with modern notation and not with the 'square notes' of Chant notation can quite easily and quickly work out how the latter works with a brief introductory text.

It is useful, if not essential, in discussing a piece of chant, to be able to use the technical terms developed for the chant, including the different kinds of bar-line, and the names of notes and neumes (groups of notes). The most commonly used ones are found in all introductory texts.

The GCN website has a list of introductory books here:

<http://gregorianchantnetwork.blogspot.co.uk/2010/02/books-about-chant.html>

Prices, Discounts, and Booking

(LMS members: £10 discount on all prices)

£205 per person

£135 each for 2 people from the same choir or schola

£105 each for 3 or more people from the same choir or schola

Booking is handled with an online form on the St Catherine's Trust website:

www.stcatherinetrust.org

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