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Sarum Chant Sung in Japan

By Tamaki Makino

The Community of Nazareth in Tokyo, Japan is a monastery where the Sisters sing the Sarum chant of the Divine Office every day. There are two Sisters there. The Community of Nazareth is a member of the Anglican Episcopal English Church in Japan which we call "Nippon Seikoukai". In Nippon Seikoukai, they worship using a Japanese edition of *The Book of Common Prayer* from 1991 that is translated in the colloquial style. In the Community of Nazareth, while the prayer book is in colloquial style, the chants are sung in the traditional literary style. They sing plain chant in Japanese in this literary style in the seven hours of the Divine Office every day. Their chants have been translated to Japanese from an English source, which has itself been translated from Latin.

The Choir in Rikkyo University (a mission school of Nippon Seikoukai) sung Sarum chant in former days, but no other people in Japanese churches currently sing the Sarum chant that was brought from England. The chant introduced into the Community of Nazareth is mainly Sarum chant from England, along with other English regional chants. In the Community, they practice Sarum chant taught by Mrs. Chikako Hashimoto, the head of the St. Gregory's House Institute of Church Music where Gregorian chant is sung every Saturday and Sunday. The Sisters of Nazareth say that by singing the plain chant together they pray with one heart. Mrs. Chikako says she thinks a great deal about every word.

Gregorian chant virtually disappeared from the rite of the Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council; it is now sung only in a few churches in the west and in Japan. In Japan, Gregorian chant was sung in only four monasteries of the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance: Tohbetu Trappist Monastery (Hokkaido), the Angel of Trappistine Abbey (Hokkaido), the Nasu Trappist Abbey (Tochigi) and Imari Trappistine Abbey (Saga). Is not such a situation, where the Community of Nazareth sings plain chant every day, a precious treasure? I was interested to learn about the Sarum chant sung in the Community of Nazareth; which chants were sung, and how the chant came to Japan from England. My research is based on information obtained from the testimonies of the Nazareth sisters and other associated people, as well as the chant-books that are used. In particular, I conducted an interview with an elderly Sister M. who was born in 1925, and entered the community in 1947. I also participated in Nazareth's divine office, and listened to the voices that sang the different chants every day.

The Footprint of the Nazareth

Before discussing the story of the Community of Nazareth, I will review the history of Christianity in Japan. In 1549, Francisco de Xavier came to Japan and introduced

Christianity, but the Christian faith was banned by the government from 1612 to 1873. Anglican missions to Japan began in 1846 when the Church Missionary Society (CMS) sent missionaries to Okinawa, which was in the Ryukyu Kingdom at that time, not in Japan. Missionaries of CMS landed in Nagasaki in 1860, and built the first Protestant chapel in 1862. Members of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America arrived in Nagasaki in 1859 and began missionary work, and did remarkable work on missions to Japan. The Anglican Episcopal Church in Japan celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2009.

The Community of Nazareth was begun in April 1920 by four women from the Community of the Epiphany (Truro, Cornwall, United Kingdom) that came to Japan to begin their vocations in Tokyo. Two Japanese volunteers joined with them on November 1, 1934. On April 21, 1936 the Community of Nazareth was established. When World War II began in 1941, two members of the Epiphany returned to the United Kingdom, and the Japanese sisters left Tokyo. After the War, in 1947, the Epiphany's sisters returned to Japan. The Community of Nazareth was re-established in Minato-ku, Tokyo on February 24, 1958, and later moved to Mitaka city in Tokyo on February, 1993.

Establishment of the Community of the Epiphany

On November 1, 1883, the Community of the Epiphany was founded in Truro, Cornwall, England; it closed about 10 years ago. Some of the four Sisters who came to Japan excelled in music, and the appearance was described as follows in *The Steps of the Community of Nazareth in 40 Years* (Reference 12, page 26): "Sister Elena Frances is a musician, so the embroidery students are excellent at music, and the first Angel Mass chant to be sung in the Anglican Episcopal Church in Japan was entered into the record. The embroidery department was the work of St. Hilda's Mission brought by the Community of the Epiphany, and they taught embroidery in the St. Hilda Yoko Home (girl's orphanage) established by the women's association on the site of St. Hilda's Mission." What is recorded here occurred between 1925 and 1936. Sister Elena Frances, who played and taught the organ, also taught plain chant to both the orphans and the Japanese Sisters.

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UNA VOCE and the Servants of the Most Blessed Sacrament

By Michel Tremblay

The Gregorian choir UNA VOCE of Saguenay was founded in 2007. It has been under the musical direction of Raymond Laforge from the beginning until today. When it began, UNA VOCE looked for a practice place, and it was the Monastery of the Servants of the Most Blessed Sacrament (SSS), under the auspices of Sister Yolande Thérien, who welcomed the 31 members of the choir. The parish of Christ-Roy was the first to accept, on an experimental basis and for one year, the inclusion of a mass with Gregorian chant once per month as its regular Saturday mass at 4:00 p.m. After one year, however, the indications were not favourable for the continuance of a Gregorian mass in that parish. UNA VOCE then turned to another church, l'église du Sacré-Cœur in Chicoutimi, which agreed to create a special mass for UNA VOCE which would take place on the first Saturday of each month at 4:00 p.m. Many of the faithful attended.

Several years later, the parish of Sacré-Cœur, which also manages l'église du Christ-Roy, decided to close the latter, and to repatriate the Saturday masses to l'église Sacré-Cœur. This made things more secure for UNA VOCE, seeing that this mass became a part of the regular calendar of this church.

In addition to allowing UNA VOCE to carry out their chant practices, the Monastery of the SSS turned out to be an ideal place to organize educational workshops in Gregorian chant, not only for the choristers, but also for people

who wished to join the choir and who were still beginners in the field. For their training, UNA VOCE appealed regularly to Father Richard Gagné, Choirmaster at the Abbey of Saint-Benoît-du-Lac, who had also been the Choirmaster at the Abbey of Saint-Pierre de Solesmes for several years. His teachings were very precious and beneficial.

In 2010 the monastery welcomed the 5th Colloquium of the GIC with 35 participants, in partnership with the Conservatoire de musique of Chicoutimi. The opening concert, given by the Gregorian choir UNA VOCE, took place in the chapel of the Congrégation, followed by the singing of Compline. Blessed with many rooms and a cafeteria, the monastery is an ideal location for the holding of a national conference. We are considering hosting another conference in the near future.

A few years ago we learned that our dear monastery was to be put up for sale. To add to that, Sister Yolande Thérien, who was our special link with the monastery, was leaving Chicoutimi for the Monastery of the SSS located in Edmundston. It was four little Vietnamese sisters (right) who took the monastery in hand. The shoes were large to fill, but by dint of hard work and perseverance, aided by an army of volunteers, they managed to find new sources of income by opening their monastery to groups wishing to give educational workshops. Everything was going so well that they decided to put an end to the sale of their building until the end of 2018. They subsequently received a very generous offer from the municipal housing office who wanted to provide a more suitable place for the homeless in the region. However, they declined this offer and once again UNA VOCE was pleased to be able not only to keep its practice space, but also to have a place for the celebration of its mission: since 2017 it had been invited by the congregation to sing the mass of Corpus Christi annually in their chapel in the presence of the Bishop of Chicoutimi. A procession followed in the gardens of the community. It appeared that a tradition had been born.



Unfortunately, this past November 15 we learned from the newspapers that the Monastery of the SSS had finally been sold.

To give a brief history of the congregation, it was on July 4, 1858, that the Community of the Servants of the Most Blessed Sacrament was founded in Paris by Father Pierre Julien Eymard, which had for its mission perpetual adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. Unfortunately, the sisters were forced to leave following the adoption of the Combes law at the beginning of the 20th century, a law which ordered the expulsion of religious communities. On June 20, 1903, two young religious, both aged 29, crossed the Atlantic, disembarking at New-York, and then began to search for a place that would welcome them. After making a stop-over in Montreal, they were welcomed in Chicoutimi by Mgr. Michel-Thomas Labrecque who accepted them into his diocese. They were first hosted for several months by the congregation of the Sisters of Notre-Dame du Bon Conseil, a community dedicated to teaching, then established themselves on the main street for some time before erecting their own monastery and a chapel on Rue du Saint-Sacrement in Chicoutimi—all thanks to many benefactors and to the gift of an American

family whose daughter was one of the first vocations. For more than a century this sanctuary was a centre of eucharistic devotion where many faithful came to draw from the source of the Christian life, which is the Eucharist.

It was on March 11, 2020, that the Gregorian choir UNA VOCE of Saguenay held its final practice for the mass on Saturday March 14 at l'église du Sacré-Cœur in Chicoutimi—which never took place. The next day, the 12th of March, the government of Quebec decreed a general lockdown because of the Covid-19 pandemic in the province. Despite a busy schedule planned through to June 2020, the UNA VOCE choir cancelled all its activities.

Through the course of the summer, UNA VOCE increased its initiatives with the diocese to learn of any changes in directives that would permit a resumption of activities in the autumn. Unfortunately these did not materialize. Likewise the engagement at the hermitage Saint-Antoine du Lac Bouchette planned for September was cancelled. While awaiting new developments in the pandemic, UNA VOCE has maintained interest among the choristers and contacts with the clergy and with religious communities by suggesting every month a list of Gregorian chants that may be heard on You-Tube.

The last representatives of the Community left the area on December 15, 2020, after 120 years presence in Chicoutimi. This is a double heartbreak for the choir, which hopes to soon resume Gregorian chant practices in another inspiring place.

—Michel Tremblay
President, Le Chœur grégorien UNA VOCE de Saguenay
20 December, 2020

Translated from French to English by William Renwick.



Sarum Chant Sung in Japan

By Tamaki Makino

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The Community of the Epiphany was founded after the rebirth of the monastic orders in England. In the 16th century, Henry VIII's reformation had disbanded all the monasteries in England. The rebirth of female monastic life in England dates from the establishment of the Sisters of Charity in 1839. Sisters of Mercy was established in 1848, the Community of St. Mary in 1849, and the Community of St. Margaret in 1854. All of these communities were involved in charity work. The establishment of monasteries were part and parcel to the phenomenon of the return to Catholicism inspired by the Oxford movement, beginning in 1833. Along with the re-establishment of the medieval institution of the monastery were the reintroduction of formal furnishings such as choir seats, pulpit, priestly vestments, and the increasing interest in ancient church music. This movement revived interest in Latin and Greek chants. Collections of translations of ancient Latin chants, such as *Lyra Catholica* (1849) by Edward Caswell (1814-78), and *The Hymnal Noted* (1852-4) by John Mason Neale (1818-66) were published. In this restoration, which developed within the Church of England, all worship and songs were translated from Latin to English; this was the reason that the Epiphany Sisters sung plain chant translated in English from Latin.

Furthermore, the institution that became the mother of the Community of the Epiphany was the Society of the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG). SPG was founded in 1701 and began its Mission to Japan in 1873. SPG was established for the purpose of Anglican pastoral care in the colonies and missions to the pagans who lived in these foreign parts. Its constitution was systematic and conservative, it respected Catholic traditions, and stood on free thought. It was in contrast to the militant and evangelical position of the Church Mission Society

(CMS), another British missionary organization. CMS is an evangelist society established around 1786 by the evangelical faith revival movement that took place in Britain. Thus it was that the Anglican Church in Japan partook of both evangelistic characteristics of CMS but also Sarum chant, a Catholic heritage, introduced by SPG.

Plain chant sung in the Nazareth

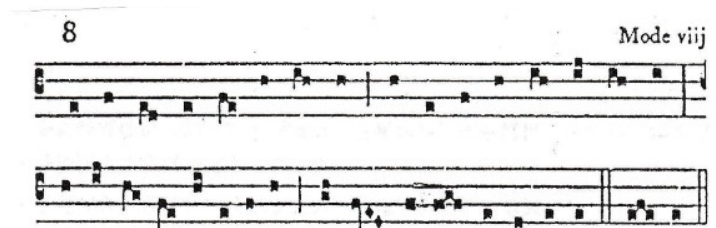
At the Community of Nazareth they pray seven Divine Offices each day. The schedule is as follows (it is somewhat different from the typical Catholic Divine Office): Matins begins at 6:20, Mass at 7:00, Terce at 9:00, Sext at 12:00, Nones at 13:00, Evensong at 17:00, and Compline at 20:00, completing the day. Nones originally started at 15:00, but it is now sung immediately after lunch in order to resume work in the afternoon.

The chant books currently used at Nazareth are *The Holy Prayer Chant* (Reference 13) and *Compline Book* (Reference 11), and the prayer book is *The Holy Prayer* (Reference 10).

First we will examine the chant from *The Holy Prayer Chant* (see right). The chant appears in traditional four-line notation, and the Japanese text appears separately from the chant notation. This piece is the familiar “Salvator mundi Domine”. *The Holy Prayer Chant* is based on the chants from *Hymn-Melodies for the Whole Year* (Reference 14). This collection of chants was printed at St. Mary Monastery in Wantage, England, and brought to Japan from the Community of the Epiphany. St. Mary Monastery is a traditional monastery founded in 1849. I learned about St. Mary Monastery in Wantage from Sister M. of Nazareth, who stayed there for two months. She went to St. Mary’s Monastery around 1972. At that time there were about 150 Sisters belonging to the monastery near Oxford; about half of them were abroad and 80 women lived at the monastery. At that time they sang the same chants as those in Nazareth.

Hymn-Melodies for the Whole Year is comprised of chants from the Sarum hymnals numbering 67; from York, 17; from Hereford, 1; from Gisbarn, 2; from Peterborough, 2; from Dominican hymnals, 2; from Barking, 2; from the Sarum processional, 5; sequences with English text from Sarum the gradual, 20; together with two other sequences: Stabat Mater, and the Seven Sorrows of the B.V.M. (melody from the Dominican gradual). One can see, this book includes great diversity in English regional chants.

Hymn-Melodies for the Whole Year was brought from the UK by the Community of the Epiphany.



ソハアリノ (大観目)

Salvator mundi Domine

贈一八

一	世の救いぬしよ 今宵もこの身を	この一日のこと 抱きまもりませ
二	一日の罪咎 主よこい願わく	身にし覚ゆれば 赦させたまいね
三	今宵も聞ぬち 宮とし献げし	仇はなお製わん 身をいかに守らん
四	御腕にいだかれ 明日目さめなんと (通常頌栄)	罪にもけがれず 契いたてまつる
五	天なる聖父よ 聖子イエスによりて	聖霊と偕なる 切に祈き奉る

アーメン

The Sisters taught Japanese Sisters how to sing chants. According to the oldest Sister, Sister M., when the Sisters in Nazareth lived with the Epiphany's Sister after World War II, they prayed and sang in English until around 1950.

The Holy Prayer Chant has altogether 47 melodies. Of these, citing from *Hymn-Melodies for the Whole Year*, Sarum chants comprise 43, and there is one York chant. I reckon the same melody but with different texts as one chant, so *The Holy Prayer Chant* has altogether 44 chants from *Hymn-Melodies for the Whole Year*. For the sources of references of the three remaining chants, one comes from No. 155 in *The English Hymnal with Tunes* (Reference 5), one from No. 22. The last comes from No. 230 in *Hymns-Ancient and Modern* (Reference 1).

It is not clear when *The Holy Prayer Chant* was edited, but according to Sister M., it was edited about 28 years ago after the Community of Nazareth was moved into newly built premises. It was printed by one of the faithful in St. Martin's Church in Tokyo. The texts are Japanese translations by Toshio Murata published in *The Holy Prayer*.

The Holy Prayer first edition was edited and published in 1936 by the Community of the Epiphany (Reference 4). The translations of the chants are by Murata, but they have been slightly corrected in the 1956 version. Editor Ken Sakurai wrote that the 1956 version also referred to "A little prayer book ... that [was] recently published in the UK, based on the English Sarum Prayer Book." (Reference 10, page 2). As a priest, Sakurai became a spiritual guide when Nazareth was established.

In *The Holy Prayer*, the course of the divine office and the Japanese translations of the chants are included. The Monks of St. John, a male monastery of the Anglican Episcopal Church in Japan, now closed, originally used it to perform the Divine Office. We don't know who Murata is, but it is certain that he was not a priest because his name does not appear on the list of priests of the Anglican Episcopal Church in Japan.

"1936 is the year when Nazareth was established, and the seven services of the office were held every day using *The Holy Prayer*," the first abbot, Sister Yachiyo, wrote in *Steps of the 40 Years of Nazareth*. Since 1991, when worship at the Anglican Episcopal Church in Japan adopted the colloquial style, prayer texts have been used from the newer prayer book. However, the plain chants continue to be sung in literary style, as they were at the time of the establishment of the community.

I present the chants of *The Holy Prayer Chant* in [Table 1](#).

In Matins, chants are designated from Monday to Saturday, and on Sundays are designated as Trinity, Epiphany, and Sundays before Lent. On other days, they are designated as for Apostles and Evangelists. At Terce, chants are designated as feria, feast, and principal feast. At Sext, Nones, and Evensong, chants are designated from Monday to Saturday, and they are divided into Saturdays after Trinity, Christmas, the Name of Jesus, the Epiphany, the First Sunday of Lent, the Fifth Sunday of Lent, Easter Eve, Easter Day, Ferias after Easter, Ascension Day, Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, Corpus Christi, the Heart of Jesus, and Evangelists in Eastertide; others are designated for Sundays. Chants of Compline are divided into feria, feast, principal feast, and furthermore, they are divided into Christmas, the First Sunday of Lent, the Fifth Sunday of Lent, Easter, Ascension, and Sundays after Trinity.

In addition, Nazareth uses *Compline Book*, which was originally compiled in manuscript. The text was translated into Japanese, and according to the church calendar, it contains sixteen chants for ferias and feasts. The source of the texts is *The Holy Prayer*. I list them in [Table 2](#).

Conclusion

I think the tradition of Sarum chant inherited from England that is sung in Japan is valuable. The Community of Nazareth sing Sarum chant not only on Sundays and feasts, but also in the Divine Offices every day. More recently, GIC has made it easier to obtain pieces of Sarum chant from the internet. Despite this, the opportunity to sing Sarum chant in Japan is rare, except at Nazareth. Even members of the Anglican Episcopal Church in Japan, which

administers Nazareth, are not well-known for singing such chants. Sarum chant is not well-known in Japan. This is because the Sisters of the Nazareth sing Sarum chant in a single-minded attitude of serving God, and they don't seek to appeal to a wider following. Being involved in the study of Christian music, I will continue to pay attention to the Sisters, who have no contact with the outside world, and who continue to sing Sarum chant wrapped in their veils.

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—Tamaki Makino
Kyoto, Japan

NB: Translated from Japanese to English by the author.

