

In the 1960s the Second Vatican Council made significant changes in the way Roman Catholics worship. These changes were long overdue and have been most beneficial. It is particularly important for congregations to hear the Word of God and respond to it in their own language.

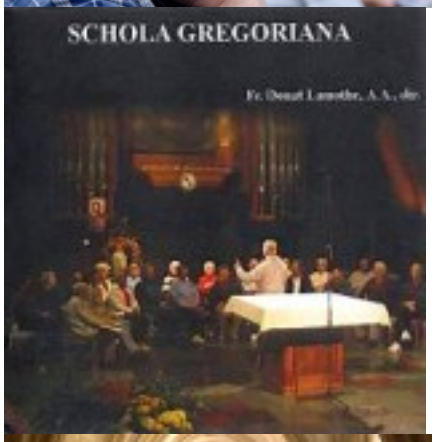
So why does a group of Catholic lay people continue learning and singing the ancient Latin chants of the Church? Doesn't this contradict the pastoral thrust of Vatican II?

For over fifteen hundred years monophonic chant music was used to accompany the Latin text of the liturgy. Some have felt that this music is a precious legacy that must not be allowed to disappear completely from the Church's worship. But music is not really preserved on parchment or in choir books. It exists only when it is sung and heard. So there must be an effort made to keep the chant and polyphonic traditions, which use the Latin language, alive and available in the sound world. This would still not justify using the Latin chant in preference to music with vernacular texts for today's congregations. The chant must serve the congregation's need. The contemplative spirit of the ancient modal melodies is capable of conveying an invitation to raise our hearts and minds to God – in other words, these melodies can and do foster prayer.

Later in this month of September, the Assumption Schola Gregoriana, based at Assumption College begins its fifteenth year of singing the ancient Latin chants of the Roman Catholic Church for their own spiritual enrichment and that of congregations throughout the Worcester Diocese.






SCHOLA GREGORIANA

