

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY • Brébeuf Hymnal

THE MOST CATHOLIC hymnal to appear in seventy years has been met with unstinted praise from informed critics. Specialists from across the globe (both priests and laity) worked diligently for five years to produce a hymnal based upon *excellence*: excellent texts, excellent tunes, and excellent translations. This pew book does not “build upon” or mimic Protestant hymnals; instead, authentic Catholic hymnody forms its core. We did include a few texts—e.g. *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*—written by Protestant authors; but such texts constitute a tiny, inconsequential percentage. The English translations by priests and bishops are magnificent, especially those of Fr. John Fitzpatrick.

Nine members from *Corpus Christi Watershed* were chosen to assist the *John Paul II Institute for Liturgical Renewal* in the production of this superb hymn book. The sensational melodies found in the Brébeuf Hymnal have been described as “simple, memorable, and hauntingly beautiful”—composed by such artists as FLOR PEETERS, KEVIN ALLEN, RICHARD CLARK, PETER LEJEUNE, ALFRED CALABRESE, and more. Singable tunes have been painstakingly shared amongst various texts, recognizing that too many Catholic congregations know just a handful of hymns really well. No effort has been spared in this regard, since the Brébeuf Hymnal was created by and for choirmasters and priests working in real parishes across the globe—the antithesis of a theoretical exercise.

Catholic Texts & Translations

In addition to sublime melodies, the Brébeuf Hymnal also contains magnificent texts by contemporary Catholic priests such as Fr. Christopher Phillips, Fr. Dominic Popplewell, and Fr. Dylan Schrader. At the same time, this book preserves the very best from the past, especially gems found in such publications as the *New Westminster Hymnal* (1939), *Mediator Dei Hymnal* (1955), *London Oratory Hymn Book* (1998), and Theodore Marier’s famous 1983 hymnal. Moreover, you will discover superb texts—written in metrical English and set to gloriously singable tunes—by Monsignor Ronald Knox, Saint Thomas More, Saint Philip Howard, Saint Robert Southwell, and more. The Brébeuf Hymnal is the only source containing literal translations (as well as rhyming translations set to music) of certain rare hymns, such as *Non Abluunt Lymphae Deum*, *Rebus Creatis Nil Egens*, *Rex Sempiternae Domine*, *Salve Caput Cruentatum*, *Sancti Venite*, *Victis Sibi Cognomina*, *Agnoscat Omne Saeculum*, *Hoste Dum Victo Triumphans*, *Jam Desinant Suspiria*, and *Ave Vivens Hostia* (complete). This allows congregations to better understand the genius of Catholic poets who created these singable translations. Indeed, the section with color plates provides a breathtaking “history” of how the Catholic Church has used vernacular hymns through the centuries, as well as the amazing story of why Father Brébeuf was chosen as patron.

Organ Accompaniment & Choral Supplement

The organ accompaniments and choral supplement must be used in conjunction with the Pew Edition, which contains more comprehensive indices and complete information about hymn sources, translators, theology, text sharing, melody sharing, copyright, and so forth. Every hymn with notes in the Pew Edition has been given an organ accompaniment. Out of respect for organists who simultaneously serve as cantors, *each verse has been written out!* The Choral Supplement is marvelous, and adds wonderful solemnity. (Nonetheless, the normal way to involve a congregation in hymn singing is “German style,” that is: unison+organ). The way each verse is written out—for the first time in history—will thrill all those who sing from this book.