

**Five Franciscan Martyrs Region of the Secular Franciscan Order  
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## Metrics in Music

by Fred Schaeffer, SFO

Most of us Franciscans pray the Liturgy of the Hours every day. For the First and Second Order, it is mandatory, as it is for all priests and brothers, diocesan or religious. People who are members of Third Orders Secular, may pray different forms of the Liturgy of the Hours. There are Orders, such as the Benedictines, for example, who use Gregorian Chant as a basis for all their Liturgies. In all of these forms, there are hymns, and hymn tunes are very standardized because their tune or melody is adapted around the metrics of those hymns.

The purpose of this web page is then to show members of SFO, and similar Orders, that they can remember hymn tunes, because there is no need to remember them all. The reason is simple... once you know the standard hymn tunes based on the metric system, these can be applied to all hymns which have the same metric rating.

Metric rating is done by line of each stanza, simply by counting the syllables. For example, take the first line of the hymn "*Pange Lingua*" which reads: "Pange Lingua Gloriosi" - there are 8 syllables in this line, let us separate them:

"Pan-ge-Lin-gua-Glo-ri-o-si" that's 8 syllables.

Now, in English, the hymn "*I shall praise the Savior's glory*": is traditionally sung, using the Pange Lingua tune. The first line "I shall praise the Sa-vior's glo-ry" - also have 8 syllables. But that's only one line. The *Meter* of both hymns is noted as: 87.87.87 - which means that there are six lines and that the first, third and fifth lines have 8 syllables and the second, fourth and sixth lines have 7 syllables.

Let's take another example, something easier, perhaps. "Sunday Week II Evening Prayer I" uses the hymn "At the Name of Jesus" composed by R. Vaughan Williams using the "King Weston" melody. The *Meter* of this hymn is 65.65.D - which means each stanza has 8 lines ("D" mean double). Let's examine the first two lines:

At the name of Je-sus = 6 syllables

Ev'-ry knee shall bow = 5 syllables.

One more example. The hymn for Thursday Week II Morning Prayer, is "*O God of Light, the dawning day.*" When you look underneath the hymn you will find no numbers but the letters

L.M. which stands for Long Meter. There are several of those designations, e.g. CM or Common Meter, LM Long Meter, etc.

In simple terms, meter refers to the rhythmic and syllabic structure of a piece of poetry, which is essentially what a hymn is. Meter markings on hymn tunes indicate the number of syllables in each line of the hymn. For instance:

A hymn with the meter 76 76 has seven syllables in the first line, six in the second, seven in the third, and six in the fourth. A hymn with the meter of 10 10 10 10 has four lines, each with ten syllables. The letter D at the end of a meter notation means "double." For instance, a hymn with the meter 87 87 D has eight syllables in the first line, seven in the second, eight in the third, seven in the fourth, then the pattern repeats itself for the fifth through eighth lines.

Some meters are used so frequently they have acquired names of their own:

86 86 is known as Common Meter (abbreviated CM)

66 86 is known as Short Meter (abbreviated SM)

88 88 is known as Long Meter (abbreviated LM)

Again, when the letter D follows any of these, the pattern is repeated.

When looking at the metrical index of a hymnal, one often finds some hymns listed with the meter "Irregular." This means a couple of different things. For one, it can mean there is no consistent pattern of number of syllables per line. For another, it can mean the number of syllables per line is not consistent between stanzas. This can happen especially when slurs are used in some stanzas and not in others in the same part of the music.

In addition, most hymnals do not count out the number of syllables in refrains. Thus, if a hymn is listed as "CMD with Refrain," it means the stanzas are Common Meter Double, and the refrain is in addition. The only way to know for sure is to count the syllables in the refrain.

If you are using Christian Prayer, there will either be a listing of hymns without notes, or, hymns with notes, depending on the edition. In either case, it will give you the Meter. For example, Hymn #35, "*The Setting Sun*" shows "Melody: Angelus L.M." - What's important to us is "LM" or Long Meter. So when you know the tune of this hymn, one could apply the same tune to all Long Meter Hymns. Instead of knowing just one hymn, you now know dozens!

Abbreviations: w/ with; A Alleluias; An Antiphon; R Refrain

No.	First Line	Meter	Similar Hymns (i.e. same Meter) by Number
75	A Child is born in Bethlehem	88 w/A & R	

171	A mighty fortress is our God	87.87.66.667	It is immediately obvious that Long Meter (LM) occurs most frequently in the table. While there are various forms of LM, any one of those will fit with any LM hymn.
14	All creatures of our God	88.44.88 w/A	
103	All glory, praise and honor	76.76.D	
131	All hail, adored Trinity	LM	
52	All praise to you, O God	LM	
11	All you nations	Irregular	
121	Alleluia! Sing to Jesus	87.87.D	
112	Alleluia! The strife is o'er	8.8.8.w/A	
27	Almighty Ruler, God of truth	CM	
173	Amazing grace	CM	
81	As with gladness men of old	77.77.77.	
116	At the Lamb's high feast	77.77.D	
39	At the name of Jesus	65.65.D	
57	Be consoled, my people	Irregular	
67	Behold, a rose of Judah	76.76.676	
65	Behold a Virgin bearing him	LM	
180	Blessed are the poor of heart	Irregular	
181	Blest are the pure in heart	SM	
18	Breathe on me, breath of God	SM	
2	Brightness of the Father's glory	87.87	
170	Christ, in whose passion	LM	
154	Christ is made our sure foundation	87.87.87	
17	Christ is the world's light	11.11.11.5	
115	Christ Jesus lay in death's strong bands	87.87.78.74	
120	Christ the Lord is risen today	7.7.7.7 w/A	
123	Christ the Lord is ris'n today	77.77.D	
111	Christ, victim for the sins	LM	
127	Come, Holy Ghost, Creator come	CM	
23	Come, Holy Ghost, who ever one	LM	
133	Come, thou almighty King	666.6664	
56	Come, thou long-expected Jesus	87.87	
139	Come to me	Irregular	
86	Creator of the earth and skies	LM	
61	Creator of the stars of night	LM	
101	Crown him with many crowns	SMD	
5	Darkness has faded	11.11.11.5	
42	Day is done	84.84.88.84	
96	Draw near, O Lord	11.11.11 w/R	
31	Faith of our fathers	LM	
21	Father, Lord of earth and heaven	87.87	
46	Father, we thank thee	98.98.D	
28	Firmly I believe and truly	87.87	
172	For all the saints	10.10.10 w/A	
93	For forty years	12.12.12.12 w/R	
37	For the fruits of his creation	84.84.88.84	
44	For to those who love God	Irregular	
19	From all that dwell below the skies	LM w/A	
20	From all that dwell below	LM	
			Everyone knows the tune of "Faith of Our Fathers" - so now you know a tune that fits all LM hymns.
			87.87 is another frequently occurring meter. Most of us know "Alleluia, Sing to Jesus" or "Holy Spirit Come Confirm Us" - you can apply that tune to all 87.87 and also the "D" form (just repeat the tune).
			A word about some of the "Irregulars." If some of your Fraternities have good singers, you could, for example, learn all hymns by Lucien Deiss, C.S.Sp. A frequently sung Lenten hymn "Grant to us" comes to mind. His hymns are very melodic and special. And, it is customary that the cantor sing the verses and all sing the Antiphon or Refrain.
			At Divine Mercy Fraternity, we often use the "Old 100th" tune, which is interchangeable with LM. It is a 16th Century tune (see "Lord Jesus Christ, Abide with Us" it'll say "Old 100th L.M.")
			There are a number of choices for CM, but the most useful one is for the hymn "O God, our help in ages past," which many people know. All the CM hymns can be used with that tune.
			76.76.D is another common tune. "Now fades all earthly splendor" will help you with this meter type.
			So you, see, my friends, you already know dozens of hymns by just knowing a couple of key hymns! And, the Bible says that <i>Singing is Praying Twice</i> , so those for whom you are offering your prayer will benefit doubly. In fact, when I am alone, I sing the whole "Office." It just comes natural especially when I pray to the Holy

69	From heaven high	LM	Spirit beforehand to make my prayer more pleasing to God!
70	Go tell it on the mountain	Irregular	The 4-volume "Liturgy of the Hours" books have more and different hymns than those listed in this table, which occur in the 1-vol. "Christian Prayer."
13	God Father, praise and glory	76.76 w/R	
135	God with hidden majesty	75.75.D	
90	Grant to us	Irregular	
142	Great Saint Andrew	87.87.D	
162	Hail, holy queen	Irregular w/An	Peace and Good to All! Fred Schaeffer, SFO 7/23/2005
102	Hail, Redeemer, King Divine	77.77.D	
122	Hail thee, festival day	Irregular w/R	
160	Hail this festival day	Irregular w/An	
143	Hail to the Lord who comes	66.66	<b>The Catechism of the Catholic Church gives us the following advice:</b>
107	Have mercy, O Lord	Irregular w/An	2680 - Prayer is primarily addressed to the Father; it can also be directed toward Jesus, particularly by the invocation of his holy name: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us sinners."
58	Hear the herald voice	87.87	
137	Heart of Christ	87.87	
24	Help us, O Lord	SM	
49	Holy God, we praise thy name	78.78.77	2681 - "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord', except by the Holy Spirit" ( <i>1 Cor</i> 12:3). The Church invites us to invoke the Holy Spirit as the interior Teacher of Christian prayer.
132	Holy, holy, holy	11.12.12.10	
158	Holy Mary, now we crown you	87.87	
22	Holy Spirit, come confirm us	87.87	
129	Holy Spirit, God of light	7.7.7.D	
114	I am the bread of life	Irregular	
108	I shall praise the Savior's glory	87.87.87	
10	I sing the mighty power of God	CMD	
118	Jesus Christ is ris'n today	7.7.7.7 w/A	
78	Joseph	10.10.10.6	
79	Joy to you	Irregular w/An	2682 - Because of Mary's singular cooperation with the action of the Holy Spirit, the Church loves to pray in communion with the Virgin Mary, to magnify with her the great things the Lord has done for her, and to entrust supplications and praises to her.
98	Keep in mind	Irregular w/An	
100	Let all mortal flesh keep silence	87.87.87	
45	Let all things now living	Irregular	
124	Let the earth rejoice and sing	7.7.7.7	
145	Look down to us, Saint Joseph	76.76 D	
29	Lord God and Maker of all things	LM	
34	Lord Jesus Christ, abide with us	LM	
26	Lord of all being throned afar	LM	
25	Lord of all hopefulness	10.11.11.12	
134	Lord, who at your first Eucharist	10.10.10D	
94	Lord, who throughout these forty days	CM	
7	Lord, whose love in humble	87.87.D	
87	Love divine all loves excelling	87.87.D	
174	Loving Shepherd of thy sheep	77.77	
55	Maranatha	Irregular w/An	
156	Mary, crowned with living light	75.75.D	
157	Mary Immaculate	11.10.11.10	
165	Mary the dawn	Irregular	
185	May flights of angels	10.10.10.10.10	
4			

*From:* MUSICAM SACRAM  
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## II. The Singing Of The Divine Office

30	Morning has broken	55.54.D	37. The sung celebration of the Divine Office is the form which best accords with the nature of this prayer. It expresses its solemnity in a fuller way and expresses a deeper union of hearts in performing the praises of God. That is why, in accordance with the wish of the Constitution on the Liturgy,[23] this sung form is strongly recommended to those who celebrate the Office in choir or in common.
159	Most ancient of all mysteries	CM	
164	Mother of Christ	10.10.10.10	
110	Mother of holy hope	Irregular w/An	
	My loving Savior	11.11.11.5	
51			
41	Now at the daylight's ending	76.76	
178	Now fades all earthly splendor	76.76.D	
169	Now from the heav'ns	76.76.D	
85	Now let the heav'ns resound	LM	
179	Now let us all with one accord	LM	
32	Now let us praise	10.10.10 w/A	For it is desirable that at least some part of the Divine Office, especially the principal Hours, namely Lauds and Vespers, should be performed in sung form by these people, at least on Sundays and feast days.
	Now thank we all our God	67.67.66.66	
136			
33	O Christ, Redeemer of mankind	CM	
71	O Christ, you are the light	CM	
63	O come, all ye faithful	Irregular w/R	
150	O come, O come Emmanuel	LM w/R	
36	O cross of Christ, immortal tree	CM	
15	O Father, whose creating hand	88.88.88	
182	O God of light	LM	
80	O God, our help in ages past	CM	Other clerics also, who live in common for the purpose of studies, or who meet for retreats or other purposes, will sanctify their meetings in a very fitting way if they celebrate some parts of the Divine Office in sung form.
184	O Mary, of all women	76.76 D	
148	O radiant Light, O Sun divine	LM	
104	O raise your eyes on high	CM	
43	O Sacred Head, surrounded	76.76.D	
54	O worship the King	55.55.65.55	
1	On Jordan's bank	LM	
	On this day, the first of days	77.77	
125			
8	Praise him as he mounts the skies	7.7.7.7 w/A	
151	Praise, my soul	87.87.87	38. When the Divine Office is to be celebrated in sung form, a principle of "progressive" solemnity can be used, inasmuch as those parts which lend themselves more directly to a sung form, e.g. dialogues, hymns, verses and canticles, may be sung, and the rest recited. This does not change the rules at present in force for those obliged to choir, nor does it change particular indults.
166	Praise the Lord, ye heavens	87.87.D	
88	Praise to Mary, heaven's gate	77.77	
	Praise to the holiest	CM	
167			
	Queen of heaven	Irregular w/An	
176			
	Rise up, O men of God	SM	
130			
140	Send forth your Spirit	Irregular w/An	
77	Shepherd of souls, in love come	98.98.88	
82	Sing of Mary, pure and lowly	87.87.D	
9	Sing praise to our Creator	76.76 w/R	
3	Sing with all the sons of glory	87.87.D	
72	Sion, sing	Irregular w/An	
84	Songs of praise the angels sang	77.77	
	Songs of thankfulness and praise	77.77	
92			
155	Take up your cross	LM	
64	The Church's one foundation	76.76.D	
117	The coming of our God	SM	
168	The day of resurrection	76.76.D	

89	The eternal gifts of Christ	LM	
163	The glory of these forty days	LM	
146	The God whom earth and sea	LM	
126	The great forerunner	LM	
59	The head that once was crowned	CM	
175	The King of glory	12.12 w/R	
53	The King of love my shepherd is	87.87	
66	The Master came	87.87 w/R	
35	The night now is ending	Irregular w/R	
128	The setting sun	LM	
109	The Spirit of God	Irregular w/An	
152	The word of God proceeding	LM	
12	They come, God's messengers	LM	
106	This day God gives me	55.54.D	
95	This I ask	Irregular	
177	This is our accepted time	76.76 D	
	This is the feast day of the	11.11.11.5	
50	Lord's true witness		
149	This world, my God	10.10.10.10	
138	'Tis good, Lord, to be here	SM	
141	To Christ, the Prince of peace	SM	
	To Jesus Christ, our sov'reign	87.87 w/R	
	King		
68			
76	Unto us a child is born	Irregular w/An	
	Unto us a child is given	87.87	
73			
	Virgin-born, we bow before you	88.77.D	
60			
47	Wake, awake, the night is dying	898.898.664.448	
48	We plough the fields and scatter	76.76 D w/R	
16	We praise you, Father	LM	
113	We turn to you, O God	11.10.11.10	
105	We who once were dead	56.56.5	
74	Were you there?	10.10 w/R	
147	What child is this?	87.87.68.67	
99	What fairer light?	12.12.D	
97	When from the darkness	89.89.4	
	When I survey the wondrous	LM	
38	cross		
83	When, in his own image	65.65.D	
144	When Jesus comes	LM	
6	When Mary brought her treasure	76.76.676	
183	When morning fills the sky	667.667.D	
91	Who would true valor see	65.65.66.65	
	With hearts renewed	887.887.48.48	
119			
62	Ye Sons and Daughters	8.8.8. w/A	
153	You Heavens, open from above	Irregular w/R	
	You holy angels bright	66.66.44.44	
			40. The members of Institutes professing the evangelical virtues should be given special instruction of this type, so that they may draw from it more abundant riches for the development of their spiritual life. It is desirable also that they should participate more fully in the public prayer of the Church by performing the principal Hours of the Office in sung form, as far as possible.
			41. In accordance with the norm of the Constitution on the Liturgy and the centuries-old tradition of the Latin rite, the Latin language is to be retained for clerics celebrating the Divine Office in choir.[24] Since however the same Liturgy Constitution[25] concedes the use of the vernacular in the Divine Office both by the faithful and by nuns and other members of Institutes professing the evangelical virtues, who are not clerics, due care should be taken that melodies are prepared which may be used in the singing of the Divine Office in the vernacular.