435 Ridge Street
Newark, New Jersey  07104
November 1, 1995

The Rev. William G. Gärtig
2146 Cameron Avenue, #5
Cincinnati, Ohio  45212-3631

Dear Father Gärtig:

Please excuse me for not replying sooner to your letter of October 10.

Enclosed is a graphic analysis of the solemn preface tone.

This chant formula is composed of two musical phrases. The first is almost completely regular. It consists of a one-note intonation, a recitation, and a cadence of two accents without preparatory syllables.

The intonation is cursive; that is, it is indifferent to accent. The first syllable of the text, whether accented or not, is set to the one note of the intonation (la) and the second syllable, whether accented or not, is set to the first note of the recitation.

An epentheses (extra note) is added to the cadence whenever two unstressed syllables follow either of the accented syllables.

Up to the final cadence the second musical phrase is less regular than the first. The one-note intonation (also cursive) is omitted more frequently than it is used. The recitation is on ti. Except when the text is very short, there is a medial cadence of one accent and (usually) two preparatory syllables. Most often the accented syllable is set to do and the two syllables that precede it are set to la and ti. (See "cum Pascha nostrum immolatus est Christus.") When the accented syllable is not preceded by two unstressed syllables, the medial cadence formula is compressed, and all three notes (la, ti, and do) are used for the accented syllable. (See "per Christum Dominum nostrum.") Another recitation (on ti) sometimes follows the medial cadence. The final cadence is absolutely regular. It consists of one accent and three preparatory syllables. The three syllable that precede the final accented syllable are set in the manner shown, regardless of whether they are stressed or unstressed. An epentheses is inserted when two weak syllables follow the accented syllable.
I do not, by any means, believe that the solemn preface tone cannot be adapted to English texts. The principal problem posed by English texts are oxytonic endings. Various adapters have approached this problem differently. Douglas and Burgess borrowed an oxytonic cadence for the first phrase from the Exsultet. The American editors of the Anglican Missal simply eliminated the last note of the cadential formula. (See examples).

I do, however, believe that apart from the prefaces (which were reviewed by a "singability committee") the texts of the Eucharistic Prayers in the Prayer Book cannot be set to this formula. I have tried many times and failed; and I regret to say that I do not think you have succeeded, either.

Please refer the my numbered markings on your draft:

1. The intonation consists of only one note.

2. Accentuation of "us" is possible but seems forced to me.

3. This decoration of the recitation does not occur in the Latin prefaces, although it does occur in the Exsultet, at "in quibus verus ille Agnus occiditur," for example.

4. The final cadence of the second phrase of the formula is never abridged in the Latin prefaces, and I do not think it is patient of this kind of abridgment.

5. Incorrect accentuation.

6. First and second phrases conflated in an unprecedented fashion.

7. There is no precedent in the Latin prefaces for insertion of two epentheses into this cadence.

8. An epenthesis is needed here.

9. This phrase is not part of the preface formula.

I believe that because of the many short phrases and proximate accents in these Eucharistic Prayers, they cannot be set to the solemn preface tone. I have set them to other anaphorical chant formulas with what I consider some degree of success, and I think you would obtain better results if you did likewise. (One of my settings of Prayer D is enclosed.)
Byron Stuhlman and I shared the authorship of an article called "The Eucharistic Prayer and Anaphoral Chant," which is to appear in the second volume of The Hymnal 1982 Companion. He wrote the section on texts, and I wrote the section on music. I do not have a copy of his section in its final form, and I hesitate to send you a copy of his draft. I am, however, enclosing a copy of the section that I wrote in the hope that you will find it interesting.

I am not familiar with the Mozarabic tone you have used for your setting of Eucharistic Prayer D; so I cannot offer any evaluative comments on your handling of it.

I think you have done an excellent job with the Gospels. Let's talk over the telephone after you have had an opportunity to look at what I'm sending.

Sincerely,

Bruce E. Ford.