

Ecclesiastical Latin Pronunciation

One-page reference chart — vowels, consonants, diphthongs, and special combinations as used at the Holy See and in the Roman Rite.

Vowels

LETTER	SOUND	AS IN
a	<i>ah</i>	father
e	<i>eh</i>	met
i	<i>ee</i>	machine
o	<i>oh</i>	more
u	<i>oo</i>	rule
y	<i>ee</i>	same as <i>i</i>

Consonants (differ from Classical)

LETTER	SOUND	CONTEXT
c	<i>ch</i>	before <i>e, i, ae, oe, y</i>
c	<i>k</i>	before <i>a, o, u</i> , consonants
g	<i>soft j</i>	before <i>e, i</i> (as in gentle)
g	<i>hard g</i>	before <i>a, o, u</i>
j / i	<i>y</i>	before a vowel (Jesus, jam)
v	<i>v</i>	not <i>w</i> as in Classical

Diphthongs

COMBO	SOUND	NOTE
ae / æ	<i>eh</i>	Not "eye" as in Classical
oe / œ	<i>eh</i>	Same as <i>ae</i>
au	<i>ow</i>	as in "now"
eu	<i>eh-oo</i>	Two syllables, slid quickly

caelum → CHEH-loom. *laudate* → lah-oo-DAH-teh.

Special Combinations

COMBO	SOUND	NOTE
gn	<i>ny</i>	as in "canyon"
sc	<i>sh</i>	before <i>e, i</i>
ti	<i>tsee</i>	before a vowel, not after <i>s/t/x</i>
xc	<i>ksh</i>	before <i>e, i</i>
ph / th / ch	<i>f / t / k</i>	Greek-derived

gentes → JEN-tehs. *caritas* → CHAH-ree-tahs. *agnus* → AH-nyoos. *descendit* → deh-SHEN-deet. *gratia* → GRAH-tsee-ah. *excelsis* → ek-SHEL-sees.

TWO RULES TO REMEMBER

Italian sound, Latin spelling. If you've ever heard a word in Italian, the Latin pronunciation is usually close. The big traps are **c/g** softening before **e/i**, and **ti** turning into "tsee" before a vowel.