"Isn't That Alice Johnson Upfront Singing?"

THE ROLE OF THE CANTOR IN CATHOLIC WORSHIP

The role of the cantor in the celebration of the Eucharist is one of several
Catholic liturgical functions that have its origin in first century Jewish temple and
synagogue worship. Like the Chosen People of God, we, Catholics assemble to
worship as *a community at prayer.* The cantor is not a performer, rock star, or
diva. His or her purpose is to be of *service* to the liturgical assembly by enriching
its prayer through song. The cantor is an embodied extension of the faith
community's intentional desire to praise and worship God through prayer, silence
and song.

The cantor has two primary duties. He or she invites the assembly to join
voices in hymns used throughout the Mass. Secondly, the cantor is responsible for
solo passages of hymns or songs, like the verses of responsorial psalms that are
constitutive parts of the Eucharistic rite. For special or solemn occasions, the
cantor may sing the petitions of the General Intercessions or Prayer of the Faithful.
In more elaborate musical settings of the sung parts of the Mass, that is, the Glory
to God, Acclamations, Sanctus and Lamb of God, that cantor may also have a
soloist role the purpose of which, however, is to enhance the community's sung
response of those ordinary parts.

The role of the cantor is one of service to the community at prayer. It is a
ministry of the Church that has specified requirements and responsibilities. It is
not entered into for reasons of personal satisfaction or self-aggrandizement. It is
for men and women with humility, integrity and musical talent who want to be of
service to the brothers and sisters by helping them praise God in song. And, yes, I
think you are correct, that is Alice Johnson standing before us at the microphone.
She is one of the wonderful cantors at St. Joseph's Parish, Fairhaven.