

Classical or Ecclesiastical Pronunciation?

Both pronunciations are really quite similar, so ultimately the decision is not a significant one. The classical pronunciation attempts to follow the way the Romans spoke Latin (an older pronunciation), while the ecclesiastical pronunciation follows the way Latin pronunciation evolved within the Christian Church during the Middle Ages, particularly within the Roman Catholic Church.

The main difference between the two pronunciations is the way *c* and *v* are pronounced. Classical Latin pronounces *c/ch* as an English *k*, whereas the ecclesiastical in some cases pronounces *c* (Italian style) as an English *ch* (as in **ch**eck). The ecclesiastical pronounces *v* as the English *v* (as in “**v**ictory”), whereas the classical pronounces it as an English *w*. In the ecclesiastical pronunciation, a *j* occasionally appears in place of an *i* when the *i* is used as a consonant. For instance, *iudex*¹ (judge) is changed to *judex*¹ in the ecclesiastical pronunciation. The *t* has a special pronunciation, like *ts*, as in “**ts**.”

See the following chart in which the ecclesiastic pronunciation is shaded.

¹the letter u needs a diacritical mark on it

Latin for Children, Primer C, Dr. Aaron Larsen & Dr. Christopher Perrin, Classical Academic Press, 2020, Camp Hill, PA.