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FOREWORD

Christ Present . . . When the Church Prays and Sings

The National Association of Pastoral Musicians (NPM) is delighted to make available these essays, all but one of which were originally part of the Robert W. Hovda Lectures delivered during the 2003 NPM National Convention in Cincinnati, Ohio.

The planners of that convention were aware from the outset that they would be observing the fortieth anniversary of the landmark Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (CSL), Sacrosanctum Concilium, the very first document promulgated at the Second Vatican Council.

One of the best-known principles articulated in the Constitution concerned the many modes of Christ’s presence in the liturgy:

To accomplish so great a work, Christ is always present in his Church, especially in its liturgical celebrations. He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass, not only in the person of his minister, “the same now offering, through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross,” but especially under the eucharistic elements. By his power he is present in the sacraments, so that when [someone] baptizes it is really Christ himself who baptizes. He is present in his word, since it is he himself who speaks when the holy Scriptures are read in the Church. He is present, lastly, when the Church prays and sings, for he promised: “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:20) (CSL, no. 7).

An astute member of the planning team directed the attention of the entire group to the Council’s assertion that Christ is present in the singing and praying assembly. This discovery led in turn to the adoption of the 2003 convention theme: “Christ Present . . . When the Church Prays and Sings.”

It was obvious to everyone that the Constitution deserved to be celebrated and explored anew. Although its principles are familiar to pastoral musicians, clergy, and other leaders of worship, its guiding vision still remains unfulfilled, and disagreement over its implementation continues.
While the liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church has come to be celebrated mostly in vernacular languages, there has just recently been a major shift in the official norms guiding the translation of biblical and liturgical texts. The full, conscious, and active participation of the faithful is now generally assumed, yet many if not most pastoral musicians still long for robust singing on the part of the congregation. Liturgical celebrations now regularly include the service of various ministers, ordained and lay, but questions and concerns continue to be raised about the role of lay ministers and the nature of lay ministry. While the Council mandated the restoration of the catechumenate for adults, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults has yet to be fully implemented in many parishes in the United States.

The lecture series from which most of these essays are drawn is offered in honor of Rev. Robert W. Hovda, whose prophetic voice summoned Catholics and other Christians in the United States to recognize the transforming power of worship. In his own writings Hovda challenged members of the Church to live out an uncompromising vision of social justice that flowed from the very act of celebrating Word and sacrament. Faithful to the vision of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, he recognized that the liturgy is the heart of the Church’s life and is intrinsically linked to action that proclaims God’s reign of justice and peace.

The texts of the 2003 Hovda Lectures found in this volume provide an opportunity for scholarly reflection on various aspects of the liturgical renewal that follow from Vatican II, including Christian initiation, liturgical catechesis, ecclesiology, inculturation, and the role of music in the liturgy. This collection also seems like a fitting place to publish the very fine and thought-provoking essay by Edward Foley on liturgical music and theological discourse.

It is our hope that these essays will contribute to the continuing reform of the liturgy, the renewal of the Church, and the advancement of God’s reign in the world.

J. Michael McMahon
President
National Association of Pastoral Musicians
“Acknowledge, O Christian, Your Dignity”: The Impact of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* on the Sacraments of Initiation

GERARD AUSTIN, OP

To assess the development of the sacraments of initiation during the forty years since the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* of the Second Vatican Council was approved, we look to the past, the present, and the future.

We look back with gratitude, first, to December 4, 1963, the day *Sacrosanctum Concilium* was promulgated by Pope Paul VI. This important document was to be the *Magna Carta* for all the liturgical reforms instituted since the Council. And we look to the slightly more distant past for our terminology. In the present day, in our post-Vatican II Church, the three sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist are known as “the sacraments of initiation,” but that terminology is actually quite recent. First used only toward the end of the nineteenth century,¹ the phrase “sacraments of initiation” quickly caught on among liturgists and then was gradually embraced by theologians in general. Finally, the 1983 *Code of Canon Law* stated quite clearly that “the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and the Most Holy Eucharist are so interrelated that they are required for full Christian initiation.”²

I remember being taught in school that the sacraments of initiation were two, namely, baptism and confirmation, so the change in terminology marked a changed understanding of these sacraments as well. As I shall point out, it is necessary to contextualize our theological treatments of baptism and confirmation by relating them to Eucharist. The first two sacraments lead to the table of the Eucharist by their very nature. We are baptized only once, confirmed only once, but we celebrate Eucharist time after time, Sunday after Sunday, year after year. It is Eucharist that our

Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy aptly called the “repeatable sacrament of initiation.” It is through the action of Eucharist that we say “yes” to our baptism and confirmation time after time. In our teaching and preaching about baptism and confirmation, we must constantly make reference to the pivotal theological point that Eucharist is the “summit of the spiritual life and the goal of all the sacraments,” as St. Thomas Aquinas described it.⁴

**Vatican II and Initiation**

The Second Vatican Council took place from 1962 to 1965. I well remember the excitement in the air as the Council was announced and prepared, but I also remember the anxiety that those forces within the Church that were lukewarm or even hostile to a council of renewal would win out. Everyone was aware that the group urging renewal was not in the majority. In his contribution to the book *History of Vatican II*, Hilari Rauger lists the forces that caused the shift from the majority conservative position (represented by the bishops of Italy and North America) to support for the minority position—a reform trend represented by the rest of the Europeans and the bishops from the missions. Those forces were the news media, the people of God, and especially Pope John XXIII. Rauger writes:

> We shall also look at the role of the news media, which not only conveyed more information about the conciliar events than had ever been done before, but also in turn influenced the Council fathers themselves. We must also speak of the people of God, who were not simply spectators at the show but through the news media also acted as a sounding board, with undeniable results. Undoubtedly, however, the key to the reversal of major and minority was John XXIII, who was the great catalyst for the few reform-minded bishops; he had been able to excite the people of God and world opinion with his plan and, at the same time, he found, in the universal sympathy which his person and his Council aroused, the moral strength to overcome the opposition that reigned in the Curia against the ideas of a council of renewal.⁵

It would seem that the reciprocal causality at work among the media, the people of God, and Church leader(s) is something positive that could profit the present situation in the Church, as we will see later.

The Council moved forward, and the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* was the first document completed. It stated: “The purpose of the sacraments is to make people holy, to build up the Body of Christ, and, finally, to give worship to God” (#59).⁶ As to the sacraments of initiation:

> The catechumenate for adults, divided into several stages, is to be restored and put into use at the discretion of the local Ordinary. By this means the time of the catechumenate, which is intended as a period of well-suited instruction, may be sanctified by sacred rites to be celebrated at successive intervals of time (#64).

> [I]t is lawful in mission lands to allow, besides what is part of Christian tradition, those initiation elements in use among individual peoples, to the extent that such elements are compatible with the Christian rite of initiation (#65).
The rite for the baptism of adults was to be revised (#66) and also that for the baptism of infants, taking into account in the revision that those to be baptized "are infants" (#67). (That stipulation would rectify a problem which had existed since the fifth and sixth centuries.) A new rite was to be drawn up for "converts who have already been validly baptized; it should express that they are being received into the communion of the Church" (#69). (Such people were still being termed "converts" at this point; later, they would be more correctly described as "candidates for full communion," reserving the term "converts" for those not yet baptized—those coming from unbelief to belief.) The rite of confirmation was also to be revised—and note the wording—"in order that the intimate connection of this sacrament with the whole of Christian initiation may stand out more clearly" (#71). This was to be the most important thing the Constitution would say on the question of the sacrament of confirmation.

As to the Eucharist, the apex of the initiation process, the document stated: "The Order of Mass is to be revised in a way that will bring out more clearly the intrinsic nature and purpose of its several parts, as also the connection between them, and will more readily achieve the devout, active participation of the faithful" (#50). This echoes the famous statement of the Constitution that "in the reform and promotion of the liturgy, this full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else" (#14).

These mandates for the revision of the sacramental rites put into motion a vast mechanism that allowed collaboration on the part of experts to prepare the new rites gradually. A point to remember is that the experts did not start from point zero: The liturgical movement had been in motion long before the opening of the Council. A good example of the groundwork that had already been done is the early-twentieth century widespread renewal of the catechumenate in Africa by the White Fathers, as they were known at the time. A later example is the 1955 renewal of Holy Week, which brought with it the return of baptizing at the Easter Vigil and a separation of the preliminary steps for baptism.

So, in accord with the mandates of the Council, the revised rites for the sacraments of initiation appeared over time but, in fact, very quickly:

1969: The new Order of Mass, with the General Instruction of the Roman Missal;
1969: The Rite of Baptism for Children;
1970: The Roman Missal (editio typica);
1971: The Rite of Confirmation;
1972: The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults;
1988: The final edition of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults for use in the dioceses of the United States. This volume includes the complete text of the rite together with additional rites approved for use in the dioceses of the United States of America as well as the National Statutes for the Catechumenate approved by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1986 and confirmed by the Congregation for Divine Worship in 1988. These statutes mandated that children of catechetical age should not "receive the sacraments of initiation in any sequence other
than that determined in the ritual of Christian initiation” (#19), that is: baptism, confirmation, Eucharist (the “original order”). The 1988 rite complements the 1972 Ordo by adding a number of rites modeled on the original RCIA for those already baptized but uncatechized. This is an attempt to answer a great pastoral problem of whether to separate or put together catechumens and candidates for full communion in the one formation process. In this regard the National Statutes for the Catechumenate mandate: “Those who have been baptized but have received relatively little Christian upbringing may participate in the elements of catechumenal formation so far as necessary and appropriate, but should not take part in rites intended for the unbaptized catechumens” (#31).

Renewed Theological Visions

Before attempting any assessment of the state of the sacraments of initiation during the forty years since the promulgation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, I would like to describe renewed theological visions created by the text and by use of the renewed rites. I would underscore three such visions: an ecclesiology based on baptism, a Eucharistic participation based on viewing the gathered assembly as the proper subject of the liturgical action, and Christian initiation as ongoing.

Baptismal Ecclesiology. Through our baptism, we are members of the Church, the body of Christ. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy states that “liturgical services are not private functions, but are celebrations belonging to the Church, which is the ‘sacrament of unity,’ namely, the holy people united and ordered under their bishops” (#26). This fact creates what commentators on the Constitution call a “homogeneous ecclesiology” that will run throughout all the decrees of Vatican II. In this ecclesiology, priority is given to the entire people of God as actively and responsibly constituting the Church. According to this theology, the starting point is not what divides us but what we have in common, namely, our baptism, which gives us a participation in the one, eternal priesthood of Jesus Christ. It is most accurate, then, to say that the Church baptizes to priesthood. Godfrey Diekmann, OSB, himself an expert at Vatican II, writes of the overall thrust of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: “First, and perhaps most importantly, is the priority given to the entire people of God as actively and responsibly constituting the church, before consideration of the diverse ministries, inclusive of the diakonia based on holy orders. . . . Secondly, and correlative to this basic concept of the church, is the constitution’s underscoring of the dignity and role of the laity, based on their sacramental deputation to cult through baptism and confirmation.”

In view of such a theology of the Church, every baptized Christian is seen as an active, responsible member of the Body of Christ having a distinct contribution to make in the liturgy. This approach is a return to the baptismal theology of the early Church, in which the alter Christus was seen to be the baptized woman or man rather than the ordained presider. It reverses a medieval theology that so emphasized the promi-
nence of the ministerial priesthood that it almost forced into oblivion the importance of the priesthood of all the baptized. While highlighting the importance of the ordained presider at Eucharist and the uniqueness of his role, the Council’s baptismally oriented approach is a return to the early Church’s ecclesiology of communion, the point of reference being what we all have in common, namely, a share in the priesthood of Christ. Indeed, by baptism we become Christ! In his apostolic constitution *Christifideles Laici*, Pope John Paul II reflects this type of theology from Vatican II when he writes: “All the baptized are invited to hear once again the words of St. Augustine: ‘Let us rejoice and give thanks: We have not only become Christians, but Christ himself. . . . Stand in awe and rejoice . . . we have become Christ.’”¹¹

I once asked the great Church historian, Msgr. John Tracy Ellis, how he thought the period of the years following Vatican II would go down in the history books. After a reflective pause, he responded, “I believe it will be known as ‘the era of baptismal consciousness.’”¹² I believe this “era of baptismal consciousness” is best understood when one does not overly separate the sacrament of baptism from the sacrament of confirmation. These two sacraments need to be understood in their complementarity. Orthodox theology maintains this thinking, as do many Eastern Catholic rites. John Meyendorff writes from this Eastern perspective: “The gift of the Spirit in chrismation is the main sacramental sign of this particular dimension of salvation [that is, of the connection between the gifts of the Spirit and human freedom], which is, according to the liturgical norm, inseparable from baptism. Thus the ‘life in Christ’ and ‘life in the Spirit’ are not two separate forms of spirituality; they are complementary aspects of the same road, leading toward eschatological ‘deification.’”¹³

**The Proper Subject of the Action.** The second renewed theological vision is a Eucharistic participation based on viewing the gathered assembly as the proper subject of the liturgical action. Edward Schillebeeckx writes of the effects of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* as follows: “The fundamental gain of this constitution is that it broke the clergy’s monopoly on the liturgy. Whereas it was formerly the priest’s affair, with the faithful no more than his clientele, the council regards not only the priest but the entire Christian community, God’s people, as the subject of the liturgical celebration, in which each in his proper place is given his own particular, hierarchically ordered function—a theological view with all kinds of practical repercussions.”¹⁴

This reflects a theology that sees not just the ordained minister but the Church as the proper subject of liturgical actions. Yves Congar maintains that this theology is clearly part of the ancient tradition of the Church.¹⁵ The Church is by its very nature priestly. Congar writes:

It is not simply a question of a relationship between two terms, the faithful and hierarchical priests: there is a third term, Christ, which encircles the two others, associating them to himself organically. The whole body is priestly, but it is so in virtue of being the body of the first and sovereign priest, Jesus Christ, who acts in the celebrations of his spouse as the first and sovereign celebrant. It is he first and foremost who offers, and the Church offers only because she is his body and follows him faithfully in everything. Jesus offers himself and he offers us; his members, the faithful, offer him in their turn and
offer themselves with him.\textsuperscript{15}

That participation is a logical consequence of an ecclesiology of communion which gives priority to the entire people of God as actively and responsibly constituting the Church.

We are at the very heart of what participation in Eucharist is all about. When we come to Mass we do not just tune the television to Channel 6, “Calvary Revisited,” passively sit back and sing “On a Hill Faraway Stood an Old Rugged Cross,” and recall all Jesus did for us. No, we actively take part in the actio, the action of the liturgy, which is the action of both Christ and his Church. The Constitution on the Church of Vatican II describes the priestly role of the baptized when it says: “For all their works, prayers and apostolic undertakings, family and married life, daily work, relaxation of mind and body, if they are accomplished in the Spirit—indeed even the hardships of life if patiently borne—all these become spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (cf. I Pet. 2:5). In the celebration of the Eucharist these may most fittingly be offered to the Father along with the body of the Lord.”\textsuperscript{16} This is reminiscent of the wonderful Augustinian totus Christus theology of the Eucharist: The Whole Christ (head and members) offering the Whole Christ (head and members) as Augustine put it in The City of God: “Such is the sacrifice of Christians: ‘We, the many, are one body in Christ.’ This is the Sacrifice, as the faithful understand, which the Church continues to celebrate in the sacrament of the altar, in which it is clear to the Church that she herself is offered in the very offering she makes to God.”\textsuperscript{17}

**Ongoing Initiation.** Our third and last renewed theological vision brought about by the Vatican II reforms of the sacraments of initiation is that Christian initiation is ongoing. This might be likened to the stages of a journey. The spiritual journey begins at baptism. This leads to confirmation, which in turn leads to the Eucharist. As is well known, the exact meaning of confirmation is a subject of great debate and is often dubbed “a practice in search of a theory.” How one views confirmation has great implications for the question of the unity of the sacraments of initiation. I have written elsewhere: “Confirmation is not a reaffirmation of a previous baptism; it is not the ritualization of a key moment in the human life cycle. It is, rather, the gift of the Spirit tied intimately to the water-bath that prepares one for the reception of the body and blood of Christ as a full member of the church.”\textsuperscript{18} In Divinae consortium, the apostolic constitution that promulgated the new rite of confirmation, Paul VI stated: “Finally, confirmation is so closely linked with the holy Eucharist that the faithful, after being signed by baptism and confirmation, are incorporated fully into the Body of Christ by participation in the Eucharist.”\textsuperscript{19}

Eucharist is, of course, the apex of the process. This refers not just to first Eucharist but also to Eucharist repeated Sunday after Sunday. Through our initiation we have become the body of Christ, and through each repeated Eucharist we become all the more what we already are. Each Eucharist is more intense than the previous one because we have the momentum of previous Eucharistic actions behind it. The Christian life is an ongoing process or journey, a continuing reaffirmation of who
Finally, this process of Christian initiation is continued and renewed by living the Eucharist day in and day out. The baptized carry out Christ’s command to remember him not only by liturgical action but especially by Christian love. This is brought out well by noting both the “cultic tradition” and the “testamentary tradition” of the Last Supper as described in sacred Scripture. The former approach is in the realm of “liturgical account” and is the perspective taken by the synoptics and Paul. The emphasis here is on cult, and it forms the basis of what happens at Mass. The “testamentary tradition” is in the realm of “farewell meal” and is the perspective taken by the Gospel of John. The emphasis here is on Jesus’ last testament, a life of service and love, and it forms the basis of what occurs in the Christian’s everyday life. Christ mandated his followers to remember him. They do this both by liturgical action (the cultic tradition) and by the lived Christian life (the testamentary tradition). The Jesuit scholar Xavier Léon-Dufour puts it well: “Two kinds of remembrance are required of the disciples of Jesus: remembrance by liturgical action and remembrance by an attitude of service…. I do not choose between the two but cling to both by establishing a rhythm between them.”

Thus, initiated Christian men and women are Christ in the world. They carry on his ministry in and to the world. They are called to evangelization, which is not to run from the world but to enter into the world, to shape the world according to the image of God. This is done by way of living in the world. By good example, they will attract others to join their way of life. The process of initiation is accomplished first and foremost (as the new rite tells us) in the midst of the community: “The initiation of catechumens is a gradual process that takes place within the community of the faithful. By joining the catechumens in reflecting on the value of the paschal mystery and by renewing their own conversion, the faithful provide an example that will help the catechumens to obey the Holy Spirit more generously” (#4). The days of “Father Smith Instructs Mr. Jackson” in the rectory parlor one-on-one are over. Balthasar Fischer, the head of the original RCIA drafting committee reportedly said, “Shepherds do not make sheep, sheep do!”

Thus there is a cycle of: evangelization—initiation—mission (and then the cycle starts over again).

Successes of the Initiation Reform

This is indeed the process going on in our country, and we in the United States should feel good about it. We have done a remarkable thing! We have so much to be proud of:

- Countless parishes revitalized by the RCIA process;
- Dynamic liturgical centers, both diocesan and national;
- Countless books and articles on the sacraments of initiation as well as pertinent catechetical materials;
- Specialized journals like Catechumenate, started in 1978 by Fr. Ron Lewinski as Chicago Catechumenate (since 1990 Victoria Tufano has served as editor, and Catechumenate can boast of subscribers from all
over the world);
• The North American Forum on the Catechumenate (founded by James Dunning and Christiane Brussemans, with James Schellman as the present director);
• And on and on!

**Challenges Ahead**

We know that nothing is perfect, however, and that we still have much work to do in the area of Christian initiation. In my opinion, at the top of the “work to be done” list stands the question of the length of the catechumenate. In the United States, it seems that three-fourths of our parishes celebrating the RCIA are locked into an academic nine-month time frame. This is just too short a period for most catechumens. We must alter our vision to think of the great advantages of a year-round catechumenate. In this regard, I recommend the book *Year-Round Catechumenate* by Mary Birmingham. She argues convincingly that the need for such a process comes first and foremost from the rite itself. She writes: “To answer the question, Why do we need a year-round catechumenate? We must first make the case that one is needed—demanded, in fact—by the rite itself. As the church continues to grow in its understanding of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, it has become obvious that the common practice of initiation in most parishes falls short of the vision set forth in the rite. We have come a long way, but the race has only just begun.”

After the issue of the catechumenate’s length, I would place near the top of the “work to be done” list the question of how to deal with candidates (baptized Christians being received into the full communion of the Catholic Church) as opposed to catechumens. In many places we treat candidates like catechumens. This is a serious problem, especially at the Easter Vigil. We can be thankful that there is a growing body of literature on this topic; it needs to be studied more widely.

The next challenge is the question of the restored order of the sacraments of initiation (baptism-confirmation-Eucharist). There is no question that this traditional order is favored by the universal legislation, and this has been the case for the past century. One of the issues delaying the restoration of this order is the question of an appropriate age for confirmation. The present legislation for the United States allows for an age range from about seven to about sixteen. Within that range each Latin Rite bishop can set a more specific policy in his own diocese. In spite of the clear preference in the law for the restored order of initiation, it is far from the normal practice in the United States. As reported recently in *Origins,* “only a handful of U.S. dioceses have moved confirmation to the early end of the 7–16 age range. Fewer than 10 dioceses currently call for confirmation as young as 7, according to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Office of Doctrine and Pastoral Practices. In a couple of dioceses, the decision is left up to individual pastors.”

I have spent a fair amount of my own effort in promoting the restored order of the sacraments of initiation. My fear about delaying confirma-
tion until after first Eucharist is that it "ends up with something other than confirmation."28 One of the best diocesan statements fostering the restored order, in my opinion, is that of the diocese of Portland, Maine.26 A very helpful tool for catechizing parishioners at large and especially the parents of children to be initiated has grown out of the experience of the restored order in that diocese.27 Finally, allow me to mention that one of the most significant writers on this topic is Paul Turner. His solution to our present dilemma is that "the most comprehensive resolution to the issues surrounding initiation is for the West to restore full initiation at one ceremony to all candidates, regardless of age, including infants."28

My last item on the "work-to-be-done" list is something that I learned from the late Godfrey Diekmann, osa. Toward the end of his life, he became increasingly interested in and appreciative of the Eastern notion of deification (theīsis) as the goal of human existence. He was fond of telling his friends that this concept can give unity and meaning to our spirituality and to our grasp of the meaning of the sacraments of initiation. In one of his final Christmas messages he encouraged us to read or reread John Meyendorff's Byzantine Theology.29 I took him seriously and ordered a copy immediately. In this, as in so many things, Godfrey was right. I believe that this concept of deification, so appreciated by the Eastern Church, can give us Westerners deeper insights into the mystery of initiation. It is not a concept absent from Western spirituality, but it is something that needs more attention.

At Mass, as the deacon or priest pours wine and a little water into the chalice, he says: "By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity." The Byzantine notion of deification is rooted in human freedom, both on the part of Christ and on our part. Meyendorff writes:

En-hypostasized in the Logos, Christ's humanity, in virtue of the 'communication of idioms,' is penetrated with divine 'energy.' It is therefore, a deified humanity, which, however, does not in any way lose its human characteristics. Quite to the contrary. These characteristics become even more real and authentic by contact with the divine model according to which they were created. In this deified humanity of Christ's, man is called to participate, and to share in its deification. This is the meaning of sacramental life and the basis of Christian spirituality. The Christian is called not to an 'imitation' of Jesus—a purely extrinsic and moral act—but, as Nicholas Cabasilas puts it, to 'life in Christ' through baptism, chrismation, and the Eucharist.30

Application to the Present Crisis

I would now like to ask: Do these Vatican II reforms of Christian initiation bring to us anything that would help us meet the challenges of the present sexual abuse and sexual misconduct crisis in our Church? I think they do.

We are all aware of the great pain and injury that have been caused to many young and helpless victims. We are aware of the disillusionment on the part of the parents of these victims and of many others in the Church when they discover patterns of cover-up and what appears to them as greater concern with the bella figura of the institutional Church than with the safety and true well-being of our children. Indeed, I do not think it is
Could something positive arise from these ashes in light of what we have been considering?

an exaggeration to say that we are undergoing a unique time in the history of our American Roman Catholic Church. Many are comparing it with the effects caused by the Protestant Reformation. The very trust in hierarchical leadership has eroded, at least for many Catholics.

In this terribly bleak context, my question is: Could something positive arise from these ashes in light of what we have been considering? I think it could; indeed, I pray that it will, and I think that this positive future is very much tied up with my assigned topic, “Christian Initiation: An Assessment Forty Years after Vatican II.” In my more optimistic moments, I believe that we are already moving toward systemic changes in our Church.

Perhaps the most significant thing that happened at Vatican II was the reordering of the chapters in the Constitution on the Church. The original preliminary schema placed the chapter on the hierarchical structure of the Church before the chapter on the people of God. As you know, some powerful interventions objected to this ordering of the chapters, saying that to start with the hierarchical structure would contradict the already approved ecclesiology contained in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. That ecclesiology reflected a primacy of baptism. That ecclesiology reflected a return to the early Church’s insistence that the Holy Spirit resides in the people, the holy people of God, with resulting respect for each and every member of the people of God.

In the Middle Ages, theologians spoke of “major” and “minor” sacraments. The “major” sacraments were baptism and Eucharist. Holy orders was—and is—a “minor” sacrament. It needs to be understood in its relationship to the “major” sacraments. Indeed, once holy orders was separated from its relationship to baptism, ministerial priesthood often degenerated into clericalism. One of the good effects of the present crisis in the Church could well be systemic changes by which the baptized and the ordained join hands and hearts and work and live as the one Body of Christ.

All the baptized, whether lay or clergy, need to re-assimilate the words Jesus uttered at Capernaum when he spoke of the very heart of discipleship: “They returned to Capernaum and Jesus, once inside the house, began to ask them, ‘What were you discussing on the way home?’ At this they fell silent, for on the way they had been arguing about who was the most important. So he sat down and called the Twelve around him and said, ‘If anyone wishes to rank first, he must remain the last one of all and the servant of all.’” The last one of all! The servant of all! We must remember that this message of Jesus is directed to all of us in the Church—to those who possess the baptismal priesthood and to those who possess the ministerial priesthood as well.

The Church baptizes into priesthood; the Church ordains to the episcopacy, presbyterate, and diaconate. St. Augustine wrote: “As we call everyone ‘Christians’ in virtue of a mystical anointing, so we call everyone ‘priests’ because we are all members of only one priesthood.” That is our theological starting-point! Aidan Kavanagh described the clericalization of the Church this way: “The association of priesthood with the presbyterate among the Western churches has presbyteralized not only the ministry but the very sacerdotality of the Church as
well... Ordination cannot make one more priestly than the Church, and without baptism ordination cannot make one a priest at all."35

In the post-Vatican II period we are enjoying a renewed realization of the dignity of the baptized. Yes, incorporation into Christ through baptism gives all members of the Body of Christ, at the most foundational level, an equal dignity. St. Paul stresses that the diversity of gifts is a function of the one body, and all gifts are given "for the common good."34 These diverse ministries come from the sacraments of initiation and from the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Even the unique gifts and ministries stemming from the sacrament of orders are contextualized against the backdrop of baptism, because they, too, are aimed at building up the Body of Christ. Ordination does not remove someone from the baptized community, just the opposite: It roots that person more deeply and more firmly in the community precisely as its servant-leader. Donald Cozzens writes of the temptation facing a young priest to forget this: "He is blinded to a fatal transformation—he has been taken over by his priestly persona. He is no longer a man like other human beings, a Christian like other Christians. He no longer is one of the faithful. His priestly identity overshadows his baptismal identity."35 I believe this is the root cause of ministerial priesthood degenerating into clericalism.

Restoring a Balance

Church history has much to teach us. Different eras have emphasized different things. There is no question that at certain periods (e.g., the Carolingian Period) the ministerial priesthood was emphasized to the detriment of the baptismal priesthood. The same thing happened again—and probably with greater detriment—as a result of the Protestant Reformation. I believe that our post-Vatican II era is remediying this!

I think that God could well be using this moment of crisis in today's Church to restore a balanced notion of the Church as a synergy between laity and clergy. We are leveling the playing field, so to speak. We are returning to an era of baptismal consciousness; this is the fruit of the Vatican II reforms. This certainly does not mean the end of the ministerial priesthood, but it does, one may hope, spell an end to clericalism.

After the Second Vatican Council, the U.S. bishops urged the creation of parish, diocesan, and national pastoral councils. We fell short on implementing this project. Had those councils been put in place, we might well have avoided a good bit of the horrible situation in which we now find ourselves. But God can, and does, draw straight with crooked lines. I believe that Vatican II's reforms of the sacraments of initiation have put into place great things in our Church. The baptized, reborn in water and the Spirit through baptism and confirmation, have been brought to the Table, not only to receive the Body and Blood of Christ but to be part of the very action of the Eucharist. As the Constitution on the Church puts it, their whole lives are brought to the celebration of the Eucharist where "they are most fittingly offered to the Father along with the body of the Lord" (#34). Or, as the Catechism of the Catholic Church puts it: "It is the whole community, the Body of Christ united with its Head, that celebrates... The celebrating assembly is the community of the baptized..."36
The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy has caused our people to take ownership of the liturgy, but this ownership brings with it a great challenge. Mark Searle looked back at the Constitution twenty years after its publication, much as we are doing now forty years after its publication. He observed: “It has become increasingly clear that active participation in the liturgy on the basis of baptism is something of a sham if it does not mean active participation in the whole life of the local church and the assuming of the wider responsibilities of the Church towards its members and the larger society. . . . The faithful will not be able to make the desired connections between liturgy and daily life if their participation in the life of the believing community is restricted to liturgical role-playing.”

Today, twenty years after Searle’s article, partially because of the sexual scandals in the Church, there is a mounting cry for a far greater participation in the total life of the Church by all the baptized members. The Church today stands at a unique moment in its history. Many wonderful and challenging things are on the table:

- The retrieval of baptismal consciousness;
- The retrieval of a view of the entire assembly as the proper subject of the liturgical action of the Eucharist;
- The universal call to holiness on the part of all the Church’s members: laity, clergy, religious;
- The growing awareness of the importance of the community’s having ordained ministers in its midst, ironically often caused by their absence.

All these things call the Church to communion rather than to division. The Church cannot exist with only clerics; the Church cannot exist with only laity. Indeed, the clergy-laity distinction may not be our best approach to understanding what the Church is.

Thomas Aquinas described the purpose of the Eucharist (what he called the res of the Eucharist) with masterful simplicity as unitas corporis mystici, the unity of the Mystical Body, embracing the unity of head and members and the unity among the members. The chief aim of all the Church’s life is that same unity, and that unity began in baptism and grows through Eucharist. We still have two major sacraments, and they are baptism and Eucharist. What laity and clergy have in common is far greater than how they differ. What they have in common is that, through their baptism, they are members of the one Body of Christ. Godfrey Diekmann loved to say that there are not different types of spirituality in the Church; there is only one spirituality—baptismal spirituality. He was fond of quoting the famous line of St. Leo the Great: “Acknowledge, O Christian, your dignity!”

I hope I do not sound naively optimistic when I say that I am convinced that the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of Vatican II, with its subsequent liturgical renewal of the sacraments of initiation, has unleashed upon the Church a new era of baptismal consciousness. It can serve—and indeed is already serving—as a clarion call to a much-needed reform in the life and structures of our Church. May God bring to completion the work God has begun in us!
Notes


4. Summa Theologica (henceforth ST) III, q. 73, a. 3.


8. The Society of Missionaries of Africa was founded by Charles-Martial Allemand-Lavigerie at Algiers in 1868.


15. Ibid., 255 (my own translation from the French).


19. DOL #303, 768.


25. Gerard Austin, Anointing With the Spirit, 146.


27. Michael Henchal et al., Celebrating Confirmation Before First Communion: A Resource


29. See note 12 above.

30. Ibid., 163–4.


34. I Corinthians 12:7.


38. ST III, q. 73, a. 3.

Liturgical Catechesis and Formation in Light of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*

JOYCE ANN ZIMMERMAN, C.PP.S.

Invariably it happens when I’m at a meal with people whom I don’t know very well. Dinner is served, and all of a sudden things grow very, very still and quiet or very, very busy and loud. One person picks up a fork, examines it intently, and puts it down. Another stares longingly at the plate of food. Beneath outer calm is a growing anxiety: Do we pray or not? Sister is here; we must. But who prays? Finally, simply out of compassion, I casually ask, “Shall we pray before we eat?” There is an audible sigh of relief. All look to me, and I say a simple grace. Conversation picks up with the initial enthusiasm, everyone begins to eat, and calm is restored.

This situation happens to me over and over again, but it never ceases to fascinate me. When there is obvious discomfort about praying, I surmise that giving thanks to God for the blessings of food probably isn’t part of these people’s regular daily pattern. Sometimes I’m with people who obviously pray at mealtime—occasionally a host or hostess even prays without looking to me first. It is clear to me in these instances that prayer is a regular part of these diners’ lives.

For both groups—those uncomfortable or those comfortable with prayer (and I encounter the former far more than the latter)—I suspect that there was conscious and thorough formation in prayer, at least at mealtimes, probably from an early age. Both groups, I suspect, learned to pray at mealtime when they were quite young, and they formed a habit of such praying. But the former group lost the habit, while the latter group retained it.

Formation in prayer—and formation in liturgical prayer, the specific...
focus of our conversation—can only come through sustained praying, and praying well. So how do we form people in good liturgical prayer? This is no easy question, for our topic is a challenging one. Since, during this fortieth anniversary year of the promulgation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, this document serves as our guide for exploring liturgical catechesis and formation, it makes sense to begin there.

The very first chapter of the Constitution is already concerned with “promotion of the Sacred Liturgy,” taking “promotion” to be a broad agenda for catechesis and formation. After a first section discussing “The Nature of the Sacred Liturgy and Its Importance in the Life of the Church,” the second section of the Constitution’s first chapter is entitled “The Promotion of Liturgical Instruction and Active Participation.” There are only seven paragraphs in this section, covering less than two pages in my volume of the documents. At first glance this doesn’t seem like enough reflection on liturgical catechesis and formation to give the impression that the bishops in council were very concerned about it. But the very structure of this chapter—that is, first, the nature of liturgy; second, its promotion—is significant for our discussion and points to a concern about catechesis and formation that even underlies the entire document. The first task, in other words, is to know what liturgy is and does; the second task is to be formed in it. Sounds simple? It is and it isn’t!

The Nature of Sacred Liturgy

As the clarion call of the Second Vatican Council was “back to the sources,” so we might say that the clarion call of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy is “back to the basics.” The fundamental theology of liturgy repeated over and over again in the Constitution does, indeed, harken back to the sources—back to the mystagogia of the initiation sacraments in which both their celebration and subsequent reflection were clearly focused on Christ, the sacred mysteries were clearly acts of the Church, and initiation plunged the initiate into the paschal mystery (the dying and rising) of Jesus Christ (see especially nos. 2, 5, 6, 102, 104, and 106). Liturgy, first and foremost, enact in the here and now the dying and rising mystery of Jesus and our own participation in it by which we are a redeemed, holy people.

To this description we all nod our heads in agreement. But I say: Not so fast! Two formidable challenges greet us if we accept as our working definition of Christian liturgy that it enacts here and now the paschal mystery.

First challenge: Our participation in the paschal mystery in the very celebration of liturgy mustn’t end at the conclusion of the ritual, but the dynamic dying/rising rhythm of liturgy must continue into our daily living. If this is to happen with any kind of success at all, three things must be in place: The liturgy must be celebrated in such a way that the dying/rising rhythm is apparent in the very ritual celebration; we must be clearly sent forth to live the rhythm; and this dying/rising must become a habit of daily living (or a liturgical spirituality). In other words, liturgy isn’t something that is self-contained in a forty-seven minute ritual and then we are done with it, but authentic liturgy explodes the
ritual occasion to become a living reality informing all we are and do. Liturgy always deepens our Christian identity and goes to mission.

These assertions have enormous consequences for how we plan, prepare, and celebrate liturgy. Clearly, the focus must be on Christ and his mystery; this means that the focus can’t be on ourselves. Easily said, not so easily carried out! How many members of our liturgical assemblies (and maybe even some of us!) judge good liturgy by what makes us feel good, what we like, what entertains. We judge liturgy by whether it has rousing music and engaging homilies; we judge liturgy by the environment we create that sometimes obscures even the altar and ambo in its elaborateness. Now, don’t misunderstand me: An emotionally fulfilling celebration and challenging homilies are desirable goals, and good music and sacred environment are a must, but these in themselves cannot be the focus or the reason for celebrating liturgy. Liturgy ought never be focused on us except insofar as we are surrendering ourselves to Christ’s mystery to be more profoundly transformed into being more perfect members of his body, the Church.

Liturgy can never be the “kingdom” of a handful of people doing their own thing, no matter how well intentioned they might be. Liturgy is always a celebration by the whole Church for the whole Church. It is for this reason that we have some common guidelines—the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy and the General Instruction of the Roman Missal are two basic documents with which we must be thoroughly familiar. Whatever choices about liturgy are made (and every liturgy requires many choices), decisions are always directed to whether the choice helps the assembly better enter into and be transformed by the paschal mystery being enacted. This is a tough criterion to put into practice, but it is essential if the celebration is to be good, authentic liturgy.

Second challenge: The second challenge is a point raised in the first challenge, but it is so important that it deserves to be addressed separately. The second challenge is that liturgy is to be lived! The dying/rising mystery of Christ is to become a habit of daily living. Our very initiation into the life of Christ as members of his body the Church includes a mission to live the Gospel, to live as Jesus did. Liturgy instills in us a way of living—a spirituality—that conforms us to Christ in ever deeper and richer ways. Practically speaking, this means that both liturgy and liturgical living bear out the same paschal mystery rhythm of dying and rising. Further, because we all belong to Christ, both liturgy and Christian living have as their very heart genuine compassion and care for the other—Christian love—as well as an unflinching will to have right relationships with others—justice that is carried forth in concern for all, especially those who don’t have the means to live fully, healthily, and with dignity.

As in the early Church, assemblies today which are praying well liturgically ought to have no one in their midst who is in need (see Acts 2:45 and 4:34). This self-sacrificing generosity (far more than merely material sharing) doesn’t just apply to members of our own families and parishes; it means that we have concern for all God’s people—all humankind. Conformed to Christ, we are to have the mind of Christ (see 1 Corinthians 2:16): we reach out to all peoples and all nations, bringing to others the love and compassion of God.
Liturgy, then, is far more than a ritual occasion; it is a way of living—a spirituality—that makes demands on us and challenges us each moment of each day. When we celebrate liturgy in such a way that its true nature (that is, to enact the dying and rising mystery of Christ) is hidden or compromised, we risk losing what our very life is about: conforming ourselves to and living the mystery of Christ.

Liturgy itself forms us in Christian living—in self-sacrificing, dying and rising living. And if Jesus taught us anything, it’s that the only way to share in resurrected life is by embracing the cross. With far more implications than the popular adage “no pain, no gain,” what is at stake here is no short-term gain but a way of living the dying and rising rhythm of the paschal mystery that leads to eternal life itself. We cannot afford to compromise the nature of liturgy, nor can we afford to be lackadaisical in its celebration. What is at stake is our very life.

We could well dwell on the nature of liturgy for the whole length of this essay: It is that important and so often misunderstood. But our topic compels us to move beyond the nature of liturgy to catechesis and formation. Armed with a common understanding of the nature of liturgy—making present the paschal mystery to be celebrated and lived—we now turn to what the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy says about catechesis and formation.

Formed about and from the Liturgy

Liturgical catechesis and formation entail far more than simply learning about liturgy (although that may well be an important part of the whole process). The term “catechesis” comes from two Greek words: kata, “down,” and chizein, “to sound.” Therefore, literally, katachesis (“catechesis” in English) means to “sound down.” In our context I suggest that liturgical catechesis means to transmit the Christian Tradition about liturgy. Even more importantly, I suggest it also has to do with ourselves and our appropriating the meaning of liturgy in our everyday lives so that in our very living the paschal mystery rhythm of dying and rising is evident, the Gospel is preached, and the compassionate care of God is manifested. We aren’t primarily transmitting a body of doctrine (as important as that is) but are primarily transmitting a way of life. This is why liturgy itself is inherently catechetical.

More specifically, then, we might think of both catechesis about the liturgy and catechesis from the liturgy. The Constitution mentions both. To catechize about the liturgy is required for seminaries and religious houses of studies (nos. 16 and 17); for priests to understand what they are presiding over, to live a liturgical life, and to share this with “the faithful entrusted to their care” (no. 18); and for pastors who are to “promote the liturgical instruction of the faithful.” Here, clearly, the Constitution has in mind some kind of formal instruction about liturgy. We could envision whole courses on liturgy that might be offered in seminaries and in ministry formation or degree programs. We might also consider here the occasional presentations that are offered in most parishes. One of the concerted efforts at such catechesis that might still be made in the United States concerns the implementation of the General Instruction of the
We might hope that more catechesis will be offered so that members of the assembly may understand these changes more thoroughly than they have perhaps understood the changes that have been introduced in the past.

The Constitution also alludes to catechizing from the liturgy. For example, the bishops of the Council reiterated the teaching of the Council of Trent in maintaining that liturgy “likewise contains much instruction for the faithful” because “in the liturgy God speaks to his people, and Christ is still proclaiming his Gospel” (no. 33). This same paragraph goes on to mention that the singing, praying, “visible signs which the liturgy uses,” postures, and gestures all affect the faithful and form them. In order to heighten this formational aspect, the Constitution calls for the rites to be “within the people’s powers of comprehension” (no. 34) and for “the intimate connection between rite and words” (no. 35) in the liturgy to be more apparent. In that same paragraph, the Constitution then describes how explicit liturgical instruction might be given (no. 35).

These remarks and suggestions in the Constitution are hardly new; people were attentive to them with more or less success even before the Council. So in this the Constitution probably isn’t much help for moving the catechetical/formational ministry forward and, indeed, may be a bit disappointing to some. However, this isn’t all that the Constitution intimates about catechesis and formation about and from the liturgy. Perhaps the most helpful, surprising, and insightful implications come from where the paragraphs on formation occur in the document: The “promotion of liturgical instruction” is coupled in the same section with “active participation.” This structural coupling in the very first chapter of the document is as significant as coupling liturgical catechesis and formation (the Constitution uses the phrase “promotion of liturgical instruction”) with the nature of liturgy (a structural pairing discussed above).

Here is a proposal: For the “full, conscious, and active” participation (no. 14) demanded by liturgy to be fruitful in daily Christian living, it must be paralleled with a “full, conscious, and active” catechesis. Although the Constitution doesn’t explicitly use the phrase “full, conscious, and active catechesis,” it implies it by including its fullest remarks on catechesis in the section on participation. To flesh out our proposal we first look at the meaning of “full, conscious, and active participation” and then see how this can help us understand a “full, conscious, and active catechesis.”

Full, Conscious, and Active Participation

This phrase contains the five words that are perhaps the most often used and quoted words of the Constitution. Needless to say, the phrase has been used by many people to say many things! To understand what the bishops of the Council meant when they used it, we might begin with the point that they envisioned assembly members having a greater role in liturgy than they did prior to the Council. For more than a thousand years before the Second Vatican Council lay members of the liturgical assembly were present at liturgy but hardly participated in liturgy. Liturgy was “done” by a priest and servers, and the faithful for the most part prayed their own devotional prayers. This began to change with the liturgical movement
initiated in the mid-nineteenth century but was given real impetus by Pope St. Pius X at the beginning of the twentieth century. This liturgically-minded pope introduced frequent Communion for the faithful, promoted participation in singing the liturgical music, lowered the age at which first Communion could be received, and in other ways promoted participation by the faithful in the liturgy. By the mid-twentieth century, the so-called “dialogue Mass” was well established in parishes, and all the faithful—not merely the servers—could enter into dialogue with the priest at appropriate times.

One of the biggest steps toward a greater participation by the faithful occurred with the Council’s permission to have the people’s parts of the Mass translated into the vernacular, the language of the people (see no. 36). Interestingly enough, the bishops of the Council never envisioned a totally vernacular liturgy, but with the door cracked open, the faithful charged through! It took only a few years from introducing the people’s texts (e.g., Gloria, creed, Our Father) in the vernacular to having the entire Mass in the vernacular.

While all of this has been a major step forward in terms of people’s participation, more is yet implied by “full, conscious, and active” participation. It means much more than “participating” in the sense of doing. The doing of liturgy is important, as we discovered after the Council when we prayed in the vernacular, expanded the visible liturgical ministries, and promoted active engagement of each member of the assembly in the “physical” aspects of the liturgical celebration. People began to have a stake in how liturgy unfolds. Postures and gestures are now something people pay attention to and, sometimes, they are even things that cause controversy. Some people despair of the lack of uniformity in liturgy from parish to parish or diocese to diocese, but even the fact that people are bothered by this tells us that active participation by the assembly is now so commonplace as perhaps even to be taken for granted. It’s when we introduce change (such as with the implementation of the revised General Instruction of the Roman Missal) that we begin to have a sense of exactly how much members of the assembly have come to be actively engaged in liturgy. But still, this kind of active participation is hardly sufficient if liturgy is truly to draw us into celebrating and living the paschal mystery. Therefore, it is helpful not to think of “conscious” and “full” as synonyms for “active” but as further adjectives the Council document used to suggest a progressively deeper participation in liturgy demanded of all the baptized.

In addition to being physically, actively involved in the liturgy, we must participate consciously as well. This means that getting ourselves to church and ending up on “automatic pilot” (which is, after all, so very easy to do!) is less than active, conscious participation. Our active participation must be complemented by consciously choosing to surrender ourselves to the dynamics and challenges of the ritual action. This conscious surrender is a willful “yes” to allow God to act in and upon us during liturgy. This conscious surrender means that we do ritually during liturgy what we are doing in our daily living: surrendering our wills to God’s will so that we might more perfectly live as the body of Christ, be more faithful disciples. The conscious surrender is more than
simply our faithfulness in coming to Mass (or other liturgical celebrations), or hospitality in gathering, or our recollecting ourselves at the beginning of Mass. This conscious surrender must be as ongoing during liturgy as it is ongoing during our daily Christian living. It takes great effort—and patience with ourselves—to allay distractions, focus on God’s presence to us, let go of our own desires, and trust that God will fill us. Conscious participation is nothing less than a surrender to the liturgical action that keeps us there and aware of what we are doing and why we are doing it. Conscious participation is doing liturgy according to its nature—entering into and surrendering to the dynamic rhythm of dying and rising.

Conscious surrender, then, means that we look for and become consciously aware of the dying and rising rhythm as it is presented at this time in this particular liturgy. This paschal mystery dynamic won’t be evident in exactly the same way during each liturgy. This is why our conscious participation is so critical—so that we don’t miss what God is offering us even as we offer ourselves to God.

Even as challenging as this conscious surrender is (more challenging, indeed, than the physical engagement and doing of active participation), this is still not enough! Liturgical participation must also be full, which means that, finally, we trust in God enough to be open and malleable, so that God may transform us into ever more perfect members of the body of Christ. This transformation is the ultimate expression of participation because it takes us where our baptismal commitment calls us: to the heart of Christ, being one with him, entering into his saving mystery as our own mystery and way of living. Full participation, then, means that we never leave liturgy the same as we were when we gathered. Perhaps that transformation isn’t felt or noticed after each liturgical celebration. Over time (for example, through a liturgical year), however, we might look back and see a difference because of our full participation. Both individuals and liturgical communities grow in their ability to act like Christ: more kind, loving, compassionate, forgiving, just. If this isn’t happening over time, then we need to question whether the assembly is participating fully. If this transformation isn’t making a difference in our world, then we need to question whether our liturgical celebrations are accomplishing what they intend—to enact the paschal mystery and draw us into it.

There is so much more to full, conscious, and active participation than physical engagement (as important as that is)! The kind of engaging, surrendering, and transforming participation of which we speak is how we conform ourselves more perfectly to Christ and live as faithful disciples. This kind of participation makes clear to us that the dynamic rhythm of dying and rising that structurally defines liturgy is the same dynamic rhythm of dying and rising that characterizes our Christian living. When we fully, consciously, and actively participate in liturgy, we allow God to make of us an ever holier, redeemed people who bring the presence of Christ to each moment of every day and to all those we meet in the ordinary circumstances of our lives. Ultimately what is at stake in this kind of participation is our embracing a liturgical spirituality as the only way we live.

There is a clear danger in this kind of participation, so it is always good to know where we are allowing God to lead us and what the human
There is a clear danger in this kind of participation, so it is always good to know where we are allowing God to lead us and what the human consequences of our liturgical choices are. Consequences of our liturgical choices are. When we live a liturgical spirituality, we commit ourselves to be a living sign that this world is not all there is and that we are not ultimately in charge. We commit ourselves to be prophetic witnesses to the kind of radical love and community life that the Gospel demands. We commit ourselves to put others first for the sake of the in-breaking of God’s reign. We commit ourselves to have and use only what we need and make sure that others have what they need. We commit ourselves to right relations and right priority of values. We commit ourselves to allow God to take center stage in our lives and spend ourselves for others because we recognize the presence of the risen Christ in them—what we do to others, we do to Christ (see Matthew 25:40).

“Full, conscious, and active participation” in the liturgy has consequences far beyond the ritual celebration. Allowing God to transform us means that our lives are always changing, our daily living always is conforming more perfectly to Gospel values. Quite frankly, it’s tiresome! So why would anyone choose this kind of participation? Because the new life in Christ that is God’s gift to us when we surrender to dying to self far exceeds any human cost. When we surrender ourselves to God’s transforming action, we can never be the same. The wonderful thing about God’s gift of a share in divine life is that, as we continually surrender, life only gets better!

This doesn’t mean that we have no troubles or worries. On this side of our physical death these will always be part of human existence. However, as we surrender to God’s transforming us and receive an ever greater share in divine life, we are better able to keep our troubles and worries in right perspective: They soon will pass, but what endures is God’s life within us and the invitation to share divine life eternally.

We Christians are a people of hope—we live our lives fully now in God’s grace but also know full well that our faithfulness brings us to even greater grace. This is why we choose to participate fully, consciously, actively: because God’s presence continually draws us deeper into divine life. God’s presence assures us that we are never alone but always in loving relationship with God and others in the body of Christ. This is why we can face the cares and tragedies of this life with hope—because God has shown us in Christ that through dying to self there is always the grace of divine life. Dying isn’t all there is!

This is mystery, to be sure. We grapple for words to express how and why God chooses us to share in divine life. And perhaps the greatest mystery of all is God’s election of us to share in divine life. No words can capture this fully. This is why, as we participate in liturgy, come to experience God’s deeds on our behalf, and become energized by the marvel of God’s life within us, we hunger and thirst to delve deeper into the liturgy and search ever more diligently for its meaning in our daily living. This is why “full, conscious, and active participation” in liturgy eventually leads us to desire more knowledge about liturgy and to seek tools that help us enter more deeply into the mystery liturgy celebrates.

Most parish ministers have had the unfortunate experience of scheduling information sessions on the liturgy only to have them poorly attended. We might despair, asking “Aren’t the people interested?”
when maybe the right question is: “Is our celebration of liturgy leading the people to hunger to know more about the mystery?” This question brings us back to the nature of liturgy. When liturgy is celebrated so that the paschal mystery’s dying and rising is enacted and the assembly is led through death to new life, then that liturgical community is well on the way to linking liturgy and catechesis. Let’s consider “full, conscious, and active” catechesis next and then see how liturgy and catechesis are linked through the participation schema.

**Full, Conscious, and Active Catechesis**

As with participation, “full, conscious, and active” catechesis and formation might be considered from three progressively deepening perspectives. We will consider these first and then link our discussion about catechesis and formation with the reflection on participation. We begin with “active catechesis,” the most tangible and hands-on form, and progress to the more demanding forms of catechesis and formation.

We might approach “active” catechesis in terms of catechesis *about* the liturgy. First, we need to understand that catechesis about the liturgy isn’t a choice for a liturgical community: It is a necessity if that community wishes to grow in its celebration of liturgy. However, offering classes and workshops probably isn’t the best place to begin. Most parishes have more catechesis about the liturgy in place than they recognize. Here are some easy ways to begin or strengthen liturgical catechesis—with “captive audiences,” so to speak.

Almost all parishes or liturgical communities offer annual or biannual ministry workshops for their liturgical ministers—lectors, Eucharistic ministers, musicians, altar ministers, hospitality ministers, and so on. Two points about these need to be made. First, along with sessions for these “visible” liturgical ministries, a workshop ought to be offered for the most important ministry of all—that of the *assembly*. In such a program, a parish would be conveying the idea that *everyone* who celebrates at liturgy is a minister of liturgy. Second, the workshop (or day of recollection, or however a parish does it) ought to include two parts. The first part is a “how to” that discusses the nuts and bolts of the particular ministry—this is especially important for parishioners who are new to the parish and/or to the ministry. (It is a good idea to review the “how to” even with people who have been ministering for a while because it is easy to fall into sloppy habits.) Additionally, however, these ministry workshops ought to include a second part—time spent reflecting, discussing, and praying about the spirituality and meaning of ministry in general and also about the particular ministry. It is here that sound liturgical catechesis would be included. For example, a presenter might focus on the meaning of the introductory and concluding rites when reflecting with the hospitality ministers, or the presenter might focus on the structure and meaning of the liturgy of the Word with the lectors and on the liturgy of the Eucharist with the Eucharistic ministers. Texts from these parts of the Mass could form the backbone of the prayer for a ministry day or session. With this catechesis as a backdrop, the ministers might be encouraged to brainstorm on what kinds of Christian virtues need to be practiced every day in order to live
out their ministry.

Parish staffs, parish councils, and worship commissions (or however they might be named) that meet regularly are also “captive audiences” for ongoing liturgical catechesis. One might object that, except for the worship commission, liturgy isn’t the direct responsibility of a parish staff and council. Oh, but it is! Since liturgy is the heart of the parish—its celebration is the most important reason a parish exists—then liturgy is, indeed, the concern of these groups. What a difference it might make in a parish if all pastoral decisions and actions flowed from a clearly articulated theology of liturgy and worship that is carried out in good celebration!

Another “captive audience” is the music ministers. The choir director might make a point to include some small piece of liturgical education during choir practice. For example, when the choir begins rehearsing music for a particular liturgical season, the director might offer comments on the meaning and liturgical structure of the season. When beginning a new hymn, a leader could take some moments to discuss the text and what it says about liturgy and Christian living. Cantor practice might include similar elements, focusing the reflections on the psalms that the cantors sing. Keep these catechetical moments brief and simple; everything doesn’t have to be accomplished in one choir practice! But fidelity to such catechetical practice over the years can produce great fruit by building a solid base of liturgical understanding.

Homilies are not primarily catechetical in nature, but including some catechesis when appropriate is surely laudable (see the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, no. 35). Short bulletin notes are another good form of liturgical catechesis, as are bulletin inserts. The key here is long range planning, consistency, and perseverance. Again, results won’t be evident immediately, but if this active catechesis is well planned and consistent, results will eventually be noticeable. And the most happy result is the affirmation that the liturgical community is truly praying and celebrating better.

After years of this kind of consistent and quiet active liturgical catechesis, it will become evident to the liturgical leadership that the assembly members are hungering for more formal liturgical catechesis. This is the ripe time to offer sessions on timely liturgical topics—in the beginning, short sessions; after a following develops, longer sessions might be offered. For example, now parishes are catechizing on the General Instruction; if this builds a hunger, capitalize on it and continue. It might take time and an energy commitment for parish staff to offer these sessions, but since liturgy is the heart of the parish, their time could not be better spent.

A principle to follow for active liturgical catechesis is to begin small with at-hand groups and build to larger programs. And don’t get discouraged! Foster and encourage small faith-sharing groups to organize around liturgical interests. At the risk of promoting my own work, Living Liturgy is an all-around resource for these groups, liturgical ministers, all those involved with preparing liturgy.

Most parish ministers find this active liturgical catechesis challenging enough, and we usually stop our catechesis here. However, this is really
the easy part! The more challenging task is conscious formation from the liturgy. This means, first, that liturgy must be well celebrated with all the right foci: Christ, Church, worship of God with all the various liturgical elements (e.g., music, postures, gesture, etc.) supporting and centering on these foci. Good celebration of liturgy that draws the assembly members to surrender to the ritual action forms them in the paschal mystery rhythm simply by their regular participation in it.

Such a simple thing as being drawn into the readings because the lectors truly proclaim can aid conscious formation (of course, preparing the readings ahead of time through self-study helps immensely). A presider who truly prays with his whole heart is forming the assembly to have thankful hearts aware of God’s mighty deeds of salvation. Respecting the required silences during liturgy and allowing them to be long enough to have an effect is another avenue of formation from the liturgy. Well-composed introductions and intercessions also form us in the liturgical pattern. Unhurried processions, festively dressed liturgical ministers (including the congregational part of the liturgical assembly), beautiful sacred environment, deliberate and reverent gestures: All form the assembly. In short, everything about liturgy ought to unfold in such a way that all of the assembly members are drawn into the mystery. Careful attention to details about the liturgy (environment, dress, comportment, a balance of silence/voice/music) conveys that this liturgical time together is important and is the high point of the week.

Liturgy forms the assembly best when it is approached and conveyed as God’s loving action on behalf of God’s beloved people, when liturgy is truly the time and space where God is encountered, when it opens the assembly members’ minds and hearts beyond themselves to embrace all of God’s gift of creation and humanity. Liturgy forms the assembly best when it is celebrated so finely that the assembly members want to surrender to its action. Liturgy forms the assembly best when throughout the unfolding ritual action the assembly is drawn out of itself, so that when the members are sent forth at the conclusion of the rite, they can’t help but live what they have celebrated.

Finally, then, full liturgical catechesis and formation is the living out of the paschal mystery rhythm in one’s daily life in such a way that one gives witness to Gospel values and to the presence of God in our world. It might be said that liturgy isn’t fruitful until it spills over into care and concern for others. Full liturgical catechesis and formation are not achieved until liturgy makes a difference in the way one lives and engages with others and the world in daily living. Full liturgical catechesis means that assembly members embrace gospel living with fresh insight and renewed hope that they (with God’s help) can make a difference in the world.

Linking Liturgical Participation and Catechesis

There is an obvious parallel between full, conscious, and active participation and full, conscious, and active catechesis. Perhaps the schema on the next page will help by summarizing what we have discussed so far.

“Active” liturgical participation is about the physical doing; a very minimal active catechesis is informing the congregation and the assembly’s
ministers about what they are doing and why they are doing it. Without at least this very basic information/catechesis it is difficult to move the assembly beyond “autopilot” and fulfilling an obligation. Further, although initial catechesis might be about the what and why of doing, it cannot end there but must eventually take the assembly deeper into the meaning or nature of liturgy. The what and why are a good springboard to move to the deeper level of mystery.

“Conscious” liturgical participation requires surrendering to the liturgical action so that God can act on and within the individual and the community. Without this surrender there can be no catechesis from the liturgy, but conscious surrender is itself a kind of catechesis, for the individual and the community are choosing to allow the liturgy to change us. With this surrender God’s grace can work and the individual and the community can be transformed.

“Full” liturgical participation is the fruit of good liturgical celebration and results in the assembly members being transformed into more perfect members of the body of Christ, more equipped for Gospel living. Full liturgical catechesis is this Gospel living that is a witness to others of God’s goodness and presence.

**Celebration, Formation, Catechesis**

When the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy placed liturgical formation in the same section of the document as full, conscious, and active participation, it inextricably linked participation and catechesis. Every good celebration of liturgy promotes liturgical formation and catechesis. This link also shows us the way to sure liturgical catechesis and formation—not first through the classroom or workshops but through God’s presence to us and within us in liturgy’s paschal mystery rhythm of dying and rising. There is no way around what good liturgy does: God embraces us, changes us, works through us to perfect us and all of creation to bring all back within God’s loving provenance.

Too many of our liturgical leaders are malformed! One tremendous need, then, is for liturgical leadership—priests, deacons, lay presiders, liturgy and music directors, catechists—to become more fully informed about liturgy. Only in this way can we make the right decisions about the practical matters of liturgy so that the deeper meaning of liturgy—enacting the paschal mystery so it is lived by all Christians—comes alive and becomes the focus of our growth. To be sure, this is the high road, and it is much more difficult! Progress is slow. But much is at stake—the very meaning of who we are as baptized members of the body of Christ plunged into his dying and rising mystery.
The whole enterprise can happen only if it begins with those directly responsible for planning, preparing, and carrying out liturgy. How do liturgical leaders themselves enter into both full, conscious, and active participation and catechesis? How, then, from this personal experience of God's working, do they in turn help others enter fruitfully into the same process of encountering mystery? Liturgical leaders must be excited about what they are doing if the rest of the assembly is to be excited about what liturgy is doing! Liturgical leaders share in a most sacred trust! It is their ministry to have a direct hand in how the body of Christ, the Church, encounters our Lord, takes up his cross, dies to self, and is raised to new life. Such a sacred trust! Such a wonder gift and grace! Be faithful! The reward will be great in the kingdom of heaven.

Notes


2. I use “dying and rising” as a metaphor for the whole mystery of Christ: his incarnation; his public life of preaching, teaching, calling followers, nourishing, healing; his death, resurrection, and ascension; and his sending of the Spirit to be with us as we take up our own discipleship and do as the Master commanded.

3. I am indebted to Dr. John Witvliet of the Calvin Institute for Christian Worship in Grand Rapids, Michigan, for this notion of “habit” as a continuation into one’s life of the meaning of what is presented, whether that presentation is liturgy, a catechetical workshop, or a formation program.

4. Some of the remarks in this section were first published in my Liturgy Notes column in Liturgical Ministry 9 (Fall 2000), 227-28.

The Impact of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy on Ecclesiology

JEROME HALL, sj

HOW DID THE REFORMS OF VATICAN II change our way of thinking theologically, liturgically, and ecclesiically? The question recognizes that practice affects theology: Our experiences of Church, worship, intercession, and communion—both the form and the content of our common prayer—shape our understanding of the mystery God and God’s love for us. In a time-honored formula, the rule of prayer (lex orandi) grounds the rule of belief (lex credendi).

Our question calls all of us who have been working to implement the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy to stop and reflect on the changes that this document and subsequent documents have wrought in our experience of the liturgy. This presentation will begin with a somewhat lengthy description of our worship in the days before the Council, move to a shorter description of a contemporary Sunday parish Mass and a brief listing of the changes made in obedience to the Liturgy Constitution and a few other changes—like the use of the vernacular throughout the liturgy—which weren’t explicitly called for but which were quickly perceived as necessary for the full, conscious, active participation of the entire assembly in the act of worship. Next we will summarize the understanding of the liturgy which the Council expressed through those changes, noting some significant points of departure from the theology expressed in Pius XII’s 1947 encyclical Mediator Dei. A brief consideration of our liturgical music will lead us to a few observations about how our common prayer is continuing to shape the way we think about God and the Church.
How Has Our Worship Changed? Snapshots of Experience

Forty years later, it is hard to remember how fully the reforms of Vatican II changed our experience and our expectations of how to be Church. In a sense, the reform of the liturgy in the second half of the twentieth century began not with Sacrosanctum Concilium but with the restoration of the Holy Week liturgies under Pius XII. To remember how things were, I used a tape of the solemn Mass of Easter in the Church of Our Lady of Sorrows, an Augustinian parish in Chicago. The original film was made in 1940, before Pius XII's 1947 encyclical letter on the liturgy, as part of a campaign to teach Catholics to pray the Mass using the missal, urging them to understand the action of the Mass and participate in the prayer. The tape offers a commentary on the Mass by the young Fulton Sheen.

In this liturgy the people, using their missals, pray in silence while standing, sitting, and kneeling. They neither sing nor say a word. The Mass propers are chanted by a choir of seminarians from Our Lady of the Lake in Mundelein, Illinois; the ordinary is sung by a choir of men and boys supported by orchestra, using an elaborately romantic but easily forgettable setting composed by one of the clergy of the Archdiocese of Chicago. As was demanded by the rite, the celebrant, who is assisted by a large and well-trained corps of ministers, pronounces every word of the liturgy, except the responses. Most of the words which the celebrant pronounces are not heard by the people in the congregation; they must follow his prayer in their missals.

While the choir sings the Introit and the Kyrie, the celebrant says the prayers at the foot of the altar, with the deacon and subdeacon responding. Then the priest ascends the steps, incenses the altar, recites the Introit, and prays the Kyrie together with the deacon and subdeacon. He then intones the Gloria and recites the rest of the text quietly while the choir sings it. When he finishes reciting, he goes to the predella, the bench where he sits with the deacon and subdeacon until the choir has finished singing. Then he returns to the altar to chant the opening prayer. While the subdeacon chants the Epistle, the celebrant reads it silently. After he reads the Gradual, Alleluia, and Sequence—which the seminarians’ choir sings—the priest moves to the center of the altar, while an acolyte moves the missal from the epistle side (on the right, from the congregation’s viewpoint) to the Gospel side (left) of the altar. The celebrant then turns to put incense in the thurible and bless the deacon, who goes in a small procession with the Evangelary, accompanied by the thurifer and the subdeacon, to sing the Gospel. (Meanwhile, the priest celebrant turns back to the altar and moves to the left to read the Gospel text quietly. When he has finished reading the Gospel text, he moves back to the epistle side—right side of the altar—to listen to the deacon’s sung proclamation.) There is no homily. After intoning and then silently reciting the Credo, the celebrant goes to his chair, accompanied by the other ministers, and listens to the choir’s singing of the creed, cued by the master of ceremonies to lower his cowl (other priests at the time would be wearing a biretta) and bow his head at the name of Jesus.

The Offertory prayers; the incensation of the gifts, the altar, and the ministers; the washing of the priest’s hands; the Oraet Fratres and the
Secret prayer (now called the Prayer over the Gifts) are all accompanied by the choir’s singing of the Offertory chant and a short Latin motet. The celebrant sings the opening dialogue of the Eucharistic Prayer, with the seminarians’ choir responding, then sings the Preface for Easter. The rest of the Eucharistic Prayer is said silently while the choir sings the Sanctus and, after the institution narrative, the Benedictus, until the celebrant raises his voice to sing the doxology: “Per ipsum, et cum ipso, et in ipso . . . .” The choir responds “Amen,” and the celebrant, by himself, sings the Pater Noster, then quietly recites the embolism “Libera nos, quæsemus” (“Deliver us, Lord”), raising his voice again to sing the end of the prayer: “per omnia saecula saeculorum.” After chanting the greeting—“Pax Domini sit semper vobiscum”—the celebrant gives the peace to the deacon and subdeacon, who greet the other ministers while the celebrant turns back to the altar for the fraction rite. Meanwhile, the choir sings the Agnus Dei.

In preparation for holy Communion, the deacon and subdeacon sing the Confiteor and receive the usual (non-sacramental) absolution from the celebrant before they are given the sacrament under one kind. Then the ciborium is removed from the tabernacle, and the celebrant, accompanied by the deacon and subdeacon, gives Communion to the faithful kneeling at the altar rail. The formula “ Corpus Domini Nostri Jesu Christi custodiat animam tuam in vitam aeternam, Amen” is said quickly and quietly by the celebrant, without any response from the person receiving Communion. While the congregation is receiving, the choir sings the Communion antiphon and another Latin motet. Once the Communion procession is completed, the vessels are purified, and the priest chants the Postcommunion prayer. This is followed by the dismissal, the blessing, and the Last Gospel (John 1:1–14). The choir sings a motet as the ministers return to the sacristy.

This tape shows a celebration in which the congregation participated in silence, neither singing nor speaking, in which the experience of corporate worship went together easily with an ecclesiology which stressed the activity of the clergy and did not develop the importance of the life of the ordinary baptized persons for the ministry and vitality of the Church. In the years between about 1950 and 1960, as the liturgical movement progressed, as liturgical legislation encouraged the people to sing the ordinary of the Mass—but not the proper (even using a simple psalm tone, the Latin chants proper to the day were beyond the capacity of most congregations), and as the dialogue Mass gained popularity, the congregation began to respond out loud, even singing the responses.

The liturgy, however, was not easy to follow or understand, even for those who used a missal. During the Mass we prayed, for the most part, in silence; our great common actions were kneeling “for the consecration” and, at the Communion rail to receive holy Communion. The liturgy taught us silent reverence for God and for the clergy and gave us an opportunity to be respectful of each other by not distracting our neighbors from their prayer. The liturgy did not teach us clearly and forcefully about the mystery which we were celebrating.
Depth of Change

How deeply have the reforms directed by the Liturgy Constitution changed our experience and understanding of worship? I was struck with the differences between the celebration of Mass portrayed on that videotape and a typical Sunday Mass today on the weekend before the NPM convention in Cincinnati (July 14–18, 2003), when I joined the parishioners at St. James Church in New Bedford, Massachusetts, for one of their Sunday Eucharistic liturgies. In this celebration the Mass parts were sung by the people, who were led by a music minister with a good electronic keyboard and a microphone. The musical settings were adapted for the local assembly from pieces printed in the missalette; the people seemed at home with their local usages and sang easily. The lectors and Eucharistic ministers, who were seated in the body of the assembly, wore no special dress or other distinguishing marks. The priest listened to the readings, sang the hymns and responses with the people, prayed the presidential prayers with conviction, and was obviously at home with his neighbors in the parish. I was particularly struck by the altar servers—two brothers perhaps eight and ten years old. They knew what they were doing and they knew the music for the Mass. They listened attentively to the readings and the homily, worked well together, and sang as they moved! This was a celebration in which the assembly’s action proclaimed a Church with a diversity of ministries, in which all work together.

This short description of a recent Sunday Mass only begins to tell us how much our liturgical celebration has changed since Sacrosanctum Concilium. The Council gave instructions whose practical as well as theoretical impact has been felt as the Liturgy Constitution has been implemented over the past forty years. First among these instructions were provisions (SC 14–19) for the education and formation of the clergy, so that they may “become fully imbued with the spirit and power of the liturgy and capable of giving instruction about it” (SC 14).

The Council’s reforms, we must remember, touched the entire sacramental life of the Church:

The purpose of the sacraments is to sanctify men, to build up the Body of Christ, and, finally, to give worship to God. Because they are signs they also instruct. They not only presuppose faith, but by words and objects they also nourish, strengthen, and express it. That is why they are called “sacraments of faith.” They do, indeed, confer grace, but, in addition, the very act of celebrating them most effectively disposes the faithful to receive this grace to their profit, to worship God duly, and to practice charity.

It is therefore of the utmost importance that the faithful should easily understand the sacramental signs, and should eagerly frequent those sacraments which were instituted to nourish the Christian life (SC 59).

Since the celebration of the liturgy is formative, the liturgical books were to be revised as quickly as possible (SC 25). The people’s parts were not indicated in the previous books; our reformed books show clearly that the congregation is expected to take part (SC 31).

Now the entire liturgy is normally celebrated in the vernacular. The Council affirmed that the Latin rites should use the Latin language but
allowed for some use of the vernacular. “Since the use of the vernacular, whether in the Mass, the administration of the sacraments, or in other parts of the liturgy, may frequently be of great advantage to the people, a wider use may be made of it, especially in readings, directives and in some prayers and chants” (SC 36.2; see also SC 63). “A suitable place may be allotted to the vernacular in Masses which are celebrated with the people, especially in the readings and ‘the common prayers’ [the Prayer of the Faithful, restored by SC 53] and also, as local conditions may warrant, in those parts which pertain to the people . . .” (SC 54). As we came to realize that the presidential prayers, no less than the scriptural readings and the chants, pertain to the people, even the Eucharistic Prayer came to be translated into the vernacular. Latin is now preserved mostly as a language for singing.

The reformed rites emphasize the centrality of Scripture for our common prayer (SC 24). Every sacramental celebration begins with a liturgy of the Word (though sacramental reconciliation is still frequently celebrated without the reading of Scripture, following the structure of the previous rite) and normally includes preaching on the Scripture and the other liturgical texts and actions (SC 35.2, 52). Our Eucharistic liturgy has a three-year Sunday lectionary cycle (with a reading from the First (Old) Testament and a psalm, so that we hear four scriptural texts every Sunday), together with a two-year weekday cycle, so regular churchgoers hear a good part of the Bible every three years. This lectionary cycle (SC 51) has been adopted, with some revisions, by the other mainline churches, so that the same Scripture passages are heard by many Christians every Sunday.

Every liturgical rite has its own general introduction (SC 63), a pastoral document which gives a brief theology, describes the roles played by the various ministers of the liturgy, outlines the structure of the rite, and points out the various options which are envisaged by the text. Though not a cookbook recipe, the general introduction explains rather clearly how to plan and execute the celebration of a dignified and prayerful sacramental liturgy.

The translation of the Eucharistic Prayer and its proclamation out loud made the Roman Canon’s structural difficulties, already remarked upon by scholars before the Council, apparent to all.⁵ With the involvement of the bishops’ conferences and of a corps of scholars and pastors who studied the question for the Congregation for Divine Worship, Paul VI approved three new Eucharistic Prayers, whose structure is clear and whose texts set the narrative of institution of the Eucharist in the context of Trinitarian action throughout the history of salvation. To these prayers, found in the center of the Roman Missal (Sacramentary), have been added others for special occasions (currently found in an appendix to the Sacramentary and in a separately published set of Eucharistic Prayers for Occasional Use). All of these have a clearer and more Trinitarian structure than the Roman Canon.⁶

We sing, with more or less success, at many of the Sunday Masses in every parish. Many ministers—both men and women—take part in the celebration as lectors, cantors, choir members, other musicians, acolytes, and hospitality ministers (SC 29). We have recovered sacramental
Communion as a common practice, so that most people who come to Mass receive Communion—whether in the hand or on the tongue—and in many if not most parishes Communion is regularly offered under both species (SC 55).

The sacraments of initiation are regularly celebrated in a process designed for adults (SC 64–66), involving the entire liturgical assembly, with parishioners formed and educated to act as catechists and sponsors. The Rite of Baptism for Children (SC 67–69), with a clear emphasis on the community of faith, gives parents a major role in the celebration while making clear the importance of the family and the parish in the child’s growth in faith. Whereas baptismal water was once blessed only at the Easter Vigil, the water blessing is now heard every time we baptize (SC 70). The Rite of Confirmation emphasizes that sacrament’s connection to baptism and Eucharist (SC 71), and diocesan and parish preparation programs make clear the importance of this sacrament and its connection to mission, social justice, and the Christian life.

Two of the three rites for sacramental reconciliation are celebrated regularly; these liturgies celebrate the divine action which reconciles us and frees us from sin and make clear that both sin and forgiveness have a communal nature (SC 72). Anointing of the sick (SC 71–74), no longer considered a sacrament for the dying, is done both in the context of special parish Masses and in parishioners’ homes or hospital rooms; many lay ministers bring communion to the sick, complementing the priests’ home visits.

Marriage between two Catholics is usually celebrated with a Nuptial Mass; ecumenical or interfaith marriages always involve the proclamation of Scripture and the praying of the nuptial blessing (SC 78). Ordination rites have been made more intelligible (SC 76), with clearly structured prayers, and they are regularly celebrated in a way that involves the parishes of the diocese. Funeral rites, most frequently celebrated with white vestments, have also been enriched with more scriptural texts, with new prayers for various circumstances, and with a clear emphasis on the Paschal Mystery (SC 81, 82). Morning and evening prayer, the two pillars of the Liturgy of the Hours (SC 89.1), are prayed in many parishes at least on major feasts and during the Easter Triduum (SC 100). Blessings for special occasions are also celebrated freely, often in the context of the Sunday Eucharist, using the rich treasury of such rites found in the Book of Blessings (SC 79).

Music, Before and After

Before the Council’s reforms, the texts sung during the Mass were in Latin (and Greek), and they were usually sung by the organist or by a choir. In most places, we sang in English and other vernaculars only at low Mass (that is, Mass without someone singing the assigned texts), and we sang at four places where particular sung texts were not mandated. We also sang in the vernacular only after an official liturgy—at the end of Mass or after Benediction—or in non-liturgical settings like the Stations of the Cross or novena devotions.

What did our songs from that time tell us about God and about the Church?
Church? The great American Catholic song was "Holy God, We Praise Thy Name," whose first verse we all knew, but whose second ("Hark! The loud celestial hymn"), third ("Holy Father, Holy Son") and fourth verses ("Spare Thy people, Lord we pray") were known by fewer Catholics, and whose only ecclesiological term is "Thy people," which comes in a seldom-sung verse in which the grammar shifts from the plural of the third verse ("Three we name Thee") to the singular ("never, Lord, abandon me!"). The words of the hymns for Benediction were learned and sung by rote; their texts make no ecclesiological reference. Eucharistic devotions might also find us singing "O Sacrament Most Holy" which, since it was in the vernacular, was not used during Benediction or for a Communion hymn, and which referred to the singers' spiritual (or possibly sacramental) communion: "Then humbly I'll receive Thee, Thou Bridegroom of my soul." "Jesus, My Lord, My God, My All!" was another favorite; it moves from the singular ("How can I love Thee as I ought?") to the plural ("we Thee adore"), but has no explicit ecclesiological reference and makes no mention of the paschal mystery.

Many of the hymns that we sang were addressed to Mary or used during Marian devotions. The *Stabat Mater*, which we sang in a less-than-distinguished translation at Stations of the Cross, concentrates on the individual Christian’s contemplation of Christ’s and Mary’s sufferings and makes no ecclesiastical reference. At Miraculous Medal novenas we sang “Mother Dear, O Pray for Me” (which puts the singer not with the rest of the Church in the Bark of Peter, but alone in his or her own fragile craft), “Mother Dearest, Mother Fairest” (which at least uses the first person plural “help us”), and “Hail, Holy Queen!” At May devotions we sang the Lourdes Hymn (whose verses refer to the assembly as Mary’s children) and, perhaps, “Bring Flowers of the Fairest” (which makes no direct reference to the mystery of salvation).

June and Sacred Heart devotions brought “To Jesus’ Heart All Burning,” which is a song of praise for God’s love in Jesus Christ, but which makes no explicit connection with the communion or the mission of the Church. March 17 brought “Great and Glorious Saint Patrick” (praying for Ireland); in Jesuit parishes and schools the Novena of Grace in honor of Francis Xavier was marked by “O Father Saint Francis.” Both these songs set the singers in the position of supplicants asking for favors from their mighty patrons. Our tradition did not allow translation of liturgical hymns into the vernacular, so our song had little to do with the prayer texts which the priests prayed.

In my parish, in a small town in the southern tier of New York State, we had few musical resources: a choir that could manage a reasonably robust version of Mass VIII or IX, an organist who managed to get through Mass XVI, with simple proper chants for funerals and Masses for the Dead. In cities like Cincinnati, with a much richer musical tradition, Catholics had more opportunities to hear and even to sing music written for the Church’s liturgy. Still, a quick survey of the texts that we sang demonstrates that our songs focused on God’s own self, on an individual relationship with Jesus Christ, and on the merits of the saints. Little was said about the mystery of our salvation, the Church,
and the Christian life in the songs we sang before the reforms of Vatican II.

It came as a bit of a surprise, therefore, when the Second Vatican Council praised music as an integral part of the Church’s solemn liturgy (SC 112) and when the bishops noted: “Liturgical worship is given a more noble form when the divine offices are celebrated solemnly in song with the assistance of sacred ministers and the active participation of the people” (SC 113).

What does the music that we are singing now tell us about the nature of the Church? Since our fresh starting-point forty years ago, we have sung many songs, some of which we still remember fondly, refer to in our prayer, and may still even sing occasionally. The Gelineau Psalms remain a treasured resource, as do some of the psalms and scripturally based prayers of Lucien Deiss. “Priestly People” certainly gave many of us a good introduction to biblical images used in reference to Christ’s presence and action in the Church. The text of “Lord, Who at Thy First Eucharist Didst Pray” introduced us to the relationship between sacramental Communion and the unity of all Christians. “The Church’s One Foundation” was an exhilarating discovery, catechizing us as we sang, as was “For All the Saints” with its strong melody (though wide range!) and its emphasis on the communion of saints.

In slightly more recent days we learned “One Bread, One Body,” with its Pauline insistence “We are one Body in this one Lord,” and, more recently, “Now We Remain,” with its own emphasis on the paschal mystery, and “Pan de Vida,” celebrating our linguistic differences as a sign of the rich unity of the communion of the Church. “Lord, You Give the Great Commission,” with its clear scriptural references, and “The Church of Christ in Every Age,” written in a more contemporary poetic tone, continue a style of classic English-language hymnody which brings new riches to the Roman liturgy. Indeed, if we look through our current hymnals we will discover that most of the songs say something about the Church.

We may not, however, hear and pay attention to the words we sing, even though we know that our song should, by God’s grace, bring us deeper into the Paschal Mystery. Christ is present when the Church prays and sings, so what we sing is a theological source—not a didactic or overly theoretical source but a prayer which tells us who we are and what God is doing in us as we embody Christ’s Pasch. Since few homilists preach about the singing, and since we don’t have much of a tradition of reflecting on our song, our work as musicians and as teachers of prayer and mystagogy is extremely important! Some texts, like “The Church of Christ in Every Age,” proclaim what we believe about the Church in a way that can be interpreted either as simply exhortatory or as containing elements of petition (“Then let the servant Church arise”). Others, like “The Church’s One Foundation,” begin with proclamation of faith and conclude with explicit petition (“Lord, give us grace that we”). Many Catholic liturgical assemblies never sing the full hymn, so a text is not prayed in its richness, or a text is experienced as simply didactic because the explicit prayer petition comes in the final, rarely-sung verse. Choosing good hymn texts and singing the right verses (if not all of them) is part of the unfinished
business which lies ahead for us musicians.

Summing up, forty years after the proclamation of Sacrosanctum Concilium: Our liturgical celebrations are much clearer and more intelligible than they were forty years ago; they can function as sources of spirituality and theology in a way that the previous rites could not. As a result, our liturgical experience of receiving God’s grace partakes of a different sort of wonder than it did in the years before the reforms of Vatican II. This experience necessarily gives rise to theologies which stress the accessibility of God’s grace, the gifts of prayer and faith, and the interplay of ministries in the building up of the Church and of God’s reign.

A Renewed Understanding of Liturgy

What understanding of liturgy were the reformed rites expected to communicate? The reform of the liturgy cannot be fully understood except in the context of the biblical and patristic revivals which flourished in the twentieth century, the growth of the liturgical movement, and the scholarly controversy over the presence of Christ and his saving deeds in the celebration of the liturgy—a dispute which spurred interest and shaped the vocabulary used to speak about the liturgy. How did our understanding of liturgy change in Vatican II’s Liturgy Constitution from earlier official descriptions? There are three major differences between Sacrosanctum Concilium’s treatment of our worship and that in Pius XII’s 1947 encyclical Mediator Dei. The Liturgy Constitution teaches that Christian worship is the continuation of Christ’s response to the Father’s love, that the liturgical assembly is the active subject of the event, and that the entire celebration is sanctifying. The Council’s liturgical reforms are rooted in these foundational points.

Christian worship is the continuation of Christ’s response to the Father’s initiative in the Holy Spirit. The emphasis is placed on the divine action rather than on the human exercise of the virtue of religion (the acknowledgment of the Creator by the creature), which was the perspective emphasized by the theological tradition in which Pius XII stood. In this theological perspective, the dialogical character of the liturgy reflects the inner-Trinitarian dynamic of love.

After a brief introduction which treats of the importance of the liturgy, the Constitution begins (SC 5–6) with God’s action toward human persons, from the original creation, through a history of salvation whose high point is the sending of Word, in the Spirit, to bring all creation back to the Father. The mission of Christ—bringing all people to respond to the Father’s love—is continued in the Church, and “to accomplish so great a work, Christ is always present in his Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations” (SC 7). Through the liturgy, especially through the Eucharist, in which “the victory and triumph of [Christ’s] death are again made present” (SC 6), Christ works in the Holy Spirit, using “signs perceptible by the senses” and “in ways appropriate to each of these signs” (SC 7) to conform our minds to his own, to give us his attitude of self-sacrificing response to the Father’s love.

Since the liturgy proclaims and deepens the faith of those who
celebrate it, before people come to the liturgy they must be converted (SC 9); hence the Council stresses the importance of preaching, catechesis, evangelization, and of the works of mercy and the proclamation of faith in the totality of the Christian life. This faith, both gift of God and human response to God’s initiative, has a history which includes the history of the liturgy. It was prepared by God’s action in the history of the people of Israel and perfectly accomplished in Jesus’ response to the Father’s love and the establishment of the paschal mystery, which includes the Church (SC 5). This response is continued in the Church through the sending of the Holy Spirit. Though the life of faith is expressed and developed in many ways—in prayer and in action—it is most clearly seen and exercised in the celebration of the liturgy, which is both “the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed [and] the fount from which all her power flows” (SC 10).

Liturgy is not a human work but begins and ends with God’s grace; it is the celebration of the life of faith of Christ and the Church. In the Church, Christ’s experience of and response to the Father’s love is continued and made accessible for people of every age and culture. The Church makes God’s self-communication visible and tangible in a way that human persons can respond to. This mystery of salvation is most clearly seen in the celebration of the liturgy, using well-constituted, attractive symbols which move the heart and express the intensity of faith. The structure of the liturgy should be clear and compelling, so that the symbols can elicit the fruit which God intends the worshipers to receive (SC 33, 34).

The liturgical assembly, not just the ordained priest-celebrant, is the active subject of the liturgical event. The clergy do not stand as mediators between the laity and God, as some Scholastic theologies might imply; rather, the divine self-communication is mediated through the active interrelationship of the entire assembly that celebrates the liturgy. Christ is acting in the liturgy not directly but in a mediated fashion, by means of his Body, that is, through the people who engage in the liturgy. Therefore, the Council concluded: “Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy, and to which the Christian people, ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people’ (1 Pet. 2:9, 4-5) have a right and obligation by reason of their baptism” (SC 14).

According to the Liturgy Constitution, celebration of the liturgy should normally involve at least a few people, not just the priest and the recipient of the sacrament, and should make clear that the members of the assembly are engaged in a common work. “Liturgical services are not private functions but are celebrations of the Church, namely the whole people of God united and ordered around their bishops” (SC 26). Pius XII had certainly taught that the liturgy is the public worship of the Body of Christ, Head and members, but the theological system in which he operated was not yet able to explain how the non-ordained were active subjects of the celebration. It considered the ordained as deputized to act for the whole Church and spoke of the laity as participating by uniting their intentions with those of the priest. Sixteen years later, our theology was readier to speak of Christ’s activity not just in the ordained celebrant but also in the
liturgical assembly's song and prayer, in the proclamation of the Scriptures, and in the sacramental signs, especially in the consecrated bread and wine of the Eucharist. None of these modes of Christ's presence stands alone, of course; together they are constituted by the grace-filled interaction of the members of the liturgical assembly.

"In the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy the full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else, for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit" (SC 14). Even today, however, not all liturgical celebrations show clearly that the action of worship is done not just by the ordained presider or by a group of special ministers but by the entire assembly of the baptized. In this regard, much more work remains to be done in order fully to implement the Liturgy Constitution.

**The entire celebration of the liturgy is sanctifying.** Previous theologies had separated the essential moment of the sacrament, in which the verbal form came together with the matter of the sign, from the prayer which surrounds it. The sacrament was described as occurring in the essential moment (e.g., in the pouring of the water and the saying "I baptize you"); at that moment we were assured that Christ is present, acting through the priest (or, in the case of an emergency Baptism, through the person who performed the baptism). Liturgy was understood to be what came before and after the essential sacramental moment; liturgy was the action of the Church, intended to render the recipient of the sacrament properly disposed to receive the grace given at the moment of the sacrament. While this theology affirmed that Christ acts in the sacrament, it was by no means clear that Christ acts in the liturgy that surrounds the sacrament; in fact, the priest who prayed and performed the rites before and after the sacramental moment was described as acting in the person of the Church. In the language of the Protestant Reformation, the liturgy was a human work which could not bring salvation.

The Second Vatican Council, in contrast, taught that in the entire liturgical action God communicates sanctification, and the community of faith responds in praise (SC 2, 7, 33). *Sacrosanctum Concilium* makes no theoretical separation between an essential moment of sacrament, in which Christ acts, and the liturgy in which the Church acts. Pius XII had preserved that separation, even as he taught that in the liturgy Christ is present in various modes. But if Christ is present throughout the liturgical celebration, Christ is doing something which has to do with our sanctification. The entire celebration—not just the essential sacramental moment—manifests the saving action of God in the Body of Christ.

How do we speak of the divine action in the liturgy? There are two complementary ways, both of which have deep roots in the tradition and which can be found in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.

The older way of speaking uses the language of covenant renewal found in the Hebrew Scriptures and carried over into the New Testament. God renews the covenant by renewing the faith of the covenant in the chosen people. The religious life of the people, involving prayer,
sacrifice, and the observance of the liturgical year—the cycle of feasts and seasons—is the means by which God renews their faith, giving them the faith through which Moses and the people entered into covenant relationship with God. By faith they stand in that relationship. As Exodus and Deuteronomy insist, covenant faith demands a life dedicated to justice and care for the poor and powerless, attitudes which arise from the conversion of heart which comes with acceptance of the divine plan for salvation. Liturgy and life flow together in this viewpoint.

Every liturgy renews the covenant made in Jesus Christ’s dying and rising. The most intense form of covenant renewal is the sacrificial meal of the New Covenant (SC 10), which has as its theological center the story of Jesus’ interpretation of his own death and his giving a means by which we enter into his covenant sacrifice.10

A newer way of speaking uses the language of enacting the Paschal Mystery as we enter, by faith, into the work of worship.11 As we participate fully, consciously, actively in the liturgy, we are configured to Christ’s dying and rising: The sacrifice of Christ is made present in us. In this sense the work of our redemption is accomplished as we celebrate the mysteries (SC 2, 6). Christ’s uniting the worshipers who make up a particular liturgical assembly in his self-offering response to the Father’s love is what’s new about every liturgical celebration!

Unfinished Business

Sacrosanctum Concilium decreed that the Church’s liturgy be reformed in such a way that our way of prayer (lex orandi) could once again serve as an authoritative source of theology (lex credendi). The reintegration of the rule of prayer and the rule of belief was not to be left to chance but was to be accomplished in large part by a thorough reform of the education and spiritual formation of the clergy, who would be fully involved in the ongoing theological and spiritual formation of the laity (SC 14–17). This work of education and formation has not been completed in the first forty years, though it has been well begun.

One example of unfinished business may be seen in the area of ecclesiology. According to the Liturgy Constitution, public, corporate prayer is at the heart of the life of the Church. It is in this prayer that the Church is most clearly seen as a work of God’s salvation, so liturgy and ecclesiology cannot be separated. “The principal manifestation of the Church consists in the full, active participation of all God’s holy people in the same liturgical celebrations, especially in the same Eucharist, in one prayer, at one altar, at which the bishop presides, surrounded by his college of priests and by his ministers” (SC 41). This might imply that among the criteria for choosing bishops would be their skill in liturgical presiding. A bishop has to be able to call his diocese to prayer and to pray with the people of the diocese. He needs to listen to the proclamation of the Scriptures and to respond in the singing of the psalms, to attend to the voice of the assembly and to the various ministers, to be at home with silence, to preach well, and to express the needs of the community in a few well-chosen words. He needs to work well with other ministers, so that the harmonious coordination of the various ministries in the one event of
prayer will manifest the unity which the baptized have as together they fulfill the mission of the Church. As in the liturgy all have their own part to play, so in the rest of the life of the diocese people should be fully involved, doing their own part and taking no one else’s role away (SC 28).

Among the theologians who have assiduously promoted the Council’s vision of the Church, some begin with the Liturgy Constitution and the experience of liturgy, while others focus on the implications of other, later documents, like the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. Pope John Paul II, not least in the apostolic letter Dies Domini (1998) and the encyclical Ecclesia de Eucharistia (2003), refers to the experience of liturgical celebration as theologically and spiritually formative. His presiding and preaching, especially in his travels and during the most recent Holy Year, have continued to develop our awareness of liturgical celebration as a source for theology.

Shaping Our Thinking: God, Prayer, and Church

How have the reforms changed our way of thinking? Perhaps most importantly, they made us realize that the Church changes! These were big changes, reaching to the heart of our experience of the sacraments. They touched our self-understanding in ways that we had never imagined anything might. These changes in the Church’s life of prayer came so suddenly and reshaped our experience so thoroughly that it became possible to ask whether other changes would not be in order. Those questions will continue to be asked in every area of our ecclesial life.

The liturgical reforms of Vatican II, in another sense, began a process of change in how we experience the mystery of God in Christ and how that mystery is lived and celebrated in our own day. We are still at the early stages of this process; the rites have been reformed and made intelligible, and the books have been revised several times, with more revisions in sight. Our prayer is deepening, our musical expression is developing, and our awareness of the mystery which we celebrate will, by God’s gracious plan, keep deepening and growing more authentic in our daily living. The changes in our way of thinking and praying are not complete, nor will they be in another forty years. We have enough experience of praying the reformed rites, however, to identify some major ways that our change of practice is bearing fruit in our thinking about God, about worship, and about the Church.

The reformed liturgy which we celebrate lets the mystery of our sanctification and the salvation of the world be seen in simple rites which are easy to understand without a great deal of explanation. The celebration of the liturgy, especially the Sunday Eucharist, makes that salvation visible and tangible through the action, song, and prayer of the liturgical assembly presided over by the bishop or his ordained delegate.

The celebration of the liturgy, if we let it, provides a truly systematic theology, whose various elements are connected with each other to make a unified whole.

As the Liturgy Constitution shaped the work of the Second Vatican Council, so the reformed liturgy shapes a theology which is easily
accessible to the members of the church at prayer. Through the liturgy it is made clear that prayer is at the heart of the Church and that the leaders of the Church stand in its midst as people who pray and who help others to pray together well. The spirituality taught by good celebration of the reformed liturgy is filled with wonder and with the awareness of God’s action in the liturgical assembly through the ministry of its members. Since Christ is experienced in the members of the assembly, the celebration inculcates an ethic of respect and reverence for all the baptized. Since Christ is present in order to give his members the Spirit of his love for all people, the celebration sends the worshipers to bring all people the good news of God’s love for them.

The reformed liturgy is the source of a revived theology that treasures Scripture and the tradition of prayer and discipleship which the liturgy itself expresses. It is based in the mystery of God’s self-communication in Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit; it is deeply Trinitarian and filled with an awareness of the Holy Spirit’s action in configuring the members of the Church to the dying and rising of Jesus Christ. Since this work is accomplished through the human interaction which makes up the liturgy, this theology makes use of the human sciences which help to explain how symbols and rituals function to stir up memory and to form values. It realizes that good liturgies build and foster faith and understands that the interpersonal relationships among the members of the assembly proclaim the mystery which they are celebrating. It is not afraid of ritual studies, psychology, and sociology but considers them friends of theology, helping us to deepen our awareness of how God conforms us to Christ’s death and resurrection through our liturgical prayer.

Our question about the impact of the liturgical reform upon our thinking highlights the importance of our liturgical practice. What we do in the liturgy forms us and lets God work in and through us with our more conscious cooperation. We need to keep working together on our celebration, on the ways we pray together. All of us in the liturgical assembly need to keep learning to reverence Christ’s presence in our song and prayer, in the proclamation of the Scriptures, in the sacramental symbols, and in the person of the presider. We need to keep developing our awareness of Christ’s presence and welcome it with open hearts, letting Christ’s presence change us as we pray together.

Since Christ is present in our song, it is crucially important that we sing, and that the directors of music treasure the sound of the assembly’s singing. Especially at celebrations of the great feasts, if our choirs or instrumentalists displace the rest of the assembly, singing for them rather than with them, Christ’s presence in our liturgy is diminished. If, on the other hand, the whole assembly’s voices are enriched and augmented by the musical specialists in their midst, if they respond fervently to the cantors’ sung proclamation of faith and take their part in music which involves choir and instrumentalists, Christ is more richly present in our midst.

Similarly, if our symbols of eating and drinking bread and wine, washing with water, anointing, and laying on hands are clear and strong, if we trust that our symbolic actions can speak truth which cannot be put into words, Christ will be more strongly active in our liturgy. It is our
practice which changes our thinking, for it is through the action of our common prayer that the Holy Spirit conforms us to Christ’s death and resurrection.

We are the presence of God; this is our call.
Now to become bread and wine:
Food for the hungry, life for the thirsty.
For to live with the Lord we must die with the Lord.
We hold the death of the Lord deep in our hearts.
Living, now we remain with Jesus the Christ.14

Notes

3. Beginning in the Middle Ages, this text was recited privately by the priest as he returned to the sacristy after Mass. Gradually, it was incorporated into the public ritual and was used at almost all Masses until the reforms of the Second Vatican Council.
6. Bugnini, 450–486, details the process by which these texts were approved.
9. “It is the liturgy through which, especially in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, ‘the work of our redemption is accomplished,’ and it is through the liturgy, especially, that the faithful are enabled to express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church” (SC 2).
11. The language of mystery was recovered in liturgical and theological circles in a twentieth-century controversy over the “mystery presence” of Christ’s saving deeds in the liturgy. See Hall, 1–37.
meaning in a way that supports an awareness of liturgical celebration and the participation of all members of the community in the construction of the gracious reality which is the Church, but he does not make an explicit connection to the liturgy.

How Can We Sing Our Own Songs in Our Own Land?
The Impact of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* on Liturgical Inculturation

CATHERINE VINCIE, RSHM

**What instruments ought we to use, what songs ought we to sing to praise God in our time?** What language ought we to craft, what sounds ought we to make that our worship might ring true—true to our faith, true to ourselves? How shall we move—how fast, how slow? With what colors should we adorn our worship spaces and ourselves as we either feast or fast our way through the year? What word, what song shall this Christian community add to the witness of the many generations of Christians who came before us?

These questions are of special urgency for those of us who exercise the liturgical ministries of music, language and art, for we cannot wait until all the liturgical and theological issues are worked out in theological committees large or small. We need to play and sing this Sunday; we need a new hymn with a new text to celebrate the anniversary of September 11 this week and not next. We need authentically to be both receivers of our tradition and makers of it as well. The pressure is on us to respond week by week, year by year.

What on earth have we gotten ourselves into? If I had known the task was this vast, I would never have taken that first piano lesson! But still we return each week because we must sing our own songs in our own lands.

I say all this to put into focus the role of musicians, poets, and artists
in the work of “adapting” the liturgy at the most local of levels: the actual celebration of the liturgy in this parish or in this particular gathering of the church. It is my conviction that liturgical artists and particularly liturgical musicians play an extremely important role in the actual celebration of the liturgy. While the presiding minister has a crucial role in the unfolding of the liturgy in dialogue with the assembly, liturgical musicians hold second place in setting the tone, determining the pace, choosing the musical styles and texts, interacting with the rest of the assembly sometimes as leaders, sometimes in union with, and sometimes as representatives of the whole assembly. If our influence is great, our responsibility is just as great. The better we comprehend our task, the better we will serve our assemblies.

Our topic is the “adaptation”—or to use the more recent terminology, the “inculturation”—of the liturgy. We are interested in the particular responsibilities and opportunities of liturgical artists to live out the mandate of Vatican II’s Liturgy Constitution to adapt the liturgy to the different groups, regions, and peoples that make up our Church, thus enabling those communities to enter into their worship with full, conscious, and active participation. What role do liturgical artists play in this reform agenda? Do we simply play what is written, improvise, or create a whole new repertoire? In order to pursue these questions, we must go by way of indirection. We need to address the issues of adaptation and inculturation, approaches to culture, the dynamics of ritual, and its place in communal life.

Clarity about Terms

For purposes of our present discussion I will use the familiar understanding of the liturgy as the “work of the people.” By that I mean quite literally the acts of gathering and the various forms of participation of the whole assembly inclusive of its ministers. The liturgy is that work of the assembly that comes to be in the actual celebration of our rites. The liturgical books are an essential ground and starting point in our tradition, but liturgies come to actuality in the celebration by the Church. The liturgy is a living thing!

To this basic understanding of liturgy as the work of the people I want to add that the liturgy is also a witness to our faith. It is a privileged place where the church community gathers at the behest of God and enacts its faith in God’s salvific love for us. In celebrating, the Church becomes what it is, the sacrament of God’s love in the world. That is what generations of Christian communities have done since the very beginning of the Church. Each new generation receives this witness to the faith and sacrament of God’s love from previous generations and enacts it in its own key. Not unlike musical performance, we receive the tradition from others but of necessity interpret our tradition as we put the liturgy into play. As we know only too well, we can play the score only with the gifts and skills that are ours. We have no choice but to bring the very particularity of our lives to the task. We bring all the love and sorrow that has shaped our individual lives, and we sing, play, and dance within the cultural framework that has formed our minds and hearts, our bodies and imaginations. Merely through our act of celebrating what is there in the liturgical books, we add
We may do the same parts of the required ritual at different assemblies, but the distinctive way we do these parts sets one community apart from another.

our own voices to the tradition.

But we also do more than this. As I implied earlier, liturgical artists are in the unique position of working with the “scripted” and “unscripted” parts of the liturgy. We literally sing the liturgy with chanted Kyries, soaring Glorias, and poignant responsorial psalms, rendering those texts in a given key, tonality, style, and culture. We may do the same parts of the required ritual at different assemblies, but the distinctive way we do these parts sets one community apart from another. If this is true for communities of the same culture, how could it not be even truer between communities of different cultures? A Vietnamese psalm setting is far different from a Hispanic or Haitian setting, and all these sound differently when sung in adopted countries such as the United States or Canada. These cultural differences play a large part in facilitating or hindering the full, active participation so valued in the Conciliar reforms. We musicians and artists must know our communities so well that we can sound their praise and dance to their rhythms.

In addition to singing “what is written,” we also fill in the gaps before, between, and after the scripted parts. We bring hymn tunes to a Eucharistic liturgy that does not have any hymns written into it. We provide commentary on the liturgy of the Word with the music we play for the preparation of the gifts. We send the community forth in mission after we have declared: “The Mass is ended. Go in peace.” In other words, there is much in the celebration of the revised liturgy than relies on the initiative, creativity, and wisdom of liturgical artists. While we may debate for hours what constitutes good taste, there is no one reading this who cannot tell the difference between a musically gifted person and one who is not, between one who has practiced and one who has not. Of course, musicians and artists must know the liturgical rites well so that they can work in harmony with them.

Adaptation or Inculturation?

In the decades preceding the Second Vatican Council, the Church made tentative steps in recognizing that Catholic Christianity and the European embodiment of Catholicism are not identical. In 1945, for example, Pius XII stated that “the Catholic Church is supranational by her very nature. . . . She cannot belong exclusively to any particular people, nor can she belong more to one than to another.” Pius XII also urged a greater appreciation of the culture of all peoples. He claimed that nature itself taught that each people had “the right to one's own culture and national character.”

In mission literature at that time, terms such as “adaptation,” “accommodation,” and “indigenization” were used to speak about the Church’s efforts to spread the Gospel in new lands. While expressing a new and welcome sensitivity toward culture, these terms still carried the freight of a Eurocentric church. The discussions were not founded on a developed theology of the local church, the view of culture was too limited, and the terms carried a paternalism associated with colonialism. Nonetheless, it was the beginning of the Church’s realization of its diversity and its appreciation of how context affect faith. The church needed a
jump-start in these areas, and the Second Vatican Council provided just such a boost.

Vatican Council II was the most important ecclesial action of the twentieth century that truly recognized and valued the Roman Catholic Church as a “world-Church.” Karl Rahner suggested that the Council was the “first act in which the world-Church first began to exist,” and this world-Church acted “for the first time in historical clarity in the dimension of doctrine and law.” Evidence of this consciousness can be traced through the various documents approved by the Council. The Liturgy Constitution Sacrosanctum Concilium, the first document approved by the Council Fathers, shows some evidence of this world consciousness, but later documents such as Lumen Gentium (the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), Ad Gentes (Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity) and Nostra Aetate (Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions) reveal the Council’s more mature and developed approach in this regard.

A controlling issue in all these documents is how Christianity becomes part of the life of any culture. Not surprisingly, this topic was treated in respect to missionary churches, but later documents recognized that rooting the Gospel in every culture was the task of every local church, young or old, in Italy or Polynesia. Here are a few examples of this development in the Council’s documents.

Lumen Gentium, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, made a significant contribution by affirming at a theological level the dignity of local churches. It said: “This church of Christ is really present in all legitimate local congregations of the faithful which, united with their bishops, in the New Testament are also called churches” (LG 26). This conviction would set the stage for further conversations on the mission of the church and on its relationship to the world and to culture. Gaudium et Spes, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, spoke directly of a plurality of cultures and the necessity of culture for an individual to reach full humanity. In addition it spoke of the relationship between the Church and culture: “The Church has been sent to all ages and nations, and, therefore, is not tied exclusively and indissolubly to any race or nation…. [The Church] can, then, enter into communion with different forms of culture, thereby enriching both itself and the cultures themselves” (GS 58). The suggestion of this mutuality was a hint of things to come.

The Conciliar document on the Church’s missionary activity, Ad Gentes, used the analogy of the Incarnation to speak of how Christianity becomes embedded in a culture. The Church, it said, “must implant itself among these groups in the same way that Christ by his incarnation committed himself to the particular social and cultural circumstances of the [people] among whom he lived” (AG 10). In the following paragraph the decree went even further, using a phrase from St. Justin—the “seeds of the Word”: “[Christians] should be familiar with their national and religious traditions and uncover with gladness and respect those seeds of the Word which lie hidden among them” (AG 11). This statement suggests that while Christian mission is to bring the message of the Word to all peoples, some aspects of revelation are already planted in cultures; in Justin’s term, there are “seeds of the Word” already present before evangelization begins. This positive evaluation of culture implies that not only does
Christianity have something to offer every culture, but also there are things that each culture can offer to Christianity as it has developed so far. Still using the example of young or missionary churches, Ad Gentes suggests that these churches “borrow from the customs, traditions, wisdom, teaching, arts, and sciences of their people everything which could be used to praise the glory of the Creator” (AG 22).

These three acknowledgements—that Christianity is not coterminous with the European Church; that the church needs to embed the Gospel deeply in the life of a people; and that new ways of living the Christian life are legitimate and welcome—poised the church on the brink of a new era. Diversity, the legitimate autonomy of local churches, interdependence, and dialogue were presented as the new ways of being Church in the remaining decades of the twentieth century and beyond.

In the years following the Council, these initial efforts received further development, and the implications of these developments were worked out at the level of experience and reflection. Because of the limitations implicit in the word “adaptation,” a new term was needed to name the process of embedding the Gospel in a culture and the implications of this phenomenon in the relationships between different local churches. Modifying anthropological terms such as enculturation and acculturation, the Jesuits were primarily responsible for the initial use of the term “inculturation” in the early seventies. Gradually it appeared in Episcopal synod documents (from 1974), records of religious communities chapters (from 1974), papal documents (from 1979), and the work of countless theologians.

Theologian Aylward Shorter describes inculturation as “the ongoing dialogue between faith and culture or cultures.” Such inculturation, he writes, has three characteristics: first, this dialogue must be ongoing in all churches (missionary lands are not the only places for inculturation); second, the Christian message itself is already embedded in a cultural form; and third—and most important—inculturation is a stage in which the human culture has been enlivened from within and Christianity itself becomes newly interpreted from within that culture. This exchange between faith already expressed in cultural form and the emerging faith of a new culture is a reciprocal and critical interaction. It presupposes respect for both dialogue partners and the expectation that something can be gained from each. M. Azevedo speaks of this interaction very directly. Inculturation, he says, is “the dynamic relation between the Christian message and culture or cultures; an insertion of the Christian life into a culture; an ongoing process of reciprocal and critical interaction and assimilation between them.”

It is necessary to say that for both the Church and for the members of a culture, inculturation means change. Evangelization—the proclamation of the Gospel and a Gospel way of life—comes to a culture from “without.” Because all cultures by nature are limited and flawed, evangelization aims at transforming that culture from within, purifying it, enhancing it, and eliminating oppressive aspects of it. While the message may come from without, the internalization and modification of worldviews, ethos, ritual, and symbols systems can only be accomplished by members of the new culture. The subject of inculturation is
not the missionary but the evangelized. As Shorter says, “Christian evangelization is an invitation to the people of the culture to respond in freedom at the deepest level of religious meaning.” When they integrate the richness of their own culture with the Gospel, an inculturated faith emerges.

The initial dialogue of faith and culture gives way to a second dialogue: the exchange between local churches. New metaphors, new images, new thought patterns, new interpretations are what the young churches have to offer older churches. But since cultures are always changing, even older churches can generate a newly inculturated faith. Discernment of the process is required at all moments of the process, but when the Church welcomes this new expression of the faith, the Church itself is changed.

Later ecclesial documents pick up the discussion of inculturation. Three are of particular importance. In 1975 Paul VI published his apostolic exhortation Evangelii Nuntiandi (Evangelization in the Modern World), until recently regarded as the most important document treating the dignity of local churches, the importance and complexity of culture, and the subject of inculturation. First, Paul VI speaks of the profound change the Gospel ought to make in a culture. “What matters is to evangelize [human] cultures (not in a purely decorative way as it were by applying a thin veneer), but in a vital way, in depth and right to their very roots.” Later in the document he includes a more developed understanding of the local church and a more complete understanding of culture than we have seen to this point. “The universal Church is in practice incarnate in the individual churches made up of such or such an actual part of mankind [sic], speaking such and such a language, heir of a cultural patrimony, of a vision of the world, of an historical past, of a particular human substratum. Receptivity to the wealth of individual Churches corresponds to a special sensitivity of modern [people]” (EN 62). Finally he speaks of the role of local churches in assimilating the Gospel message and transposing it. This transposition will be found in “liturgical expression, and in the areas of catechesis, theological formulation, secondary ecclesial structures, and ministries” (EN 63). Such thoroughgoing inculturation of the Gospel is necessary if evangelization is to have any success. It must address actual people, their signs and symbols, the questions they ask, and their concrete life situations.

A recent document that has not received the attention it deserves is Toward a Pastoral Approach to Culture, authored by the Pontifical Council for Culture in 1999. This document is remarkable for its positive appreciation of culture even while respecting culture’s limitations, its commitment to inculturation as the rule for effective evangelization, and its positive approach to popular piety and the role it plays in inculturation. For the authors of this document the “inculturation of faith and the evangelization of culture go together as an inseparable pair” (TPAC 5). Quoting John Paul II’s Pastores dabo vobis, number 55, they insist that the Gospel “penetrates the very life of cultures, becomes incarnate in them, overcoming those cultural elements that are incompatible with the faith and Christian living and raising their values to the mystery of salvation which comes from Christ” (TPAC 5).

There are two areas addressed in this document that are particularly
pertinent to our concerns. They are the attention given to the arts and the role of popular piety. Noting the important place art has had throughout the Christian tradition, the authors suggest “every true work of art is potentially a way into religious experience. Recognizing the importance of art in the inculturation of the Gospel means recognizing that human genius and sensitivity are akin to the truth and beauty of the divine mystery” (TPAC 17). As if that is not encouragement enough, the authors state: “In Christian artists, the Church finds extraordinary potential for the expression of new formulas and for the definition of new symbols or metaphors through the brilliance of liturgical genius in all its creative force” (17). Such appreciation of liturgical artists and their creative contribution to the life of the Church is not so widely appreciated in other ecclesial circles.

Finally I want to draw your attention to the very positive evaluation of popular piety in this document; it is the most positive of any ecclesial document to date. It says:

Religion is also memory and tradition, and popular piety is one of the best examples of genuine inculturation of faith, because it is a harmonious blend of faith and liturgy, feelings and art, and the recognition of our identity in local traditions … Popular piety is evidence of the osmosis that takes place between the innovative power of the Gospel and the deepest levels of a culture … Popular piety is the way a people expresses its faith and its relationship to God and his Providence, to Our Lady and the saints, to one’s neighbor, to those who have died or to creation, and it strengthens its belonging to the Church … Popular piety naturally cries out for artistic expression. Those with pastoral responsibility must encourage creativity in all areas: ritual music, song, decoration, etc. (TPAC 28).

Clearly, the contributions made to Church by liturgical artists are essential and indispensable. They provide leadership and are instrumental in inculturating the Gospel in a local church’s own key.

With the developments we have already noted in the use of adaptation or inculturation in mind, we need now to go back to the Council and examine the specific concern of liturgical adaptation or inculturation.

Adaptation or Inculturation of the Liturgy

We find in the Liturgy Constitution a measured recognition of the diversity of the Church and the need for non-European churches to express their distinctiveness in liturgical celebration. With a clear mandate to preserve the “substantial unity of the Roman Rite” (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy [CSL] 38), the Constitution states that the liturgy can be “adapted” to the needs of “different groups, regions, and people, especially in mission lands” (CSL 38). In certain circumstances it allowed an “even more radical adaptation of the liturgy” (CSL 39) provided that the competent, territorial ecclesiastical authority regulate this matter.

Later paragraphs of the Constitution give further indication of what adaptation might mean. Paragraph 65 states that it is lawful in mission lands “to allow … those initiation elements in use among individual peoples, to the extent that such elements are compatible with the
Christian rite of initiation.” Regarding the marriage rite, the Constitution states that territorial ecclesiastical authority can draw up its own rite, “suited to the usages of place and people” (CSL 77), and that funerals should “correspond more closely to the circumstances and traditions of various regions” (CSL 81). To its credit the Constitution made several references to religious songs of the people. This music is to be encouraged to promote active participation, and in mission areas native musical traditions are to be fostered to help “adapt worship to their native genius” (CSL 118–119). The art of our own day, “coming from every race and region” is also credited as adding to the rich heritage of the Church in the arts (CSL 123).

“Adaptation” was the operative term in the Liturgy Constitution. While tentatively giving value to diversity and local customs, the Constitution implied that any liturgical changes would be made, if not on the fringes of the liturgy, then as modifications to the Roman Rite as set out in the reformed books—the editiones typicae (standard editions). As indicated above, more radical adaptation could be made in mission lands, but what this might constitute was not made clear.

With what we now know about the difference between adaptation and inculturation, it is reasonable to conclude that the Constitution called for change but at a rather external or superficial level. In retrospect it is obvious that the Council’s first attempt to treat liturgical change was done within a very limited and an inadequate understanding of culture and the requirements of evangelization. Because the document preceded the development of a theology of inculturation, it did not treat in any detail the issues of how the church becomes imbedded in the life of a people, the relationship between faith and culture, who the agents of inculturation of faith are, or the role of liturgical rites and popular religious practices in this larger framework of the inculturation of the Gospel. Nonetheless, the Liturgy Constitution was an important first step.

We must now turn to Varietates legitimae (Incareration and the Roman Liturgy [IRL]), the “fourth instruction for the right application of the Conciliar Constitution on the Liturgy (nn. 37–40). It was published in 1994 as a more direct treatment of liturgical inculturation than anything that had appeared before that time. One reads the first half of this document with delight at the very thorough review of a theology of inculturation. It clarifies the difference between adaptation and inculturation, stating that inculturation signifies “an intimate transformation of the authentic cultural values by their integration into Christianity and the implantation of Christianity into different human cultures.” It treats liturgical inculturation as part of the larger process of faith development. “The inculturation of the Christian life and of liturgical celebrations must be the fruit of a progressive maturity in the faith of the people” (IRL 5). It presents a history of the inculturation of the Gospel across the centuries and insists that liturgy must not be foreign in any country, people, or individual. “It must be capable of expressing itself in every human culture, all the while maintaining its identity through fidelity to the tradition which comes to it from the Lord” (IRL 18).

However, one can only read with disappointment the document’s refusal to address practical issues of inculturation in the present or in
immediate future. The Instruction states quite clearly:

Since the theological principles relating to questions of faith and inculturation have still to be examined in depth, this congregation wishes to help bishops put into effect, according to the law, such adaptations as are already foreseen in the liturgical books; to re-examine critically arrangements that have already been made; and if in certain cultures pastoral need requires that form of adaptation of the liturgy which the constitution calls “more profound” and at the same time considers “more difficult,” to make arrangements for putting it into effect in accordance with the law (IRL 3).

More radical adaptation of the liturgy requires that “an Episcopal conference has exhausted all the possibilities of adaptation offered by the liturgical books” (IRL 63). The areas foreseen for this kind of adaptation pertain to language; use of native elements of initiation, marriage, and funeral rites; blessings; the liturgical year; and the Liturgy of the Hours. The instruction is emphatic in stating that “adaptations of this kind do not envisage a transformation of the Roman rite, but are made within the context of the Roman rite” (IRL 63).

I am struck by the inordinate attention given in this document to the procedures required for any kind of adaptation, more radical or otherwise. Repeatedly we are told that “adaptation of the Roman rite, even in the field of inculturation, depends completely on the authority of the church (IRL 37). This is exercised by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments and, within limits, by episcopal conferences and diocesan bishops. “Inculturation is not left to the personal initiative of celebrants or to the collective initiative of an assembly” (IRL 37). The proper procedures for adaptation are spelled out in detail in paragraphs 65–69. One cannot help but conclude that adherence to proper procedures and reference to appropriate ecclesial structures is more important in this document than is the inculturation of the faith and its liturgical expression. (Lest you remain mired in discouragement, may I recommend that you read the 1999 document on culture immediately after reading this instruction.)

Whatever the limitation of the 1994 instruction, it is becoming obvious that the work of inculturation of the faith through critical dialogue with culture is incumbent on all Christians and all local churches irrespective of their longevity. Ecclesial ministers, lay or ordained, have a more public role in this process. Ministers of music in particular have an important role to play in the life of the community, and they can engage in the work of inculturation in dialogue with their community as it gathers week by week. So it is to that subject that we now turn.

Musicians and the Work of Inculturation

I began this paper with some indications of liturgical artists’ role in unfolding the scripted and unscripted portions of the liturgies of the Church. I now want to expand that understanding of their role by including some other dimensions of liturgy’s place in the life of a community that have been brought to light through the work of some
cultural anthropologists and ritual theorists. Toward this end I propose three theses:

1. Ritual makes a difference in the lives of its practitioners.
2. Ritual is a cultural practice that participants use in a dynamic and flexible way to their own advantage.
3. Ritual ministers play an important leadership role, helping the community to appropriate its tradition as well as to stretch the boundaries of its faith and practice.

1. **Ritual makes a difference in the lives of its practitioners.** It has become common knowledge that a community’s ritual practice is related to its belief systems, its self-understanding, its social organization, and the meanings and values of its culture. The intricacies of these relationships have been explored by a number of cultural and social anthropologists during the twentieth century. Earlier theories stressed the expressive quality of ritual and ritual’s power to uphold the status quo, while more recent studies have stressed ritual’s power to negotiate change. Anthropologists like Victor Turner were helpful in exploring how ritual fits within a dynamic social process. He and others helped to bring to light “how symbolic activities like ritual enable people to appropriate, modify, or reshape cultural values and ideals.”

Explanations of ritual as an instrument of both continuity and change have helped liturgists understand how communities receive a tradition and at the same time re-introduce (thus change) it in a new context. Beyond these now familiar theories, two further considerations have emerged: ritual as performance and ritual as a form of cultural practice.

Suggesting to an audience of liturgical musicians that ritual is a social performance states the obvious. Our musical medium only comes to be through performance, so it is not a very long stretch to consider liturgy under the rubric of performance. However there are some significant insights this approach offers that may not be so obvious at first glance.

Viewing ritual as performance puts an emphasis on what ritual does rather than on what ritual means, which had been emphasized in earlier work. The accent here is placed on the temporal quality of ritual and on the agency of the participants. In other words, ritual itself is a place where a society performs and renegotiates its values, roles, and meanings. To say it another way, to perform a community ritual is to actualize the tradition and to modify it. And we might press the point further by stating that this is always achieved in action, not just in ritual planning committees and revised liturgical books. As I said earlier, liturgy is a living thing!

This point is extremely beneficial in helping us to realize how our liturgical celebrations have enabled the Roman Catholic community to reshape its understanding of the baptized since Vatican II. Active participation in liturgical celebrations has changed the ecclesial imagination regarding the identity and capacities of lay people to engage in the mission and ministry of the church. The laity have enlarged their sense of responsibility and agency by ritualizing in new ways. This modification of the laity’s self-understanding is not so much a change of ideas as it is a change of identity achieved through ritual performance. The revised liturgies of...
Vatican II have made a difference because of what their celebration engenders.

2. Ritual is a cultural practice that participants use in a dynamic and flexible way to their own advantage. The ritual scholar Catherine Bell has made significant contributions to our understanding through her analysis of ritual as a form of cultural practice. First in *Ritual Theory*, *Ritual Practice* (1992) and later in *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (1997), she explores how ritual is a particular form of social action, exercised by a community situated in a given place and time, and used by them in strategic ways. In her analysis, ritual serves as a framing mechanism and the means by which its practitioners navigate their way through life, even though participants are often unconscious of how ritual is doing this. Commenting on ritual's situational and strategic character, Bell says that ritual is motivated by what she calls "ritual hegemony," that is "a construal of reality as ordered in such a way as to allow the actor some advantageous ways of acting." In other words, ritual frames reality in a specific way and gives the participants a beneficial way of responding to reality as so construed. Bell also suggests that at the most basic level what ritual produces is a "ritual agent, an actor with a form of ritual mastery who embodies flexible sets of cultural schemes and can deploy them effectively in multiple situations so as to restructure those situations in practical ways." Wanting to give even more emphasis to the creative agency of ritual participants, Bell goes on to suggest that "ritual does not mold people; people fashion rituals that mold their world."

We can draw some connections between ritual as a social practice and our liturgical celebrations. We often speak about the Catholic "sacramental imagination," that is, our conviction that all reality is a possible place for the revelation of God. We need to be just as convinced that Roman Catholics have a "ritual competency" acquired over time, and a "ritual repertoire" available to them to perceive and to modify their situations and their lives. This suggests that liturgical assemblies everywhere are not just celebrating the official liturgies of the Church as a static given; they are practicing their way toward competency in framing and re-framing their experience. Our assemblies are appropriating the tradition through their practice even as they become more and more competent at re-interpreting it. This is another way of affirming that the local church assembly is a ritual agent and that it is also the agent of inculturation. Whatever the directives about following appropriate ecclesial lines of authority, the dynamics of ritual as a social practice developing ritually competent assemblies needs to be taken into account in any discussion of the process of liturgical inculturation.

3. Ritual ministers play an important leadership role in helping the community to appropriate its tradition as well as to stretch the boundaries of faith and practice. If the analysis of ritual suggested here is accurate, then the role of liturgical ministers has particular significance. Their work has the potential for shaping and reshaping the values, attitudes, and beliefs of the assemblies to whom they are most directly responsible. As well as faithfully carrying out their parts of the ritual service, liturgical ministers are continually honing their own ritual competencies and shaping the ritual competencies of their communities.
Again, this leadership role enables assemblies to appropriate the tradition as well as to interpret and to reconfigure that tradition specifically in light of the cultural heritage that is theirs. Liturgical ministers have always done this, and they are doing this even now. Let us look at a few examples from the past and present to see how this is the case.

**Lessons from History**

I have taken an example from the eleventh century because the period between the ninth and the eleventh centuries provides abundant material on the development of the faith in new lands and the process of inculturation. Charlemagne had first introduced Roman chant into Frankish territories as part of his effort to unite his kingdom, and the process continued in the ensuing centuries. The chant imported from Rome was characteristically spare, and the Frankish communities felt that both textual and musical elaboration was the appropriate way to “receive” this Roman import. What resulted were changes in the liturgy by means of modifying existing chants and a cultural transformation of the chants into a form more expressive of Frankish culture. The changes in the chant and thus in the liturgies were motivated by several concerns: a desire to use certain chants for occasions and feasts not originally intended, a desire to mark festivity through elaboration either musical or textual, and a desire to provide new biblical and theological interpretation of existing material.¹⁹

Modification of the Roman chants by musical and textual elaboration created a whole new genre of liturgical pieces: They have come to be called proslases, tropes, and sequences. Musical historian and medieval scholar Margot Fassler writes: “To study liturgical change in the Mass from the tenth through the twelfth centuries, then, one looks not to Gregorian chant, but rather to these sung liturgical commentaries [proslases, tropes, sequences].” She continues that through these repertoires “specific religious communities expressed their own ideals, either by creating new works or, more commonly, by selecting and arranging works from the common fund according to their tastes and principles.”²⁰

I have included on the next page an example of an Introit chant for Christmas day modified in the eleventh century through both textual and musical elaboration.²¹ All at once, the new chant enlarges the liturgy by extending the entrance chant for the expanded processions now used to mark this great feast; it provides commentary on the feast by means of additional texts; and it incorporates new artistic styles in the musical repertoire of the community. While theologians and biblical scholars were engaging in their own work of commentary, liturgical musicians created and performed an equally sizable body of commentary. Through their leadership, Frankish communities received the Roman tradition of chant, modified it according to the genius of their own culture, and became agents of the inculturation of the liturgy. The newly created repertoire subsequently became the faith tradition to be handed on (and modified) by other local churches.²²

In the recording from which I took this text, the performance has been arranged so that the complete eleventh century version of the Introit is
Gaudeamus hodie/Puer natus est nobis

Let us rejoice/Unto us a child is born

Gadeamus hodie, quia deus descendit de celis et propter nos interris;

Puer natus est nobis.

Let us rejoice on this day, for God has come down from heaven to earth for our sake.

He whom the prophets foretold long ago,

Unto us a son is given.

We know now that he was sent into this world by the Father.

The government is upon his shoulder, and his name will be called

Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace,

The Harbinger of a great purpose.

Cantate domino canticum novum, Eya, dic domne eya.

V. Cantate domino canticum novum, quia mirabilia fecit.

Sing unto the Lord a new song, Proclaim, ‘Hail, Lord, hail.’

V. Sing unto the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.

Cantate domino canticum novum, Eya, dic domne eya.

V. Cantate domino canticum novum, quia mirabilia fecit.

Vera dei forma patris hodie suscepit pro nostra salute carnem humanam. Hoc iam psallite et ovantes canite:

Puer natus est nobis, cuis imperium super humerum eius, et vocavitur nomen eius magni consilii angelus.

The true form of God the Father has taken on human flesh for our salvation. Celebrate this henceforth, and joyfully sing:

Unto us a child is born and unto us a son is given.

The government shall be upon his shoulder and his name shall be called the Harbinger of a great purpose.

Glorietur pater cum filio suo unigenito:

Gloria patri et filio spiritui sancto, sicut erat in principio

et nunc et simper et in secula seculorum. Amen

Let the Father be glorified with his only Son.

Glory to the Father, to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Ecce adest, de quo prophete ceincerun dicentes:

Puer natus est nobis,

Quem virgo Maria genuit,

Et filius datus est nobis.

Nomen eius Emmanuel vocabitur,

Cuis imperium super humerum eius, et vocabitur nomen eius magni consilii angelus.

Behold, the man comes of whom the prophets spoke,

Unto us a child is born,

Born of the Virgin Mary,

And unto us a son is given.

His name shall be called Emmanuel.

The government shall be upon his shoulder and his name shall be called the Harbinger of a great purpose.

divided between soloist and ensemble. The soloist sings the French additions (regular print) and the ensemble sings the original Roman chant (italics). At the simplest level, the addition of the French chant has doubled the length of the piece. But the differences are more profound than mere volume of text. There are different tonalities in each section. The older Roman chant has an almost “Eastern” feel, while the French section is more familiar and, perhaps, more comfortable to Western ears. Rather than creating new music that mimicked the Roman chant, this community employed its own musical idiom and chose to allow the contrasting musical styles to stand side by side. As is clear both textually and musically, the complete Roman chant has been
“received” by this local church, but it has been substantially modified by the addition of new material in a slightly different genre.

This musical addition makes a theological statement as well. In this community’s performance of the Introit it is saying that the new music of this church is valued just as much as the older received Roman chant. It conveys the conviction that while the traditional prayer of the Church hitherto expressed in Roman cultural garb is to be welcomed, it must also be modified according to the genius of the receiving culture.

Let us look at the text for a moment. As you can see, the original Roman chant is quite short and restrained in sentiment. It is a straightforward proclamation of the incarnation; it is spare and rather matter-of-fact. The Frankish version, on the other hand, modifies the original in several ways. First, by including imperatives (“Let us rejoice,” “Sing unto the Lord,” “celebrate”), the authors take on a leadership role in addressing the text to the gathered assembly and urging them to rejoice, sing, and glorify God. On such a great feast as Christmas, certain behavior and attitudes are expected.

The additional text that surrounds the Roman chant also provides theological elaboration. The naming of the Son is expanded from the simple statement of “harbinger of a great purpose” to “Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace.” The text also places the proclamation of the incarnation in the larger world of prophetic utterances (“Behold, the man comes of whom the prophets spoke.”). It elaborates the purpose of the incarnation: “for God has come down from heaven to earth for our sake.” The text adds the identity of the Son with the Father and emphasizes the humanity of the Son (“The true form of God the Father has taken on human flesh for our salvation”)—theological issues absent from the Roman text.

In sum, this Christmas Introit shows how musical and poetic artists of the eleventh century French church exercised their responsibility for the inculturation of the faith in their own key. It was through a process of reception, modification, and creation that the Franks expressed their faith from inside their culture. They employed new musical styles, introduced changes in the manner of celebrating liturgical festivity, and added theological elaboration as they deemed necessary.

Let us turn now to the contemporary period and see some of the ways that contemporary poets and musicians have taken the tradition and “inculturated” it in their own tongue.

My second example is also about the transformation of the entrance antiphon or entrance song of the Mass that is happening in our day. It has been the long tradition of the church to draw its liturgical prayer from Scripture, especially from the psalms. For example, in the eleventh century work cited above it, is clear that Isaiah 9:2, 6 was the foundation of the text. We also saw how the medievals expanded those texts and settings for their own purposes. The official entrance texts for Mass today continue to be drawn from biblical sources. They are collected in books such as the Roman Gradual or the Simple Gradual; you can also find an abbreviated form of these—a single sentence—in the Roman Missal. The General Instruction on the Roman Missal (GIRM) allows four possibilities for this Entrance Song: an antiphon/psalm taken from the Roman Gradual or the Simple Gradual, a
Bless the Feast

1. Welcome this moment, this day of sweet grace, Welcome and enter this gathering place. Welcome these symbols, feasting and telling; Signs of thanksgiving, signs of indwelling. Welcome a privilege, sister and brother, Sharing this inbreaking light with each other. Welcome the stranger beyond and above; Here only friends, Here only friends and beginning of love.

2. Here in this presence, come to be one, come to be gathered, elders and young. Here in this presence, gathering force, present on purpose, life-giving source. Now is this people, now to the last, fusing the future with present and past. Now is this people here to reveal presence in Word, presence in Word, and presence in meal.

3. Freedom to captives, good news to the poor, Lighting the darkling, unsighted, unsure. Telling the story: love without end, breath of creation, all life to defend. Telling the covenant story again; Exodus journey for women and men. Telling once more and hearing the Word Whose shining conclusion, Whose shining conclusion has yet to be heard.

4. Come to remember who is the one, Come to remember what has been done. What name do we call you? From where is our breath? Come to remember life wrestled from death. Come to remember in Eucharist faith, psalm taken from another collection, or a "suitable liturgical song."

In most churches in the United States the preference for psalm settings has been largely ignored, and the hymn form or song with refrain and verses has taken its place. This is significant for a number of reasons. First, the Mass has traditionally not had room for any hymns except the Gloria. The inclusion of a hymn at the most basic level constitutes a structural change in the liturgy, just as we saw in changes in the Gaudeamus chant in the eleventh century. The actual content or subject matter of the text constitutes another modification by liturgical composers and musicians. While a great many new hymns/songs are scripturally based, we are seeing a whole new body of material created with other motivations. Rather than drawing on the psalmody of the Gradual texts, musicians are exploring the fourth suggested purpose of the Entrance Song, that is, as "a beginning, introducing, and preparation," or "establishing communion and disposing themselves" for what follows (GIRM 46). Following these norms, musicians have found little reason to limit themselves to psalm settings. They are, however, finding their way toward an appreciation of what it takes to draw a diverse community into a praying assembly. As part of this effort, liturgical artists have been hard at work in forming the Church.

I would like to suggest that this is one form of inculturation. Composers and musicians are musically rethinking our ecclesial self-understanding. They are thinking from within our culture what it means to be a Gospel community and are expressing it ritually. Drawing on the anthropological insights gathered above, they are also forming communities to be ritually competent and to be able to frame and reframe their identity in the celebration of the liturgy. Since ritual also expresses meaning and values even as it performs them, we can look to entrance songs as examples of the central concerns of a community at a given moment. Let us look briefly at two examples: The first text and tune, in the column to the left, is James Hansen’s, "Bless the Feast."

Let me draw your attention to some of the key motifs that could only have been written after Vatican II. First, the text in verse one clearly calls us to gather—people and symbols. Had we not reclaimed the theology of the assembly, Hansen would not have so pointedly reminded us that our first liturgical act is gathering. He explores the rich meaning of divine "presence" in our traditions in verse two. Beyond the abiding "presence" in whom we gather, Hansen draws our attention to two other forms of God’s presence with us: in Word and meal. Once again it is difficult to imagine how this text could have been written without article seven of the Constitution on the Liturgy, which outlines the four forms of Christ’s presence, and the multiple articles that follow, drawing out the significance of this text.

Verses three and four are a poetic rendering of a current understanding of sacramental liturgy: It is remembrance of what God has done throughout history, most especially in Christ Jesus; memorial in word and sign; proclamation of our faith; and reminder that the Gospel calls for justice, although fulfillment is yet in our future. Finally, Hansen has actually included the word "women" in his text, a word that is almost totally absent from official liturgical texts. Our lyricists can be much
more responsive to changes in Church, theology, and culture, and thus they can challenge the status quo and bring us to new insight and new being.

Delores Dufner's wonderful text "Sing a New Church," with the great American hymn tune NETTLETON, is another good example of a liturgical artist naming our reality as Church, our baptismal identity, our struggles with diversity, and our hope and dreams (see column to the right).24

Not unlike the eleventh century Gaudeamus text, this one is filled with imperatives, challenging the assembly to become its best self: Trust in the goodness of creation, trust the Spirit, dare to dream, bring the hopes and art of every nation, weave a song of peace and justice. Perhaps the most insightful line of the song is the refrain: "Sing a new church into being." That is what liturgical musicians contribute to the church: They provide a way to appropriate our past and shape a new and better future.

A Privileged Position

Liturgical musicians and artists are in a privileged position: We work with a flexible medium that admits continuous growth and invention. We can ply our craft both at the center and on the fringes of liturgical structures. As the 1999 document on culture states: Artists have an "extraordinary potential for the expression of new formulas and for the definition of new symbols or metaphors through the brilliance of liturgical genius ...." (TPAC 17). This gift of creativity brings with it a task of being particularly sensitive to the richness of our tradition as well as being convinced that God continues to reveal in the particularity of local churches. We are both members of the Church and leaders within it, and thus we can help the community "sing its own song in its own land." Let us be bold in our efforts, insightful in our creativity, and profound in our music making.

Notes

5. Ibid, 11.
7. Shorter, Toward a Theology of Inculturation, 55.
10. An English translation is available on the WEB at http://www.petersnet.net/browse/1101.htm.
746–756.


13. See the very helpful summary of these efforts in chapters two and three of Catherine Bell's Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions (New York, New York: Oxford, 1997).

14. Ibid., 73.


16. Bell, Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions, 81.

17. Ibid., 81.

18. Ibid., 73.


22. Any contemporary attempt to use the chant repertoire without recognition of the musical, theological, liturgical, and ecclesial aspects of its development seriously misinterprets the tradition.


The Musical Impact of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy in Historical Context

PAUL WESTERMeyer

Three introductory comments are in order. First, I am especially honored to be asked to give a lecture named for RobertHonda, one of the church’s finest and one of my heroes. Since it is named for him, I have peppered in some of his prickly comments from Worship’s “Amen Corner.” Second, I am honored as a Lutheran to address this topic. I take it you want the view of a friendly outsider from my vantage point as an ecumenical catholic Christian in the United States of America. From somewhere else in the church or world the view may be different. Third, since these remarks were prepared for the NPM Convention’s meeting in Cincinnati, the section that relates to that part of the country is longer than it might otherwise have been.

The most obvious thing to say about the musical impact of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of Vatican II probably goes something like this. It moved the liturgy from Latin to the vernacular. With that move the historic repertoire of the church’s music associated with Latin disappeared. So did choirs. A popular style of music took the place of the historic repertoire, and the people took the place of the choir.

While that may not be all wrong, a little probing indicates it’s not all right either. One soon sees a more complex picture. I propose to divide the picture into five parts: choirs and choral music, style and quality of music, old and new order, Protestant issues, and participation. But first, to avoid the tunnel vision of our generation or two, we need to back up to see a larger picture.

We could back up far enough to allow two millennia to come into sight, Rev. Dr. Paul Westermeyer is a professor of church music at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, cantor (director of music) and director of the Master of Sacred Music program with St. Olaf College; a former music director and pastor; a former president of the Hymn Society in the United States and Canada; and a former national chaplain of the American Guild of Organists.
but for our purposes beginning in the eighteenth century will suffice. I suggest three historical panels for the broader picture, each one initiated by a papal or conciliar document related to church music: Annus qui of Benedict XIV in 1749, the motu proprio of Pius X in 1903, and the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of Vatican II in 1963, which I’ll divide into the parts I just mentioned. The first of the three big sections is a bit out of proportion because, as I indicated, I’ve included a large piece that relates to the part of the country where NPM met in 2003.

The Larger Picture: 1749–1903

In 1749, though he qualified and “tolerated” it, Benedict XIV in his long encyclical Annus qui nonetheless admitted orchestral music to worship. Following the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, he urged the care and cleanliness of churches. Then he addressed harmonizing chant and using the organ and other instruments at worship. He distinguished the sacred from the profane and theatrical, taking pains to make sure the chant of the Church with its text was always central, “elevated” the mind to God, and instructed the faithful. There was no expectation that the people themselves would sing.

Entertaining theatrical and operatic music, even if it did not express Benedict’s intent, flourished in the worship of Catholic churches of Europe in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. When Catholic immigrants from Europe came to America, to the extent that their congregations could afford them, they hired soloists and quartets, or they trained choirs to sing what they had heard in Europe. For example, at the Parish of the Guardian Angels in Hastings, Minnesota, for some years before 1864, Mrs. Ignatius Donnelly built up a choir which “became famous in the state.” Mr. Albert Schaller then directed the “famous choir” until it became “more renowned.” What piece is mentioned in connection with its fame? Mozart’s Twelfth Mass, a favorite of the period, was sung by this choir for the first time in the northwest, says the diamond jubilee souvenir booklet.

There were those in the church who were less than happy with Mozart’s Twelfth Mass as an ideal for church music. Two movements for reform symbolize this unhappiness. One of these was set in motion in France at Solesmes in 1833. For much of the nineteenth century the monks at Solesmes engaged in massive liturgical and musical research, always with practice in mind. Their ideal was to recover Gregorian chant in its primal unaccompanied form, attached to the Latin language and the worship of the church. They reacted against classical Mass suites of the ordinary whose musical architecture, orchestral accompaniment, and logic were seen by them to obscure texts and crowd out worship. Solesmes also wanted to retrieve the chant which underlay its alterations after the Reformation.

The other movement, the German counterpart of Solesmes, was set in motion by the Caecilian Society. It particularly influenced German immigrants who settled in the American Midwest. Since its intent included a concern about congregational singing which became critical at Vatican II, the Caecilian movement deserves our closer attention.

There were those in the church who were less than happy with Mozart’s Twelfth Mass as an ideal for church music.
Franz Xaver Witt (1834–1888) was its major force. He countered the general practice of his time by organizing the Caecilian Society at Bamberg, Germany, in 1869. Named for St. Caecilia, the obscure early Christian saint who in the late fifteenth century began to be venerated for music, this society had precursors in the eighteenth century in Vienna and Passau. There a “Caecilian-Bündnisse” had sought without much success to maintain unaccompanied singing in spite of the effect of Benedict XIV’s edict. Witt had more success. In 1865 he lamented the condition of church music, laid out principles for reform, and founded a society which Pope Pius IX recognized in 1870. Gregorian chant, Renaissance polyphony, and congregational singing were the ideals the society meant to set in practice against “impure church music.”

Today we are likely to emphasize the deficiencies of this movement. With Gustav Fellerer we are prepared to say, “A flood of poor Caecilian church music was printed... often prepared from a few cadences and stereotyped phrases” so that “mere externalism” and “shallowness” resulted. This tendency to degenerate to something external, pious, and precious was typical of the period. The music of the Caecilians did degenerate into stereotypical formulas. But the intent, though historically-rooted like Solesmes, was not stereotypically formulaic. Chant and polyphony in a Renaissance mold were regarded as ideals, and, especially for the Caecilian Society which was not monastic like Solesmes, at least in principle congregational singing was to be retrieved.

The Caecilian movement influenced German-speaking Catholic churches from near Milwaukee in the person of John Baptist Singenberger (1848–1924) who was certainly not stereotypical. He found Italian church music “a constant source of embarrassed.” It “oscillates,” he said “between undignified triviality and elaborate theatrical effect.” How, he asked, is this “anomaly to be accounted for?” He pointed out that the decrees of the Congregation of Sacred Rites did not support the musical abuses so evident, then he continued, “Is all the rest of the Catholic world to be bound down by liturgical laws and Roman musicians abandoned to do their own sweet will?”

The “rest of the Catholic world” was a mixed bag. Like many Protestant churches in the nineteenth century, Catholic congregations generally did not sing. Bishop Benedict J. Fenwick of Boston said in his Memoirs that in two-thirds of Catholic churches there was no singing at all. Thomas Day characterized the inheritance his great-grandfather brought to this country in the 1870s as the “Immense Irish Silence.” He was told repeatedly, “The Mass does not need music.” Day traced the roots of this silence to the association of hymns, pipe organs, anthems, and bells with the Protestant oppressors. (In fairness to Irish Catholics, it should be noted that they had their own Caecilian Society, started in 1876 by Monsignor Richard Donnelly in England and in Ireland, with a journal called Lyra Ecclesiastica. And one should probably add to Day’s analysis a theological posture for some Roman Catholics in which an eschatological “silent music” engenders a cultus of silence rather than song.)

German-speaking peoples were more apt to sing. Oppression for them was shared more broadly among both Protestants and Catholics, and music was not its casualty. German Catholics had hymnals which re-
seemed Protestant ones—like the *Katholisches Gesangbuch* printed in Lucerne in 1862,\(^7\) one of the hymn books some immigrants brought with them to this country. Before the settings of the Ordinary of the Mass, it began with “Hymns for the Sermon and Christian Teaching,” the first of which was “Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier”—text and tune by Lutherans.\(^18\) Similar books were the *Katholisches Gesang- und Gebet-Buch*\(^19\) printed in Cincinnati and the sweeter Victorian *St. Basil’s Hymnal*\(^20\) printed in Canada. Edwin Nemmers says the Cincinnati book, in its sixty-ninth edition by 1874, was used in thousands of churches.\(^21\)

This was the mixed bag in the world of John Singenberger when he was invited to the United States after a priest with Caecilian interests became a bishop. In 1838 John Martin Henni (1805–1881), a priest in Cincinnati, started a Caecilian Society. It met only once, at Holy Trinity Church on St. Caecilia’s Day, November 22.\(^22\) (Frederic L. Ritter began another such society in Cincinnati in 1856; it continued until 1865.\(^23\)) When Henni became Bishop of Milwaukee, he took his Caecilian concerns with him. At the time “normal schools” were being established to train laymen to serve as organist-choirmasters and to double as teachers in parochial schools.\(^24\) After first establishing a seminary in 1856, Henni organized a normal school to help reform the music of the church. It opened in 1871 as the Catholic Normal School of the Holy Family in St. Francis near Milwaukee. The rector of the seminary, Joseph Salzman, immediately got in touch with Franz Xavier Witt in Regensburg and asked him to send a music teacher. Witt sent John Singenberger.

Singenberger, a native of Switzerland who had studied at the University of Innsbruck and with Witt in Regensburg, arrived in St. Francis on Good Friday in 1873. On Easter Sunday the choir was already under his direction.\(^25\) He remained at the normal school in St. Francis as a teacher, conductor, organist, writer, editor, and prolific composer until he died in 1924.

Singenberger immediately organized the American Caecilian Society. 3,000 members joined in the first four years, and “by 1900 the Society numbered over 5,000.”\(^26\) Conventions (“Caecilianfeste”) were begun, the first in 1874 in Milwaukee. Almost every year thereafter until Pope Pius X’s *motu proprio* in 1903, some city hosted such a convention—Dayton, Baltimore, Rochester (New York), Detroit, St. Louis, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Chicago, and other cities as well.\(^27\) At these conventions worship was augmented by concerts of music appropriate to the Caecilian goals. Choirs from numerous widely scattered churches practiced before the conventions, then formed larger choirs of several hundred singers whom Singenberger conducted. “[N]owhere was Singenberger’s genius more apparent to the people than as director of the great Caecilianfeste.”\(^28\) Already in 1875 in Dayton, Palestrina’s *Missa Papae Marcelli* was on the program. Victoria, Lassus, and other sixteenth century composers were included, allied with the compositions of Caecilian composers like Singenberger himself.

In some of the convention cities, Singenberger and the normal school music faculty held summer school classes.\(^29\) The normal school itself was primarily a music school which continued until 1922 and graduated about 500 people, among them liturgically trained choirmasters and
organists who included the Pittsburgh organist Casper Koch.30

Singenberger began the journal Caecilia31 in February 1874 and edited it until the end of his life. The journal was written largely in German, so from 1882 until 1885 he also edited an English journal called Echo.32 He also conducted, improvised very well at the organ, and composed. Patrick Gorman estimates that Singenberger wrote hundreds of choral pieces, including twenty-three Masses, a Requiem, thirty sets of Vespers, and fortygraduals.33 Publishers supported the effort: Pustet in Regensburg, Germany; J. Fischer & Brothers in Dayton, Ohio (known after 1873 “as a publisher for John B. Singenberger”),34 and after 1895 the M. L. Nemmers Publishing Company.35

Singenberger’s music cannot be classified as stereotypical cadences or formulas ground out in great and frivolous profusion nor as Victorian sentimental froth. It is well-crafted and restrained. Singenberger knew how to write counterpoint. He knew about doublings and how to space chords. He knew how melodic musical lines sounded. He can perhaps be criticized for a sameness, but he can also be lauded for a commitment to write for the capacities of parish churches. The sameness could be attributed to his restrictive presuppositions about writing in a Renaissance style which actually turned out to be a nineteenth century style, but it could also reflect his intention to craft accessible music for the capacities of normal choirs in rural and urban nineteenth century churches. Sameness or not, Singenberger carried out what seems to have been his intention, to write simply but well. His Missa in honorem S. Gregorii36 indicates he was capable of greater complexity than he usually showed, though even there he restrained himself to write a liturgical piece.

Though Singenberger largely penned choral music, he did not forget the congregation. He assembled a massive organ-book37 (more than 500 pages) with organ accompaniments for the music of high Mass, private Mass, Vespers, and Compline and German hymns for the church year and several other categories. Well-crafted organ preludes, accompaniments, and interludes between stanzas by him and other composers were provided throughout, with instructions to lead but not to dominate.38 He integrated some of this into his Organ Accompaniment to the CANTATE39 which Sebastian Messmer, the Archbishop of Milwaukee, introduced this way:

When Protestant churches are filled with Christian worshippers it is in very many cases due to the beautiful church hymns sung by the whole congregation. It was the spirit of modern, unchristian innovation which deprived Catholics of our days of the beauty of the primitive and medieval mode of church music. Why not return to it?40

Gorman suggests that the concern for congregational singing “was never truly integrated into the fabric of the predominantly choral [Caecilian] movement.”41 Gustav Fellerer says the Caecilians “undertook a double task: to relegate the vernacular hymn to extra-liturgical services; and to free it from the secularized attitude of the Enlightenment.”42 The first goal, if Fellerer is right, was not participatory in the way envisioned by the next two documents we will encounter. For the second goal Fellerer says the
Caecilians returned to ancient hymnody. He is not terribly enthusiastic about the new hymns they wrote.

Gorman's assessment that the choral took precedence over the congregational for the Caecilians is surely correct, though I increasingly wonder if the unquestioned presupposition that “Roman Catholic congregations never have sung,” generated by the “Irish silence” and biased Protestant rhetoric, tends to skew our perceptions, especially for nineteenth and twentieth century German parishes, and maybe earlier as well. (It's less clear to me what French, Italian, and other ethnic groups were doing.)

There is substantial evidence that some Catholic congregations sang. Here are a few examples. First, if Edwin Nemmers is right that the Hellebusch *Katholisches Gesang- und Gebet-Buch*, in its sixty-ninth edition by 1874, was used in thousands of churches, and if Higginson’s accounting even remotely relates to practice (my own hunch is that it reflects considerable practice), there must have been some singing somewhere. Second, Singenberger mentions the popularity of “Grosser Gott.” Third, in the late eighteenth century, Philadelphia members of the Continental Congress attended St. Mary’s Church. John Adams wrote to his wife Abigail that “the music, consisting of an organ and a choir of singers, went all the afternoon except sermon time, and the assembly chanted most sweetly and exquisitely.” Fourth, the strong liturgical tradition with congregational singing at Holy Trinity Church, constructed in 1789 for Germans in Philadelphia, seems to have been undermined by the trustee controversy. Fifth, Sister Georgia Kilburg at Mount St. Francis in Dubuque, 103 years old at this writing, is from Springbrook, Iowa, near Bellevue, where she remembers that clergy came from Germany and the congregation sang German hymns at daily Masses. (The same circumstances apparently pertained in Meyer, Iowa.) The connection to Germany suggests that there must have been congregational singing in Germany as well. Sixth, Sister Lucille Lammers at Mount St. Francis is from Petersburg near Dyersville. As a child she remembers her parish and school singing the entire ordinary of the Mass daily from the *Kyriale*, especially the *Missa pro defunctis*, including the *Dies Irae* from memory. Seventh, Father Loras Otting at the Archdiocesan Archives in Dubuque is from St. Mary Parish in Cascade, Iowa, where he says daily Mass was sung by grade and high school students with members of the congregation, and certain Masses were sung on Sunday by the congregation without a choir. Eighth, Sister Elizabeth Hilvers at Mount St. Francis, to whom I am grateful for finding Singenberger’s *Organ Accompaniment to the CANTATE*, turned up a children’s hymnal from Singenberger in German and English. Though paraliturgical, it nonetheless, with the more liturgical *CANTATE*, testifies to the congregation’s singing.

Much research needs to be done so that more complete and accurate accounts can be written. It would be helpful to do this research soon so that whatever oral history is still available could be tapped in addition to the written sources.
In 1903 Cardinal Guiseppe Sarto (1835–1914) became pope, taking the name Pius X. He had an intense interest in church music and "wrote more [about it] than all the [other] popes together."\(^5\) The work and presuppositions of Solesmes and the Caecilians found expression in his motu proprio Tra le sollecitudini (TLS)\(^5\) which he issued the same year he became pope.\(^5\)

The motu proprio was a watershed. After it documents about music abound; before it they are scarce. Before it Singenberger's work had verve; after it Singenberger's work went on something closer to automatic pilot. The city conventions disappeared, partly because the motu proprio excluded women from the choir. That caused the Caecilians considerable angst, but Singenberger felt compelled to follow papal authority.\(^5\) Though Singenberger responded to the document constructively,\(^5\) in a sense the motu proprio both concluded the Caecilian work and paradoxically complicated it with legalism.\(^5\) As Sister Bernadette Grabian put it, "American Caecilians felt they no longer had a personal cause to champion."\(^5\)

The motu proprio was very close to a votum Pius X had prepared in 1893 as the patriarch of Venice. He said that music had to correspond to the goal of the liturgy which is the "honor of God and the sanctification of the people,"\(^5\) that "sacred music should possess in the best possible grade the qualities which are proper to the liturgy," namely, holiness, goodness, beauty, excellence of form, and universality. Gregorian chant was understood to embody these qualities most perfectly and was therefore regarded as the "highest model of church music."\(^5\) Palestrina's Renaissance polyphony also fit the standards. The church has "always recognized and encouraged progress in the arts," said Pius X, and modern music has "produced compositions good and serious and dignified enough to be worthy of liturgical use"; but, in words reminiscent of Benedict XIV (whom Pius cited in the letter to Cardinal Respighi, who was deputed to carry out the regulations\(^6\)), "nothing profane" is to be allowed.\(^6\) The theatrical style was deemed least fitted to the church's worship, especially the one "so much in vogue during the last [nineteenth] century" in Italy.\(^6\) Pianos and "all noisy or irreverent instruments such as drums, kettle-drums, cymbals, triangles, and so on" were forbidden. Bands were "strictly forbidden" except in some circumstances where "a certain number of specially-chosen wind instruments" were allowed. The music such a group played had to be "reverent, appropriate, and in every way like that of the organ."\(^6\)

The motu proprio was a move against much of nineteenth century practice. Mozart's Twelfth Mass at the parish of the Guardian Angels in Hastings, Minnesota, was not what Pius X had in mind. What he and succeeding twentieth century documents did have in mind was Gregorian chant sung by the people.

One of the "préoccupations dominantes"\(^5\) of Pius X was to restore to the people their role of actively participating in the liturgical chant. He gave a reason: "And since indeed Our first and most ardent wish is that a true Christian spirit flourish and be kept always by the faithful, the first thing to which We must attend is the holiness and dignity of the churches in which Our people assemble, in order to acquire that spirit from its first and
most indispensable source, by taking an active part in the sacred mysteries and in the solemn public prayers of the church."

As Gerald Ellard would say later, that statement meant that "active lay participation in the liturgy is a foremost and indispensable font of the true Christian spirit." Pius X also decreed that his concern for appropriate music should be implemented: "Especially should this [Gregorian] chant be restored to the use of the people, so that they may take an active part in the offices, as they did in former times."

Succeeding documents picked up this theme. Here are some examples. In the 1928 encyclical Divini cultus, Pius XI said this:

In order that the faithful more actively participate in divine worship, let them be made once more to sing the Gregorian Chant, so far as it belongs to them to take part in it. It is most important that the faithful should not be merely detached and silent spectators, but, filled with a deep sense of the beauty of the liturgy, they should sing alternately with the clergy or the choir, as it is prescribed.

If this is done, then it will no longer happen that the people either make no answer at all to the public prayers—whether in the language of the liturgy or in the vernacular—or at best utter the responses in a low and subdued murmur.

Pius XII followed his predecessors. In the encyclical Mediator Dei he praised those who strive to promote the singing of the people. He quoted Divini cultus and added "the ancient saying... he who sings well prays twice." In the encyclical Musicae Sacrae Disciplina, he said that "local Ordinaries and the other pastors should take great care that the faithful from their earliest years should learn at least the easier and more frequently used Gregorian melodies, and should know how to employ them in the sacred liturgical rites..." He also urged that popular religious singing outside the Mass be fostered and promoted.

In 1958 the Sacred Congregation of Rites published Instructio de musica sacra et sacra liturgia, which attempted to draw together the principal points of the papal documents. The title of an English translation of this instruction, "On Participation in the Mass," illustrates again the concern for the singing of the faithful. Paragraphs 22–34 of that instruction dealt specifically with that issue. Active participation in solemn Mass and high Mass "can be realized in three stages or degrees," it said. First, the liturgical responses like "Amen" and "Et cum spiritu tuo" are sung by all the faithful; then the faithful sing the ordinary; and finally they are so well versed in Gregorian chant that they also sing the proper. (This last method was urged in religious communities and seminaries.) At low Mass, one form of participation is when the faithful unite "their voices in common prayers and songs." A more perfect form of participation is the liturgical response of the people to the priest celebrant (presumably spoken or sung). This involves four degrees: first, the easier responses like "Amen" and "Et cum spiritu tuo"; then the parts said by the server; then the ordinary; then the proper.

In Voices and Instruments in Christian Worship, Joseph Gelineau summarized the legislation before Vatican II. Three of his comments illustrate the importance of musical participation by the people:
One has to make sure that every sung item is performed in such a way that it will procure the active and intelligent participation of the assembled faithful required by Pius XII.79

The celebrating assembly is the visible body of the Church at prayer, and in this the people have a position which is organic.80

The singing of the people, therefore, is a constitutive element of the liturgy.81

In spite of this “dominant preoccupation” with active lay participation prior to Vatican II, the people were not singing. In 1954 Gerald Ellard began his introduction to Mediator Dei this way: “Catholics know that the problem of music at high Mass, particularly from the side of congregational participation, has long been a troublesome factor: Formerly congregations sang the chants; now they sing nothing: how restore the situation in which the people will sing again?”82 Before he became Pope Pius X, Guiseppe Sarto—as, respectively, parish priest, bishop, and cardinal—had restored high Mass singing at Salzano, Tambolo, Mantua, and Venice.83 In France “the fruit of years of work” produced qualified results.84 In the United States a congregation in Baltimore and one in Indiana made efforts to sing.85 There were certainly other similar parishes—among Germans in Iowa, for example, singing from the Kyriale as I’ve noted above. But these communities were not in the majority, and, “despite multiple invitations and prompting, congregations singing the high Mass chants did not quickly materialize.”86 One might ask if the singing before Vatican II was worse than it had been in at least some nineteenth and early twentieth century German churches.

The Larger Picture: 1963–2003

The chapter on sacred music from the Second Vatican Council’s 1963 Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium—hereafter SC)87 sounds pretty much like the motu proprio of Pius X, which it cites.88 The conciliar constitution follows the line of the other papal and curial documents from the twentieth century and, apart from the matter of congregational participation, is in line with Benedict XIV. “The purpose of sacred music,” it says, “is the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful.”89 It affirms that “the musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of immeasurable value,”90 that Gregorian chant is “distinctive of the Roman liturgy” and “given pride of place,” and that polyphony is not far behind.91 The pipe organ “is to be held in high esteem,” though “other instruments may also be admitted for use in divine worship” so long as certain conditions are met.92 Unlike Benedict XIV but like Pius X, the conciliar document highlights participation by the people:

A liturgical service takes on a nobler aspect when the rites are celebrated with singing, the sacred ministers take their parts in them, and the faithful actively participate.93

Or again:

Bishops and other pastors of souls must be at pains to ensure that whenever
a liturgical service is to be celebrated with song, the whole assembly of the
faithful is enabled ... to contribute the active participation that rightly
belongs to it.\textsuperscript{94}

And again:

The people’s own religious songs are to be encouraged with care so that in
sacred devotions as well as during services of the liturgy itself, in keeping
with rubrical norms and requirements, the faithful may raise their voices
in song.\textsuperscript{95}

The familiar-sounding chapter on sacred music was probably not the
critical factor related to participation, however. If Jerome Hall is right, SC
signals a theological shift that accents the primacy of God’s action. This
not only has significant ecumenical implications but also impels respon-
sive participation far more strongly. Quoting Johannes Betz, Hall writes:

‘It is no longer the predominantly anthropological point of view, which
sees the liturgy as the human rendering of worship to God, and which is
still predominant in Pius XII’s encyclical \textit{Mediator Dei}, but the theocentric
concept of the divine saving action.’ The Council emphasizes the primacy
of the divine action, describing liturgical worship as the human response
to God’s initiative. This approach entails a significant change of focus from
that of scholastic theology.\textsuperscript{96}

Such a theological starting point naturally brings with it the “momentous”
cultural embrace which Nathan Mitchell recently noted:

Many today would agree that perhaps SC’s most momentous (and contro-
versial) paragraphs were 37–40, which boldly embraced the rich plurality
and diversity of the world’s cultures, insisting (in § 38) that ‘provision shall
be made, when revising the liturgical books, for legitimate variations and
adaptations to different groups, regions, and peoples, especially in mis-
sion countries.’\textsuperscript{97}

Already in 1966, a footnote in an English translation of the documents
of Vatican II pointed to the “revolutionary” character of this section.
About the first of the articles to which Mitchell refers, it said: “This is one
of the most revolutionary Articles of the Constitution and is likely to
have important effects both in missionary countries and at home.”\textsuperscript{98}

The vernacular permissions of article 36 that, prior to 1963 were either
denied\textsuperscript{99} or, at best, a mere hint in official documents,\textsuperscript{100} now—not
surprisingly—became a major theme. So, in Donald Boccardi’s words:

On the last Sunday of the church year in 1964, Catholics all over the world
attended Mass as usual. It was in Latin; it was quiet, except when the people
were invited to join in the Latin responses as they had since 1958; the priest
had his back to the congregation; and if there were any singing, the organist
or choir did it.

The very next week, on the First Sunday of Advent, Catholics all over
the world were invited to celebrate the Eucharist. It was in the vernacular; the
priest stood facing the assembly; and all were to sing and take an active
part.\textsuperscript{101}
Or, as Ralph Keifer said, with the reforms made by Vatican II, “in most parishes, congregational singing at the Eucharistic service was introduced practically overnight.”

But there was no sudden flood of congregational participation in the singing. In 1965 Ormer Westendorf was still dealing with the people’s lack of musical participation. The unspoken assumption on virtually every page of his *Music Lessons for the Man in the Pew* is that in fact very little congregational singing was happening. The choir continued in many places to substitute for the people. Jazz, folk, and rock Masses received much publicity in the late ’60s, but how much congregational participation they generated is an open question. Even where congregational singing did in some sense happen, it was attacked as not being the liturgical participation that was called for. Ralph Keifer, for example, said in 1971 that “almost everywhere” the standard practice is to sing four hymns: entrance, offertory, Communion, and recessional. The important people’s parts of the liturgy itself (“the *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, responses to psalms, *Alleluia*, responses to intercessions, *Sanctus*, memorial acclamation, great *Amen*, Lord’s Prayer and *Agnus Dei*”) were, said Keifer, “reduced” to spoken mutterings in unison. The result was a “hymnody-on-the-edges, recitation-in-the-center approach” in which the “congregation is galvanized to attention when there is no need, and lulled into boredom at the most important points in the rite.”

Now, thirty-two years after Keifer’s analysis, Nathan Mitchell makes a different assessment. In a list of how, “after centuries of disenfranchisement, lay Catholics have once more reclaimed a direct role in worship,” Mitchell says this: “*Silent* Masses on Sunday are virtually unknown; our people *sing* (if not always well or enthusiastically).” How much of what Mitchell refers to is still “hymnody-on-the-edges” he does not say, and his comment about the people not always singing “well or enthusiastically” needs some parsing. The *Snowbird Statement* makes a “less-than-sanguine estimation” of the situation in the middle of the final decade of the twentieth century. The *Milwaukee Symposia* gave another impression just a few years earlier. James Frazier, as a *Snowbird* signatory, is less than happy with the assessment of the *Milwaukee Symposia* and Michael Joncas’s analysis. Edward Foley gives a multivalent description when he analyzes *The Notre Dame Study of Parish Life* through the lens of ritual music.

Whatever Mitchell has in mind, he, Keifer, Frazier, Foley, and publications like *Snowbird, Milwaukee*, and *The Notre Dame Study* begin to suggest that the impact of Vatican II on music is more complex than one single thing and has evoked varying points of view and analyses. Let me try to organize the complexity by starting with other issues and come back to the congregation’s singing.

**Musical Issues Today**

**Choirs and Choral Music.** At least for the short term, choirs and the repertoire of choral music took a hit right after Vatican II. Here are a couple of illustrations.
• I was an MSM student at Union Seminary in New York just after Vatican II. One of my classmates recently reminded me that a choirmaster and organist at a Roman Catholic parish in New York City addressed us one day. He said the Protestants among us would have to be responsible for the choral music of his tradition because his choir and all its music were being disbanded.

• A few years ago I was looking for Singenberger's music. Working on a hunch that Richard Schuler at St. Agnes Church in St. Paul, Minnesota, might have some of it, I called him and asked. "Sure," he said. "Come over. Take a look." I found it by looking through a whole series of file cabinets stored at St. Agnes. They are full of choral music by various composers, with stamps or other indications on it of the various churches to whom it formerly belonged. "How did you get all this," I asked? "Well," he said, "after Vatican II everybody was getting rid of their choirs and throwing it away. They called and asked if I wanted it. I took it."

Now, this is a curious circumstance. It does not match what Vatican II says about the musical treasury of the church being "preserved and fostered with great care" or that "choirs must be diligently developed." Suddenly to abandon choirs and choral music is an iconoclastic move. It assumes something like an Anabaptist ecclesiological stance, which is not at home with sacraments or the church's continuity from age to age and presumes you can start the church or, at least, its resources—in this case its musical resources—from scratch. Vatican II's Catholic ecclesiology does not suggest this. It does suggest a pruning by way of reformation but surely not a wholesale abandonment of choirs and the church's choral repertoire. The pruning seems to rule out choral Mass suites of the ordinary that have been written since the Renaissance. That's how Michael Joncas interprets Musicam Sacram of 1967, which says: "The practice of assigning the singing of the entire Proper and Ordinary of the Mass to the choir alone without the rest of the congregation is not to be permitted."

In the last few years choirs and a practice more in keeping with what Vatican II intended have reappeared in Catholic parishes, like the cathedral of St. Thomas More in Arlington, Virginia. The story of these choirs is that they were disbanded after Vatican II and, at some point in the last ten or twenty years or so, began anew. In their current repertoire, except for concert performances or where special permission is given for the use of Latin Masses, I assume Mass suites of the ordinary are off limits, but motets and other parts of the historic repertoire are encouraged.

The situation is probably a bit more complicated, however, than simply asking what is and what is not permitted. If Michael Joncas is correct, most of the pieces from the whole treasury of the church's rich choral repertoire have disappeared and will require "concentrated efforts" to be retained if they are to be any more than "museum curiosities." My sense is that more and more choirs are again accessing the repertoire as a living and vital force, in keeping with what Vatican II meant. To what extent Vatican II can be held responsible for the presence...
or absence of the choir and its music is not an easy question to answer. The short-term and long-term answers may be different. In any case other issues are in play here, like the following.

**Style and Quality of Music.** If one were to write down the oral tradition of the last forty years, there would be a substantial section on the poor quality of texts and music after Vatican II with words and phrases like these: “dull, melodramatic, or bizarre”;

“adolescent and shallow”;

“musical quality was lacking”;

“bland, prosaic language”;

and “shab-

biness.”

The church over time has purged away what’s not worth keeping, and it will do so again with what our generation has produced. Arguments about these matters will be resolved by history, and history will do its work whether we like it or not. My point here therefore is not to make judgments. History will do that. My point is this: After Vatican II there were stylistic changes that, at least in the short term, were often perceived to yield music of poor quality. Vatican II surely did not intend that. Whether it can be held responsible is another question, which again raises a larger issue.

**Old Order and New Order.** Those who met in Rome for Vatican II could not know what protest movements would follow their meeting. They did not know how the Civil Rights movement in the United States would play out or that Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert Kennedy would be assassinated in 1968, five years after John F. Kennedy was killed. They could not see the carnage and protests of Vietnam nor the broad spectrum of equal rights movements—as for women with concerns about inclusive language—that would soon follow their meetings. But that whole sequence of events included Vatican II in its mix and set up a context in which an old order and a new order were pitted against one another. Musical styles became the symbols for the two orders. A “classical” order was set against a “contemporary” one. The defining musical character of these two orders or symbol systems had two components: date of composition (usually about ten years before the current date) and what was considered “elitist” versus what was deemed to be more folk-like or popular.

Vatican II surely did not intend this division. In view of the larger context it is difficult to see Vatican II as little more than one piece of a much larger puzzle. As the century progressed, the context got larger, increasingly complex, and ironic. Vatican II could not see the period of protest that would follow it, but it could also not see what would follow that, namely, the extent to which marketing and the commodification of everything including the church’s message—especially in the ‘90s after the fall of the Berlin Wall—would take over. Here’s the irony: The “popular” or “folk” music of the new order constellation in the ‘60s and ‘70s symbolized a challenge to the status quo on behalf of justice and peace. In the ‘80s, ‘90s, and early twenty-first century, what was presumably “popular” music turned into the commercial means to sell the status quo and build an empire of church and state with little concern for justice and peace. The implications of Vatican II in response to this change have probably not yet been felt or are at best only now being dimly perceived. They are “fiercely countercultural,” to quote Michael Joncas. (Robert Hovda may have made the point even more strongly. He might have said something about
"a 'social order' which faith pledges us to overthrow." What's at issue is the unprecedented spread of Western-style (some would call it American) free market capitalism about which John Paul II and many other church leaders have expressed deep concerns. These concerns complicate the large question of inculturation, what it means, when it means what, and how it plays out in a "culture" of impermanent commodification.

**Protestant Issues.** Music and musicians have always moved across confessional borders, but Vatican II made the borders less clear. After Vatican II, Protestants and Roman Catholics could no longer fire at one another from behind stereotypical barricades. Common liturgical research from the nineteenth century onward brought Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Lutherans, and Reformed communities into a new dialogue and whetted their appetites for contact with Eastern Orthodoxy. Common concerns emerged about baptism, a common ecumenical shape for the Eucharist and prayer offices became clear, a common (or at least largely common) three-year lectionary brought churches together across denominational divisions, and resources were widely shared in hymnals and other publications related to worship.

All that was true for churches which had some sort of catholic orientation and interest. But for those churches which were more sectarian, the liturgy, the lectionary, and hymnals were increasingly regarded as outdated and of little or no value. Taking their cue from various musical styles for worship that Catholics began to employ after Vatican II—but without Catholic formal ballast and structure to protect them from a narrow nowness—in the early '80s, as Catholics were engaged in retrenchment, some Protestants developed their own "alternative worship" and seeker service tracks for the sake of "church growth." Here the historic ecumenical creeds tended to be abandoned or altered, biblical readings were truncated or sometimes omitted altogether, and worship structures were often modeled after culturally friendly talk shows rather than the church's historic practice. Music was consciously upbeat and "contemporary," with praise bands and an avoidance of anything associated with the tradition of the church, its hymnals, or its music.

Once again there is irony here. Some churches with historic sectarian orientations expressed an unaccustomed concern for sacraments and weekly Eucharists. That concern pulled them into a more catholic place which expanded their musical repertoires to include the past. Simultaneously some Protestant traditionalists, who presumably were more catholic in their instincts, became more sectarian by pressing a narrow worship and music style from the immediate past (not the immediate present with whose partisans they disagreed) that used only a small portion of their denominational hymnals, avoided sacramental concerns, and resisted weekly Eucharists. Some who valued their old hymnals also valued what was new, and some who valued what was new came to value what was old. In a crazy and confusing ecumenical quilt, the musical labels based on worship styles became increasingly meaningless as a common catholic form encompassing many musical styles was distinguished from a sectarian worship form with a single old
or new musical style.

To what extent Vatican II is the driving force here is an interesting question. I suspect its force lay in breaking down the barriers between Protestants and Catholics. That was a big watershed, but beyond that many other streams have flowed into the mix—all of which leads us back to congregational participation via singing.

**Participation.** As we have noted, congregational singing after Vatican II did not immediately improve. Choirs may have disappeared in some places, but congregational singing did not take their place: Cantors with microphones did. In most of the Catholic congregations I have visited until recently, as the cantors sang louder or turned up the volume, what little congregational singing there may have been ceased as the people were decimated by a decibel level and leaders-as-performers approach that turned them into spectators. There were acoustic folk groups who sang at reasonable invitational levels and choirs and organists with hymnals who led congregations in hearty song, but they seemed to be exceptions—until recently.

In the last few years cantors seem to have backed away from microphones and made more competent and inviting sounds and gestures. Organists and cantors have begun to work together more fruitfully. Choirs are singing a wider and wider choral repertoire as they also lead congregations in their singing. Old and new music is being used, with more ephemeral music winnowed away, and a move toward centered durability is evident.

This phenomenon seems to be true for Catholics and Protestants, though Catholics seem farther along the trajectory than Protestants. There are exceptions, of course, and virtually everything is out there. What I have seen and heard includes

- Latin Masses with classic orchestras and choruses singing the Ordinary;
- Broadway tunes;
- Haugen and Haas;
- Palestrina, Byrd, Weelkes, Bach, Bruckner, Messiah, Pelz, and Proulx;
- music from local composers;
- praise bands;
- rock music;
- various mixes of musical styles;
- and separate musical styles used in separate services.

Some years ago I would have added Heavy Metal Masses to the list, but I have not heard of them for a long time. What seems more characteristic now is a reversal: small groups who, without any hype, wearied by instrumental excess and out-of-control microphones, gravitate to the congregational stratum of chant and an Eastern Orthodox practice with voices alone and no amplification. Closely related in principle if not in sound are voices allied to African drumming.

Here are some other trends I have observed:
- It may be that a “popular” style among some Roman Catholics is still apt to relate to concerns for justice and peace, but the more likely scenario is a “popular” style in suburban Protestant mega churches which supports the status quo and ignores or submerges concerns for justice and peace.

- Music is still being used by some churches as an entertaining means to sell Christianity, to “position” them to appeal to the “needs” of the largest number of people possible to get the largest “market share” and to push a right wing political agenda. This use of music is not different in kind from the way twentieth century totalitarians used it.\textsuperscript{136}

- One of the most promising developments, which probably owes much to themes Vatican II and SC unleashed, is the growth of global materials from various cultures and languages. Spanish and African American ones are probably most visible in larger collections,\textsuperscript{137} but music from Taizé, the Iona Community, and African and Asian sources appears with regularity in smaller collected doses and in hymnal supplements.\textsuperscript{138}

In the midst of this diversity the overall movement seems to be toward what Vatican II was driving at: a centered ecumenical, cultural, and catholic wholeness where the integrity of the faith is at issue; where singing into, serving, and challenging but not collapsing into the culture is the concern; and where music’s characteristic gifts to glorify God and edify humanity are being expressed in the church’s liturgy. Most vital participatory congregational singing is related to that wholeness as both catholicity and cultural particularity are respected, as hymnals like \textit{Worship III}\textsuperscript{139} and \textit{Ritual Song}\textsuperscript{140}—or books of some sort or oral traditions of some sort—seem to be increasing and missalettes seem to be decreasing.\textsuperscript{141}

All this, of course, is my anecdotal analysis from my experience and visits to churches. What is actually happening will not be apparent until all of us are dead and historians will see what we cannot. It may be that then Vatican II will just be beginning to make its impact.

\textbf{What Remains to Be Said}

Meanwhile, what can be said now? Two things.

1. There is a progression here. In 1749 no congregational singing was expected. After 1749 the warnings directed against a theatrical style were not followed, though reform movements worked for chant and Renaissance polyphony. In 1903 congregational singing was urged with the use of Latin, Gregorian chant, and restricted instrumental resources. It did not widely happen. In 1963 recovery of the ancient model of congregational singing was urged. It slowly emerged in the vernacular (or maybe is still emerging) with all sorts of messy confusion and trials and errors.\textsuperscript{142} Caught in the cultural swirl of its time, much that followed Vatican II may not have been of the Council’s making, and the Council’s impact after forty years may be increasing rather than diminishing.\textsuperscript{143}

2. For all of their differences and problems, \textit{Annus qui} of 1749, the \textit{motu
proprio of 1903, and the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of 1963 stand together in trying to let the music of the church be what it is with integrity. The struggle they all faced is how the church in the modern or postmodern world can proclaim its message without being co-opted or seduced by the glitter of things and the greed of our entertaining and boundless consumption. Music is the symbol here because it can so easily be either the narcotic and commercial disguise that drugs us or the healthy song of our life before God.

These documents may or may not say it well, and they are not without their problems. The motu proprio’s exclusion of women from the choir, for example, is related to an ongoing discriminatory blind spot for Roman Catholics that denies the catholic faith itself and has undermined the church’s song and caused other far-reaching problems. In addition, these documents, like all legalistic ones, did not succeed in effecting what they intended. But in the final analysis what they were after is the pleasure of music folded into its proper place as glorification of God and edification of us human creatures by way of the church’s liturgy and sacramental life in Christ, with a growing awareness of the people’s musical office. Getting at that intent, I suspect, will be the long-term musical impact of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy.

That impact will not be the calm serenity that the Constitution’s legal language may imply. It will be instead, as Robert Hovda said in another context, the liturgy “acting out symbolically [which includes musically] the Bible’s proclamation of God’s reign...” Such a song teaches us not to presume that this impact and our work are easy, quick, or quantifiably simplistic. In the words of Joseph Sittler that Hovda loved to quote:

We must not ... declare a premature calm over the boiling sea of the biblical witness. That body of water is a tumult of oppositions, a disclosure of tensions, a mighty music, instinct with the thudding of matters that cannot be made completely harmonious...

Even if we are in a period of increasing retrenchment at the moment, Vatican II nonetheless announced yet again the explosive potency of the faith in its biblical witness. As usual, that power will not be throttled. Or, in Hovda’s words:

How can we keep from singing when, with all our limits and our sins, our different cultures and ways, our warts and handicaps, our weaknesses and discouragements, we are so invited and charged to be a small part of such a pilgrimage... and to be dealing with such dynamite?

Notes

2. Ibid., 101.
8. Hayburn, 142.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., 143.
11. Ibid.
18. The text was by the seventeenth century Lutheran Pastor Tobias Clusius, the tune by Johann Ahle, who was one of J. S. Bach’s predecessors at St. Blasius Church in Mühlhausen.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid., 171.
27. For more complete lists of cities see Nemmers, 175–176, and Gorman, 13.
28. F. J. Boerger, “In Memoriam: Reminiscences of Prof. John Singengerber Who Died May 19, 1924,” *Caecilia* 52 (1925), 137, quoted in Gorman, 14. (Various spellings of “Caecilia” and “Caecilienfeste” were common.)
29. See Gorman, 13.
30. Nemmers, 176, FN 25. Singengerber’s daughter Carla married Koch who was “one of Singengerber’s favorite pupils.” See Grabrian, 10.
31. The journal *Caecilia* was continued more recently as *Sacred Music*.
34. Nemmers, 172.
35. Ibid., 176. Edwin Nemmers was Michael L. Nemmers’ grandson.
40. Ibid., page facing the Preface.
43. In Singengerber’s *Guide to Catholic Church Music* (Milwaukee: H. H. Zahn, 1905,
first ed. 1891), two pages (220–221) of 270 were devoted to “Collections of Hymns for Congregational Singing” (in English, German, Polish, and Latin), though the brief unison sections could be construed as congregational.

44. J. Vincent Higgenson, Handbook for American Catholic Hymnals (The Hymn Society of America, 1976), and J. Vincent Higgenson, History of American Catholic Hymnals: Survey and Background (The Hymn Society of America, 1982).

45. Singenberger, Orgelbuch, iv.


48. Ibid., 94ff.


51. Hayburn, Papal Legislation on Sacred Music, 195. For the reforms of Pius X see Hayburn, 195–250.

52. An English version can be found in Hayburn, 205–231, and Paul Hume, Catholic Church Music (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1956), 180–193. Pius X alludes to these movements when he applauds the good work of “flourishing societies.” See TLS, Hayburn, 223.


54. See Gorman, 20–21.

55. In Singenberger’s 1905 Guide to Catholic Church Music, Archbishop Sebastian Messner of Milwaukee strongly referenced the motu proprio which was printed in full after the Caecilian Bishop Martin Marty’s (not to be confused with the Lutheran writer, church historian, and teacher of our period) Preface to the First Edition. In Singenberger’s comprehensive organ method, adapted with his practical instincts to the melodeon, he noted changes he made in response to the motu proprio. See J. Singenberger, The Art of Melodeon or Harmonium Playing, A Theoretical and Practical School for Church Purposes Containing Over 350 Preludes, etc. in All Keys; Accompaniments to Gregorian Chants, etc. third ed. rev. & enl. (Ratisbon: Fr. Pustet, 1908), Preface. I am grateful to Sister Elizabeth Hilvers for finding this book for me.

56. One has to add that for Singenberger personal tragedy came at the same time. Between 1904 and 1907 he was hospitalized because his wife left him and never returned. For more detail about his wife, who formed an artists’ colony in Portland, Oregon, and their six children, two of whom died tragically as young adults, see Gorman, 22, and Grabrian, 10.

57. Grabrian, 11.

58. TLS, Hayburn, 205.

59. TLS, Hayburn, 224.

60. Hume, 195.

61. TLS, Hayburn, 225.

62. Ibid., 226.

63. Ibid., 229.

64. A. Harin, La Législation Ecclésiastique en matière de Musique Religieuse (Paris: Desclée & Cie, 1933), 35.

65. TLS, Hayburn, 223.


67. TLS, Hayburn, 225.

68. Pius XI, Divini cultus (20 December 1928), ¶ IX, from the translation in Hume, 199–209.

69. Pius XII, Mediator Dei, ¶ 105, from the translation given in Ellard.

70. Ibid., ¶ 192.


72. Ibid., ¶ 66.

74. Ibid., ¶ 25.
75. Ibid., ¶s 25–26.
76. Ibid., ¶ 30.
77. Ibid., ¶ 31.


79. Gelineau, 11.
80. Ibid., 80.
81. Ibid., 80f.
82. Ellard, 5.
83. Ibid.

85. See Huner, 86f.
86. Ellard, 6.


88. SC, ¶ 112.
89. Ibid.
90. Ibid.
91. Ibid., ¶ 116.
92. Ibid., ¶ 120.
93. Ibid., ¶ 113.
94. Ibid., ¶ 114.
95. Ibid., ¶ 118.

96. Jerome Hall, We Have the Mind of Christ (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2001), 45. I am grateful to Virgil Funk for setting me onto this book and to Hall for giving me a copy.


100. See the mention in the quotation from Divini cultus of 1928, given above at FN 68.


106. Music in Catholic Worship, ¶s 42–78, comments on these parts of the service.


110. For comments about how any hymns ought to be approached (as poems, faith confessions, and proclamations—not as “Muzak interval fillers”) see Robert W. Hovda, “The Amen Corner: Cautionary Tales about Liturgy’s Verbal Parts,” Worship 61:3 (May 1987), 247.


112. Jan Michael Joncas, From Sacred Song to Ritual Music: Twentieth Century Under-


117. There are obvious exceptions like St. Mary’s Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption in Covington, Kentucky, where the Cathedral Director of Music, Dr. Robert J. Schaffer, has been serving in an ongoing choral tradition since 1949. There are those who say that the disappearance of choirs had nothing to do with Vatican II but was attributable to priests who used Vatican II as an excuse to stop paying musicians.

118. See also Boccardi, 40 and 44, and Joncas, 82 and 85.

119. SC, ¶ 114. (Cf. ¶ 123.)

120. See SC ¶s 21, 50, 62, and 107.


124. Ibid., 28.

125. Ibid.

126. Ibid., 29.

127. Ibid., 44.


131. Clare V. Johnson, “Paradigms of Translation,” Worship 77:2 (March 2003), 151–170, helpfully summarizes many of the issues related to inculturation, especially for language. What complicates things (this is not the topic of Johnson’s article) is how these matters relate to a commercial “culture” which by definition has no enduring character and co-opts everything into something to be sold. For a penetrating analysis, see Robert W. Hovda, “The Amen Corner: After All, Who is Apollo? And Who is Paul?” Worship 61:6 (November 1987), 534–535 (and the rest of the article, 533–539).

132. Who is “Protestant” is messy. Sociologically, for example, Lutherans and Anglicans fit the description. Theologically they don’t. The Mercersburg Theology of the nineteenth century gave reasons for asking how Reformed communities fit. Movements like Mercersburg join Vatican II in pointing us to roots, essence, and central commonalities rather than stereotypes.


135. See, for example, Hovda’s description of a congregation singing its parts “with a thrilling confidence and strength” in Robert W. Hovda, “The Amen Corner: There’s Nothing Like a Professional Musician!” Worship 60:5 (September 1986), 451.

in spite of the rhetoric that attends it, bears scant relation to evangelization and dying and rising with Christ. It is driven by institutional fear of death and self-preservation by means of musical hype.


141. The Notre Dame Study of Catholic Parish Life confirms the connection of hymnals and sensitive choirs, cantors, and organists to congregational participation. See Edward Foley, “When American Roman Catholics Sing,” 99–100. I had not seen missaltee in Roman Catholic churches for some time but just saw some again recently; maybe I’m wrong.

142. For a thumbnail summary see the Milwaukee Symposia, ¶ 4, where this progression is given: translation to English, popular idioms, scriptural texts, broader Christian repertoire, and improved standards.

143. This is what the Milwaukee Symposia’s introductory paragraph seems to suggest by “an ongoing commitment to the active participation of every Christian in the liturgy” (italics mine).

144. “. . . present in this world yet not at home in it”—SC, ¶ 2.

145. Both Catholics and Protestants now face a sleeper they have only dimly perceived, if at all. Both, in a legitimate concern about the negative aspects of habit’s just-going-through-the-motions, are tempted to reduce active participation to feelings of the heart and music to the means to induce them. This temptation not only neglects the value and necessity of human habit (understanding the importance of habit is a Catholic gift to the ecumenical church), but it also avoids full, active, and conscious participation as much as just-going-through-the-motions does.


147. Ibid., 261–262, and Robert W. Hovda, “The Amen Corner: The Relevance of the Liturgy,” Worship 64:5 (September 1990), 447. See also Robert W. Hovda, “The Amen Corner: Historical Studies and Contemporary Worship,” Worship 60:2 (March 1986), 165, where Hovda says, “Right now we are in the early stages of a comprehensive reform effort, designed by a council of the church to get us back on the pilgrim path of neverending renewal.”

Liturgical Music as Theological Discourse: Analogy, the Human Body, and Ecclesiology

EDWARD FOLEY, CAPUCHIN

It is traditional to approach the study of worship music from an historical perspective.¹ The bulk of published scholarship on liturgical music in the West clearly relies on historical methodologies.² Over the past few decades, however, there has been a shift within the musicological establishment itself regarding the appropriate methodology for the study of ritual music in general and worship music in particular.³ This shift has resulted in a growing number of studies employing anthropological or ethnomusicological rather than historical methods.⁴ While historical studies and those employing methods borrowed from the social sciences continue to be important, by themselves they are inadequate for those who wish to reflect theologically on the meaning and role of liturgical music in a community of faith. It is this theological dimension which continues to be the least explored aspect of liturgical music in the West, even among scholars whose work on the topic is explicitly faith-based. This essay is part of my continuing effort to address that lacuna.

The basic presupposition of this article is that liturgical music is a privileged form of theological discourse which both expresses and shapes belief. Masked within that statement is a seldom asked—much less answered—question which generates the primary concern of this article: What is an appropriate method for interpreting the nature of the belief that is expressed and created in liturgical music, particularly through its non-textual elements? In response to that question, I propose that an analogical form of interpretation is both an appropriate and useful method for understanding the nature of belief that is expressed and created in the

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The basic presupposition of this article is that liturgical music is a privileged form of theological discourse which both expresses and shapes belief. In particular, an analogical interpretation which highlights the similarity-in-difference between the human body and the musical-liturgical event is of special value when attempting to interpret the belief mediated by the musical-liturgical event.

In order to make this point more clearly in the limited space available here, it will be necessary to narrow the discussion on a number of fronts. First of all, there are many perspectives to the “belief” mediated in worship. Margaret Mary Kelleher offers a useful framework for addressing these perspectives when she notes that a “public world of meaning must be distinguished from the meanings that are personally appropriated by members of the assembly as well as from the meanings identified in official texts or commentaries on a rite.” This essay will focus only on public “meaning” or belief, rather than those which might be considered private or official.

Aside from this belief perspective, there are also many foci or “objects” of the belief mediated by the musical-liturgical event—for example, belief about the Trinity, Christ, and salvation. This essay will focus on the beliefs about the church that arise within the musical-liturgical event. Finally, although there are many formal aspects of music that deserve attention in such an analysis—for example, harmony, rhythm, text, and tonality—we will limit our discussion to musical forms. Thus, this essay will be an attempt to demonstrate how an analogical interpretation which draws similarities-in-differences between the form of liturgical music and the human body can reveal the public meaning or belief[s] about the church that are mediated by such music in the musical-liturgical event.

Some Presuppositions

There are a number of presuppositions which undergird this enterprise. While none of these can be explicated with any thoroughness here, certain key suppositions do need to be acknowledged. The validity of the method presently suggested, in no small measure, is contingent upon the cogency of these presuppositions.

*Liturgy is a theological act which both expresses and creates belief:* A broad range of contemporary theologians admit that liturgy is a theological event of the first order. Liturgy, in this sense, is not theology in the abstract but is effectively linked to the belief of the worshipers. As Kevin Irwin summarizes, “Liturgy is an act of theology . . . whereby the believing church addresses God, enters into dialogue with God, makes statements about its belief in God and symbolizes this belief through a variety of means.” For Roman Catholics this theological assertion finds dogmatic affirmation in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, which notes that the liturgy is the summit and fount of the church’s activity (no. 10), and the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, which recognizes that liturgy “is carried out through perceptible signs that nourish, strengthen, and express faith” (no. 20).

*Liturgy is a symbolic event:* Two dominant emphases in liturgical theology at the close of the twentieth century are the symbolic and the dynamic nature of liturgy. David Power well synopsizes these empha-
eses when he writes: “Liturgy is not simply a word. It is an act, an act for which symbolic language is the necessary medium.” One of the more lucid magisterial affirmations of at least part of this presupposition for Roman Catholics is the 1972 statement by the U.S. bishops, *Music in Catholic Worship*, which concludes: “People in love make signs of love, not only to express their love but also to deepen it. Love never expressed dies. Christians’ love for Christ and for each other, Christians’ faith in Christ and in each other, must be expressed in the signs and symbols of celebration or they will die” (n. 4).

*Music is a dynamic symbol that is integral to the liturgy:* There is a long philosophical tradition for admitting music as a dynamic symbol. More recently, semioticians have reckoned with the essentially symbolic nature of music. This perspective is epitomized in Jean-Jacques Nattiez’s reference to music as “a symbolic fact.” While magisterial documents do not always clearly distinguish between “signs” and “symbols,” such documents do affirm the symbolic nature of music. Thus *Music in Catholic Worship* admits music as preeminent “among the signs and symbols used by the Church to celebrate its faith” (no. 23). Such documents, however, are more explicit and groundbreaking when it comes to asserting the integral relationship between the liturgy and music.

This sequence of presuppositions provides the basis for the underlying assertion about liturgical music as a privileged form of theological discourse which both expresses and shapes belief. For if liturgy itself is a theological act which both expresses and creates faith, if it does so—at least in part—because of its symbolic nature, and if music is an integral symbol in this event, then liturgical music is itself part of the theological act we call the liturgy and can be considered a form of theological discourse of the first order.

The consequence of these presuppositions and this fundamental assertion is that liturgical music needs to be interpreted and evaluated differently than, for example, concert music which is not a theological event of the same order. If context is text, as Irwin asserts, then the integral relationship of the liturgy with its music renders the liturgical music itself as theological discourse of the same order as the liturgy which serves as its context. Thus liturgical music requires properly theological and not simply historical, musicological or ethnomusicological analysis and explanation. Liturgical music expresses and creates—not simply socially or politically—but theologically.

Ascertaining the meaning of such symbolic expressing and creating, however, is problematic. The ambiguity and opacity of the symbolic is both celebrated and notorious. As Paul Ricoeur noted in his now famous aphorism, symbols both reveal and conceal. The hermeneutical challenge, therefore, is to employ an interpretive scheme that respects this ambiguity without being immobilized by it. Ricoeur himself provides an important insight for developing such a method in his definition of symbol and its function. He argues that, unlike perfectly transparent technical signs, symbolic signs are opaque “because the first, literal, obvious meaning itself points analogically to a second meaning, which is not given otherwise than in it.” There is, in his words, an “analogical bond” between the literal and the symbolic meaning. It is an analogical form of
interpretation, therefore, which appears at least helpful if not promising for interpreting symbols in general and the symbol of music in the musical-liturgical event in particular.

Before presenting such an analogical interpretation, it is necessary to offer a brief introduction to the nature of analogy. After this introduction, it seems appropriate to indicate why the human body is a suitable point of comparison and contrast for an analogical interpretation of liturgical music from the viewpoint of public meaning or belief about the church.

**Analogy**

Originating with the Greeks, analogy or *analogos* first appeared as a mathematical term where it signified numeric proportion. Plato (+347 BCE) was the first to employ analogy in a philosophical rather than mathematical manner. He used it in epistemological and ontological arguments to signify proportionality (i.e., the similarity of relations, as between knowledge/opinion = thinking/imaging), and proportion (i.e., direct similarity, as between things and ideas). Aristotle (+322 BCE), whom some have called the "father of analogy," continued to employ the term according to its previous usage, even expanded its usage particularly in the natural sciences, but made his major contribution in the realm of logic. Concerned as he was about the form of argument, Aristotle recognized in the principle of proportionality a tool that would permit the use of different terms which were yet sufficiently similar to allow an argument to carry through from one premise to another and hence be part of our reliable knowledge. Aristotle thus provided an inductive form of argumentation which asserts that if two or more entities are similar in one or more aspects, then a reliable probability exists that they will be similar in other respects.

It was with Proclus (+485 CE) and especially Pseudo-Dionysius (c. 500 CE) that the term analogy entered into theological discourse, particularly as an aid to achieving knowledge of God and as a means for transferring a concept from one sphere of reality to another. The term eventually migrated from Greek theologians to the Latin West, but it is only with the high scholastics that analogy was employed as a formal category in theology.

Thomas Aquinas (+1274) is of particular importance in the theological exploitation of analogical reasoning, especially for developing an extensive and credible explanation of how people may responsibly speak about God. Aquinas does so, however, in various works, employing many different divisions of analogy, frequently giving different names to the same division, and using a single example to illustrate different modes of analogy. The resulting confusion has lead some commentators (e.g., Cajetan +1534) to reduce Aquinas to a precise, metaphysical method. As Burrell has noted, however, this is not how analogical reasoning operates in Aquinas himself. It is not a method, he insists, but a skill "demanding continual exercise to keep toned to a discriminating expertise." Thus, Burrell concludes that analogy is not a device guaranteeing results, but a family of techniques useful in leading us to un-
standing. It is in this spirit that David Tracy notes the need for an analogical imagination in the interpretive work of contemporary theology. He writes:

Systematic theological analogical language . . . is a second-order reflective language reexpressing the meanings of the originating religious event and its original religious language to and for a reflective mind: a mind searching for some order, yet recognizing, at every moment in its search, the irreducible tension at the heart of its own participatory and distancing experience of the originating event as an event of a disclosure-concealment to focus the entire search; a mind, recognizing, therefore, the ultimate incomprehensibility of the event that provides the focal meaning for developing both analogies-in-difference and order from chaos; a mind also recognizing the self-constituting, dynamic demands of the spirit of inquiry's ownmost need for critical reflection and the human mind's and heart's need for some similarities-in-difference, some analogues, some principles of order, some ultimate harmony in the whole of reality. 

Tracy's conception of "systematic theological analogical language" is quite compatible with contemporary liturgical theology on a number of key points. The first of these is the previously noted presupposition that the worship event itself—rather than language about the event—is the central theological act. Second, this event of the first order, by virtue of its symbolic form, both discloses and reveals. In the language of the New Testament, the liturgical event is misterion (Colossians 2:2), that is, a divine secret in the process of being revealed. Finally, it is in the tension of celebrating the incomprehensible in worship while longing to unite with this mystery with our heart and mind that we search for some orderly commentary, some systematic re-expression of the meaning of the musical-liturgical event. Such second-order systematic re-expression, however, while providing useful interpretation, does not achieve absolute clarity, nor does it replace the primacy of the liturgical event itself. The purported clear and distinct, the all-too-ordered and certain, in such discourse is, ironically, "the deadening, undisclosive and untransformative world of the dead analogies . . . committed to certitude, not understanding." Thus, we will employ analogy here less as a strict method and more as what Burrell calls a skill that demands its continual and critical exercise so that it might evolve to a discriminating expertise.

The Human Body

In recommending analogical language as classic theological language par excellence, Tracy notes that the order among the relationships in an analogy is constituted by the distinct but similar relationships of each analogue to some prime analogue. That prime analogue for Christian systematics, according to Tracy, is the event of Jesus Christ. Such is also the prime analogue for liturgical theology and theological reflections upon the music that is integral to the liturgical event.

While it is not the only image that could be employed here, the human
body is chosen as an image of comparison and contrast in the current interpretive exercise because of its strong resonance with this prime analogue. The Greek word for the body—soma—occurs almost 150 times in the New Testament. More important than the sheer frequency of usage, however, are the significant references to the body of Jesus Christ. It was his body that was anointed (Matthew 26:12), crucified (Romans 7:4) and buried (Matthew 27:57–58). It was through his physical body that he communicated revelation and healing (Mark 3:10), and in his glorious body that he appeared to believers (Philippians 3:21). Most dramatically, Jesus identified his own body with a shared piece of bread (Mark 14:23) and, by extension, with believers shaped as disciples in the sharing of that bread.

The body of Jesus was such a powerful image for the early church that it was often employed to disclose the meaning of what it is to be church (e.g. Ephesians 1:22–23). In particular, Paul employs the image of the body in a series of metaphorical—even analogical—discourses, in an attempt to draw the Corinthian community into a more authentic ecclesial life: "The body is one and has many members, but all the members, many though they are, are one body: and so it is with Christ."33

Christianity continues this metaphorical and analogical reliance on body imagery for its worship and its reflection on that worship. While the popularity of this imagery waned after the so-called patristic period and through the middle ages, it has reemerged as a key theological and ecclesial metaphor in the later part of the second millennium. The reasons for this reemergence are manifold. These include the influence of social sciences like psychology which emphasize the importance of the body for self-perception and identity;34 philosophies like phenomenology which challenge the duality between body and soul and instead emphasize not only that people have a body, but also that they are their body;35 political theory in which the human body serves not only as a political metaphor but also is recognized as a political factor;36 theologies which employ a strong incarnational lens in order to emphasize that the body is a vehicle of grace rather than a source of temptation that must be subdued or ignored;37 and particularly liturgical or sacramental theologies which as a specification of their symbolic assertion note the body as a central—even critical—symbol in the liturgical-sacramental event.38

Dogmatically and liturgically there has been a revitalization of body imagery in Roman Catholicism, particularly around the foundational metaphor of the body of Christ. In his 1943 encyclical Mystici Corporis, Pius XII (+1958) reasserted belief in the Roman Catholic Church as the mystical body of Christ. In the Second Vatican Council’s dogmatic constitution Gaudium et Spes, this image is reaffirmed and extended, at least in part, to other churches. In Lumen Gentium, the Council declared that the church is not only integral to a definition of the body of Christ, but the assembly itself is a manifestation of that presence (no. 7). And the reinsertion of the ancient formula Corpus Christi—with all of its ambiguity—into the Ordo Missae of Paul VI (1969) is ritually significant.39 This Christic body metaphor for elements and assembly, bread and recipient, head and members enjoys unusual vigor and vibrancy in contemporary liturgical, dogmatic, and theological discourse.
As Tracy recognizes, the prime analogue for Christian systematics—and for any theology worthy of the name Christian—is the event of Jesus Christ. Thus it serves as the prime analogue for this hermeneutical venture. In selecting secondary analogues for assessing the belief mediated by the musical-liturgical event, it seems appropriate to choose those consonant with the event of Jesus Christ. This brief survey suggests that “body” has such resonance with the Christ event and recommends itself in this analogical enterprise. In particular, the biblical, liturgical, and theological precedents for employing body as a metaphor for the church suggest its usefulness in this interpretive venture, which attempts to articulate beliefs about the church.

**Embodying the Musical Forms**

One way to link body and musical form in this analogical exercise is through the embodied musical art of conducting. The conductor is an artist who leads and coordinates the musical ensemble, especially by indicating the meter and tempo, signaling entries for the various voices or instruments, shaping the particular moments or phrases in a work, and providing a coherent interpretation of the music. These tasks are achieved in large measure through gestures, especially with the hands. Without providing a comprehensive overview of conducting styles, a few caricatures of hand usage in conducting will serve as the basis of our first analogy between the body and musical forms.

Chironomy is an ancient form of conducting, often employed in cultures lacking musical notation, which uses hand movements to suggest an outline of the melody with its approximate pitches for singers. It is a form of conducting long associated with Gregorian chant. Iconographic evidence from the middle ages suggests that when chironomy was used to conduct liturgical chant in Christianity, the conductors in this style did not use both hands to direct but only their right hand. Making the analogical turn, if one considers the conductor’s left hand to be a metaphor for the assembly and the right hand to be a metaphor for the specialists who performed this music, chironomy serves as an embodied musical analogy for a through-composed music form which requires performance by one member but which does not need or incorporate the other member. Broadly speaking, this is true in those forms of through-composed solo or choral work in contemporary liturgy, which the assembly hears but in which they do not actively participate.

A later form of conducting, employed in Northern Europe when musicians did have precise musical notation, concentrated on supplying the beat. One way this task was carried out was by the conductor marking the beat in the air with synchronized hands. Again making the analogical turn, in this musical embodiment the synchronized movement of both the right and the left hands is analogous to the musical-liturgical moment in which the assembly and the musical specialists are in complete synchronization with no differentiation between their roles. A musical form in contemporary liturgy which would reflect a similar situation is the monophonic hymn or chorale in which choir and congregation sing the unadorned melody together.
With the advent of more sophisticated symphonic composition in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, musical ensembles required more than a clear beat from their leaders. It was now necessary to include hand signals for things like dynamics and phrasing. While most direction was supplied with the right hand that held the baton, the left hand was increasingly employed, especially for indicating dynamics.\textsuperscript{46} This dominance of the right hand accompanied by an independent though limited role for the left hand is analogous to responsorial forms of music in contemporary worship, in which the cantor has a more elaborate role than the rest of the assembly, but the congregational part of the assembly is yet essential to the performance of the work.

Finally, what might be considered a full-blown “Romantic” or virtuosic style of conducting\textsuperscript{47} requires the use of both hands in movement that is at once independent and at the same time integrated and harmonized with each other. This embodied performance practice could be considered an analogue to the ostinato style music of Jacques Berthier (d. 1994), composer for Taizé. Berthier’s music requires the \textit{cantus firmus} of the congregation, as true as the steady meter of the right hand, but it also requires the improvisation and elaboration of various musical specialists, like the weaving of the conductor’s left hand. Intentional in this analogical move is the congregation’s metaphorical shift from the left hand to the right hand; for in Berthier’s music, it is possible to dispense with all of the musical specialists but not with the song of the whole assembly. The latter does not simply provide pleasant musical adornment but sings the essential song, which allows and invites but does not require the musical adornment of the professional musician.

Restating this analogical progression, we imagined the embodiment of musical forms in terms of the participation they allow, through various styles of conducting:

\begin{tabular}{ll}

\textbf{Chironomy} & \textbf{Through composed form} \\
active right hand/ & active musical specialists/ \\
passive left hand & passive congregation \\

\textbf{Conducting the beat} & \textbf{Hymn form} \\
synchronized right and left hands & synchronized/identical participation by musical specialists and the rest of the assembly \\

\textbf{Symphonic conducting} & \textbf{Responsorial form} \\
dominance of right hand with baton, independent though limited role for left hand & dominant role by musical specialist, independent though limited role for the rest of the assembly \\

\textbf{Virtuosic conducting} & \textbf{Ostinato form} \\
equal role for both hands which are independent but harmonized and integrated & equal yet differentiated roles for musical specialists and the rest of the assembly
\end{tabular}

Considering these conducting styles and parallel musical forms from
the viewpoint of Christian belief, especially belief about the church, we return to Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians. In his analogical discourse on the body in that letter, Paul asserted that all members are one body (1 Corinthians 12:12), that these members are meant to be different (12:14–21), and that each member of the body is indispensable (12:22). Presuming that Paul’s analogy is an appropriate way to image what it means to be the body of Christ, the parallel values of unity, differentiation, and indispensability appear to be more clearly embodied in a virtuosic conducting style than in chironomy, for example. By analogy, it is reasonable to suggest that musical forms such as Berthier’s ostinato compositions which engage both the right and the left hand (i.e., the whole assembly and its musical specialists) more clearly reflect Paul’s image of the body of Christ than musical forms in which only one hand (e.g., a soloist) performs. Such fully engaged forms would seem to embody a fuller and richer definition of church than other forms.

This is not to suggest that there is no place in our liturgical music for one-handed musical performance, e.g., music by soloists or other musical specialists who do not directly engage the rest of the liturgical assembly. Rather, the performance of liturgical music, like the embodied art of conducting, needs to be evaluated in terms of its pattern and not simply as isolated moments. There are times in a virtuosic style of conducting when the left hand drops to the side, or when the two hands are synchronized, or when the right hand dominates. So too, there are times in musical liturgy when solo forms, unison forms, and responsorial forms are appropriate. The idealized pattern, however, is one in which the right and the left hand—the assembly and its musical specialists—weave their art together in a harmonious yet differentiated whole. Musical forms which allow and enable such differentiated harmony of members and their usage as a pattern would seem to reflect a full-bodied image of church consonant with that articulated by Paul.

Aware that symbols not only express but create or, in the language of Ricoeur, actually give rise to thought, we must further admit that liturgical symbols like music and their musical form not only express belief but create it. Thus, the patterned employment of single-handed musical forms as a predominant motif creates an implicit belief in the dispensability of the other at the very heart of our identity. While the conciliar documents do emphasize the active participation of the faithful (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy [CSL], no. 14), they also underscore the value of musical specialists (CSL, no. 114). Our virtuosic conducting analogy, like Paul’s body analogy, suggests that both are important ecclesially. Single-handed musical forms have traditionally excluded the congregational part of the liturgical assembly, but today they can just as often exclude the musical specialist. Both seem necessary for the full virtuosic event we call the liturgy. In the language of Paul, this variety in unity is a manifestation of the Spirit, “who produces all these gifts, distributing them to each as he wills” (1 Cor. 12:11).

One can make this point with a different analogy also dependent on body imagery, by moving from images of the conductor to that of the Christian standing in prayer. Ancient iconography illustrates that the appropriate stance for prayer was the so-called orans position, with arms

Such fully engaged forms would seem to embody a fuller and richer definition of church than other forms.
outstretched and palms facing upwards. Imaging the congregation as one arm and hand of this praying figure and the musical specialist as the other, an analogy drawn from the orans position suggests that both arms and hands are required for the performance of this praying stance. Praying in full-bodied, orans position is not a single-handed move. By analogy, the musical-liturgical forms which also purport to be full-bodied and of the whole Body of Christ also cannot be single-handed. Rather they require the engagement of the distinctive yet complementary arms of musical specialists and the rest of the assembly.

Given the musical-liturgical forms which have dominated the official liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church since the early middle ages, one could argue that we have been singing with one arm tied behind our back or one hand in our pocket. That arm or hand has been the congregational part of the liturgical assembly. Thus the musical-liturgical forms that have dominated our worship have not only been one-handed but maybe even heavy-handed. In the current moment of the reform, at least in many dominant-culture U.S. Roman Catholic Churches, the arm and hand of the congregation have been untied; it is also being exercised. In order to bring it to the same strength as the other hand, it is sometimes exercised more than its mirror arm and hand. While such action is understandable, the analogy of the virtuosic conductor or the orans position suggests that the arm and hand of the specialist should not be allowed to atrophy while the congregation exercises its musical arm and flexes it postconciliar liturgical muscles.

From the viewpoint of musical forms, this suggests that a pattern of musical forms needs to be employed which exercises all quadrants of the musical-liturgical body. At the same time, the vision of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy and of subsequent documents suggests a certain primacy about the participation of the whole assembly and their central role as fundamentally definitional for authentic Roman Catholic liturgy. In terms of our conducting analogy, this suggests a bit of a hand reversal: The right hand which supplies the critical beat now symbolizes the congregation, not the musical specialists. Thus does the hoped-for virtuosic conducting pattern which helps orchestrate authentic Roman Catholic liturgy intimate a primacy of musical forms which similarly places the actively engaged assembly at the core of the musical-liturgical event.

The Form of Interpretation

It is possible to spin out further analogies between musical forms and the human body in order to provide a reasonable interpretation of the meaning of such musical forms and the musical-liturgical participation they allow in terms of the belief they express and generate about what it means to be church during the liturgical event. One could, for example, explore the image of the organist as a paradigm not only of liturgical musicianship and then musical form but also the organist's coordinated, full-bodied performance as a type of embodied ecclesiology: hands and feet moving together in coordinated yet independent movement, producing a wondrous harmony. In a similar fashion, one could play with
the imagery of dance, musical forms, participation, and beliefs about the church. The point here, however, is not so much finding the right analogy, as suggesting that an analogical form of interpretation itself is of particular value in attempting to assess the faith impact of the music we employ in liturgy.

The symbols we use in the liturgy are not neutral conduits of some predetermined faith or doctrine. Rather, they are dynamic media for such faith and doctrine, shaping these even as they reveal them. Those who engage in the art of liturgical music have some responsibility to attend to this shaping and revelation. While some people are relatively attentive to the discursive, textual elements of our liturgical music, far fewer are attentive to the non-textual musical elements which also are revelatory and discursive. It is precisely the non-discursive nature of the latter, however, which renders them more resistant to a reasonable and shared interpretation. Analogy may be one of the best interpretive strategies in view of the opacity of these forms. Furthermore, an analogical approach that attempts to explore the similarity-in-difference between musical forms, the human body, participation, and implied ecclesiologies seems a promising avenue for achieving an interpretation of these forms that is both reasonable and capable of being shared fruitfully. While not a precise method, this skill could aid us in appreciating further how our liturgical-musical artwork is, indeed, revelation.

Notes

1. I am grateful to my colleague, Prof. Richard Fragomeni, for his help in the preparation of this article.


3. There is no generally accepted taxonomy of terms for this discussion. Ritual music is employed here as a generic term for any music that is wed to some ritual action and serves to reveal the significance of that action. Worship music is a particular genre of ritual music, which specifies the ritual as worship. Given the Roman Catholic context of both the author and the original audience for this material, the focus will be limited to the narrower genre of ritual music and worship music known as liturgical music, which can be defined as that music which unifies with the liturgical action, serves to reveal the full significance of the liturgy, and, in turn, derives its full meaning from the liturgical event and not simply from its liturgical setting. For a related taxonomic discussion, see my “Liturgical Music” in Peter Fink, ed., The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1990), 854.


5. David Tracy defines analogy as “a language of ordered relationships articulating similarity-in-difference” in David Tracy, The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1981), 408. Tracy’s articulation will serve as the basic definition for analogy for this essay.

6. Kelleher defines “public meaning” thus: “In its liturgical praxis an assembly mediates a public horizon, a world of meaning which provides a context for the assembly’s worship. This public world of meaning must be distinguished from the meanings that are personally appropriated by members of the assembly as well as from the meanings identified in official texts or commentaries on a rite, since individuals may not appropriate all that is publicly mediated and liturgical praxis may mediate meanings that are not included in the official rite.” Margaret Mary Kelleher, “Liturgical Theology: A Task and a Method,” Worship 62:1 (1988), 6.

7. In one sense the term “musical form” encompasses all elements of a musical composition, including its melody, rhythm, harmonies, etc. Thus “to change even a single
pitch or rhythm ... changes the shape of that composition, even if only in detail” (Don Randel, ed., *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music* [Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 1986], s.v. “form”). On the other hand, “form” is also employed more simply to mean “the structure and design of a composition” (Michael Kennedy, *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 2nd ed. [New York: Oxford University Press, 1994], s.v. “form”). It is in this latter, more generic sense that we will employ the term “musical form.”


10. This affirmation was previously made in a 1968 statement of the U.S. bishops, *The Place of Music in Eucharistic Celebrations*, and reaffirmed in the 1983 revision of *Music in Catholic Worship*.


13. For example, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, no. 112.


17. Ibid.

18. From the Greek words logos and ana. As Battista Mondin notes, the former signifies both a concept and a word expressing a concept. The latter is a prefix with several shades of meaning. “The meaning that seems most appropriate in its composition with [logos] are the notion of a backward relation, roughly corresponding to the prefix retro in Latin. Thus in this strictly etymological sense, [analogos] signifies a reciprocal relation between ideas.” Battista Mondin, *The Principle of Analogy in Protestant and Catholic Theology*, 2nd rev. ed. (Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968), 1, n. 3.

19. A extant fragment from the writings of Archytas (fl. 400–350 BCE) differentiates among the harmonic, arithmetical, and geometric analogy: 1) the harmonic, which played no part in subsequent philosophy, is a sequence of numbers whose reciprocals form an arithmetical progression; 2) the arithmetical analogy or series is one in which there is an analogical likeness in distance between the middle number and the number which precedes and follows [e.g., 1–3–5]; 3) the geometric analogy or proportionality is one in which two couples of numbers interrelate in the same way [e.g., 1:5:5:25]. Hampus Lyttkens, *The Analogy between God and the World* [Uppsala: A.B. Lundequist, 1952], 16.


23. Lyttkens, 98ff.

24. Ibid., 123.


26. Mondin, 35.


30. Ibid., 413.

31. Besides analogical language, Tracy believes that dialectical language also functions as a classical theological language par excellence. Tracy, 408.

32. Ibid., 408.

37. This is particularly true in many feminist theologians, for example, Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel, I Am My Body: A Theology of Embodiment (New York: Continuum, 1997).
39. The text accompanying Communion for the 1570 Ordo Missae was much less ambiguous, seemingly identifying the “body of Christ” only with the elements and not with the communicant, minister, and entire action of communion: “Corpus Domini nostri Jesu Christi custodiat animam meam in vitam aeternam. Amen.” It is also noteworthy that the communicant had no verbal response in this formula, whereas the 1969 text returns the affirmative “Amen” to the people.
42. Ambrosius Kienle, “Notizen über das Dirigiren mittelalterlicher Gesangsköre,” Vierteljahrschrift für Musikwissenschaft 1 (1885), 161.
43. Gregorian chant was not usually sung by ordinary worshipers but by choirs of monks, canons, or other musical specialists.
44. Through-composed music may be defined as that “without internal repetitions, especially with respect to the setting of a strophic or other text that might imply the repetition of music for different words.” s.v. The New Harvard Dictionary of Music, ed. Don Michael Randel (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1986).
45. There is a famous engraving of a conductor using two rolled up pieces of paper to beat time in Johann Christoph Weigel, Musikalisches Theatrum (1720). See the facsimile edition, edited by Alfred Beinner (New York-Barenreiter: Kassel, 1961), plate 17.
46. In this century, the reserved conducting style of Arturo Toscanini (d. 1957) was heralded as a return to this earlier, less ‘Romantic’ form of conducting.
47. Epitomized in the twentieth century by Leonard Bernstein (d. 1990).
49. Figures assuming this position are depicted on some of the oldest Christian sarcophagi and on the vaults of cubicies in catacombs such as those of Priscilla. An excellent introduction to these sources can be found in the two-volume Encyclopedia of the Early Church, ed. Angelo Di Berardino, trans. Adrian Walford (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), s.v. orans.
50. Environment and Art in Catholic Worship makes a particular point about the “primacy of the assembly” (nos. 28, 41).
Robert Walker Hovda (1920–1992), a presbyter of the Diocese of Fargo, North Dakota, and a leader of the liturgical movement in the United States, was a strong voice for truth, beauty, and compassion in church and society.

A teacher, editor, writer, speaker, and presider at the liturgy for many communities, Father Hovda was once warned by his bishop to slow down a bit. "You have a messiah complex," the bishop said. Hovda replied: "I thought we were supposed to."

The National Association of Pastoral Musicians has chosen to honor the memory and work of Father Hovda through a series of “Hovda Lectures” presented at its biennial national convention.

This volume contains the second set of those lectures, delivered at the 2003 NPM National Convention in Cincinnati, Ohio, plus an additional essay of scholarly and pastoral significance. These essays reflect on the impact of the 1963 *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* on several aspects of the church’s life: the sacraments of initiation, catechesis, ecclesiology, inculturation, liturgical music, and theology.