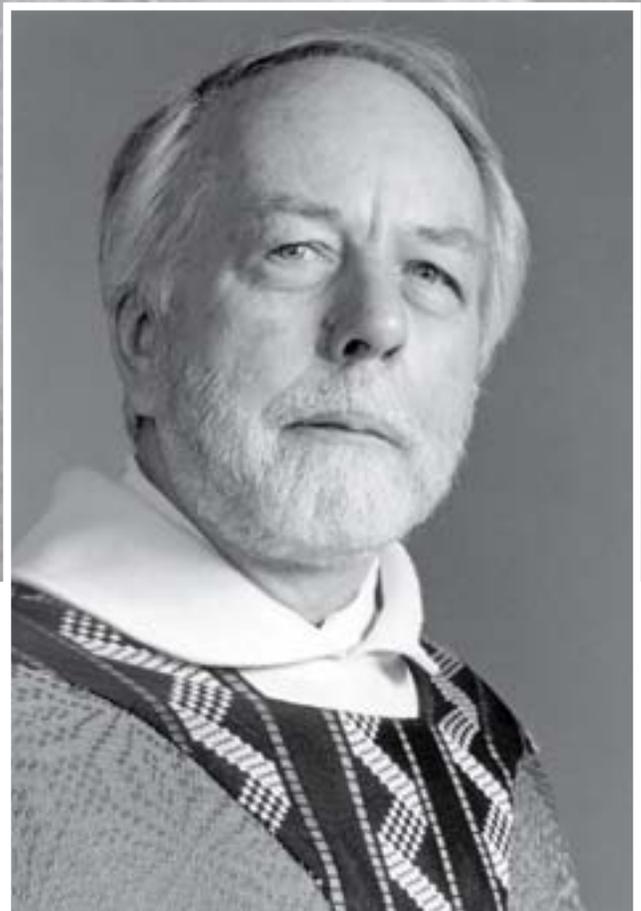


Musicam Sacram Revisited

Essays in Honor of Robert W. Hovda
Series IV



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Foreword

BY J. MICHAEL McMAHON

Among the documents that have guided the post-Vatican II liturgical renewal are five instructions “for the right implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council.” *Musicam Sacram* (MS), the second of these, was published in 1967, less than two years after the close of the Council yet two years prior to the publication of the revised *Roman Missal* of Pope Paul VI.

One of the most important reasons for publishing MS was the effort to promote active and authentic participation by the entire assembly in singing the liturgy. At the same time, the Consilium — the pontifical commission charged with developing applications of the Council’s Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy — that drafted MS wanted to emphasize the important roles of the priest and choir in liturgical song. While this document naturally places primary emphasis on the full, conscious, and active participation of the faithful, it also addresses issues such as the use of Gregorian chant and the preservation of the treasury of sacred music.

Before the Vatican II reforms, the distinction among solemn, sung, and read Masses was based on a rigid schema governing the parts to be sung. MS introduced the principle of “progressive solemnity,” which provided a certain degree of flexibility in choosing parts of the Mass to be sung while still maintaining (at that time) the distinction between solemn, sung, and read Masses.

MS expanded on the vision of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC, 1963) and provided concrete norms based on the liturgy constitution at the very same time that the Mass and other rites were being revised. More than forty years after the Council, one can only

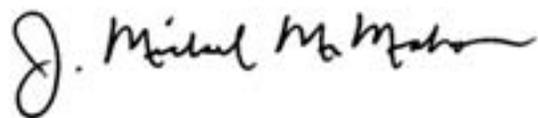
marvel at the enormity of the tasks faced in the early postconciliar days by those responsible for the numerous texts and translations of the rites, instructions, and other documents for the reform of the Mass and other ritual celebrations.

Planners for the 2007 NPM National Convention thought it timely to reflect back on MS on its fortieth anniversary and chose “*Musicam Sacram Revisited*” as the theme for this year’s Hovda Lectures. They made this decision for several reasons. First, many of the principles and norms of MS continue to influence official church directives on liturgical music. It has continued to be quoted or cited in many recent documents, including the third typical edition of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (2002) and the recently approved music guidelines of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship* (2007).

Another reason for revisiting MS is its place in the discourse on sacred music by scholars in the fields of liturgy and liturgical music. Various authors have expressed differing opinions regarding the authority of MS and its continuing relevance to the practice and development of music for the liturgy.

Convention planners chose five highly regarded scholars with different backgrounds and working in various settings to address several questions raised by the document. Although each was asked to examine a specific issue or set of issues, a look at the collected essays reveals not only attention to the various topics but also different approaches by the authors to understanding the document and its place in the life of the Church.

We hope that the essays in this volume will make a positive contribution to the ongoing dialogue among scholars and practitioners in the field of liturgical music. May that dialogue continue in a spirit of mutual respect and profound charity.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Michael McMahon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

J. Michael McMahon, President
National Association of Pastoral Musicians

Path to the Future or Anchor to the Past?

BY EDWARD FOLEY, CAPUCHIN

For those of us who do not have a place in the Church's *magisterium*, interpreting official documents on the liturgy can be risky business. It is risky because no interpretation is, from my perspective, a neutral event. Thus, the act of interpretation *de facto* not only reveals the skills or lack thereof of the interpreter but also some of her or his basic presuppositions about the Church, the liturgy, the *magisterium* itself, and myriad other theological and ecclesial realities.

My interpretive instincts were already at play when I accepted but re-titled this presentation. It was originally titled "*Musicam Sacram* Revisited: What Makes Music Sacred?" but I chose not to wade through that definitional thicket and instead want to consider to what extent *Musicam Sacram* remains a true guide in the liturgical reform forty years after its promulgation.

Others, I am sure, would title this presentation and interpret this document differently — actually, they must, because they are not me. My particular social location is as a middle-aged, Caucasian, ordained academic, who has taught for almost a quarter of a century in a graduate school of theology and ministry of sometimes mind-boggling diversity, who has for more than four decades belonged to a non-clerical religious community that eschews the hierarchical and emphasizes brother-sisterhood, who joined a boy's choir as a fourth grader, and who experienced the Second Vatican Council as a high school seminarian.

This social location renders my interpretation particular and unique, just as your social location does for you. Such does not, I hope, render my interpretation irrelevant or unhelpful. Rather, I hope it provides some context for understanding the particularities of this interpretation of *Musicam Sacram* and underscores the need for predicating some modesty about this and every interpretive act. My goal here is not first of all to persuade you as to

the accuracy and truth of my interpretation as much as it is to demonstrate something of its credibility. This is done not that you will by consequence agree with me but that you might, in turn, examine the presuppositions you bring to *Musicam Sacram* and other liturgical documents and ponder both the contextual and modest nature of your own interpretations of such documents. Such is essential, I believe, if—in the spirit of Cardinal Joseph Bernardin—we are to forge common ground and move the conversation of liturgical reform forward rather than being diverted by petty differences or bogged down in *ad hominem* skirmishes.

To that end, I wish to begin by locating the document itself historically. We need to understand something of what it was meant to achieve at the time of its promulgation. Contextualizing the document as well as recognizing the various literary strata in *Musicam Sacram* will allow us to judge something of its relevance in this era of a third *editio typica* of the Roman Missal and the third typical edition of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*.

***Musicam Sacram*: The Historical/Liturgical Context**

The occasion of this address (and not simply its topic) is the fortieth anniversary of *Musicam Sacram*, promulgated by the Sacred Congregation of Rites on March 5, 1967. Celebrating forty years of conciliar events is not new: In recent years we have celebrated the fortieth anniversary of the opening of the Council and, dearer to liturgists' hearts, the fortieth anniversary of the promulgation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (December 4, 1963). While by no means immune to the significance of such anniversaries, I think it is fair to suggest that some of us of a certain age may have forgotten—and those of another age maybe never experienced in the first place—the radical difference between our own liturgical and ecclesial context and that in which a document such as *Musicam Sacram* first emerged.

For example, *Musicam Sacram* continues to be invoked by some as a magisterial guide for decision making about music in the Mass of Paul VI. Hermeneutically that suggests that we are reading the current Order of Mass through the lens of *Musicam Sacram*. What may be surprising to some, however, is that *Musicam Sacram* was not written as a guide to the revised Order of Mass, which had not even been completely designed or approved when *Musicam Sacram* was promulgated. The revised Order of Mass, or what the Consilium called the “Normative Mass,”¹ was not publicly celebrated *ad experimentum* outside of the Consilium itself until the October 1967 synod of bishops;² it was not celebrated in the presence of the pope until January 1968;³ it was not approved by Pope Paul VI until November 1968;⁴ and it was not made public until May 1969.⁵ Now while it is true that the first instruction on the orderly carrying out of the Constitution on the Liturgy (*Inter Oecumenici*) did offer some modifications to the Order of Mass in 1964, these were nuances or changes of the Mass of Pius V (Tridentine Rite) and not the introduction of a new *Ordo Missae*. Thus in 1964 clergy were instructed:

- not to say privately those parts of the proper sung or recited by the choir or congregation (no. 48a);

- ❑ to omit Psalm 42 in the prayers at the foot of the altar (no. 48f);
- ❑ to read the Word facing the people (no. 49);
- ❑ to insert the prayer of the faithful "before the offertory" if allowed by the competent territorial authority (no. 56);
- ❑ and to use the vernacular at designated moments in the rite, if approved by the competent ecclesiastical authority and confirmed by the Holy See (no. 57).

What is clear, however, is that these are changes in the Tridentine Rite and not a new Order of Mass. Thus, in opening the section on the celebration of the Mass, *Inter Oecumenici* notes that "until reform of the entire *Ordo Missae*" (no. 48) takes place, these instructions are to be observed. When the new *Ordo* was promulgated in 1969, however, many of the particulars of *Inter Oecumenici* were superseded by the appearance of a new rite.

Since *Musicam Sacram* is explicit in noting that it is "not a collection of all the legislation on sacred music, but a statement simply of the principal norms that seem most needed at the present time" (no. 3), it is clear that *Musicam Sacram* was designed as a commentary on the hybrid Tridentine Rite that was in force in March 1967. For the United States that meant the rite published in the *Roman Missal* of 1964 which contained approved English translations for things like the "Lord, have mercy," "Glory to God," the dialogue before the Gospel, and the "creed." Be assured, however, that it was still the Tridentine Rite, as clearly announced in its title: *Missale Romanum ex decreto Sacrosancti Concilii Tridentini Restitutum Summorum Pontificum cura recognitum cum versionibus Lingua Anglica exaratis et a Coetu Episcoporum Civitatum Foederatarum Americae Septentrionalis rite approbatis actis ab Apostolica Sede confirmatis*.⁶ That means that it was a rite with prayers at the foot of the altar, no revised lectionary, an offertory rather than preparation of the gifts and table, a single Canon rather than newly shaped Eucharistic Prayers, no Communion under both forms, and subdeacons in the sanctuary.

From a musical perspective, this means that *Musicam Sacram* provides norms for the celebration of Mass in which there were official distinctions between solemn, high, and low Mass (no. 28)—distinctions which no longer exist in the Mass of Paul VI. *Musicam Sacram* provides norms for the celebration of Mass which continued to define the ordinary and the proper of the Mass (nos. 33 and 34) according to a medieval framework,⁷ while these have been significantly reshaped and redefined in current liturgical books and instructions.⁸ And maybe most surprising, *Musicam Sacram*—like *Sacrosanctum Concilium* itself—has a vision of diocesan worship in which there are two forms of celebration: one in Latin and the other in the vernacular (no. 50). Thus, as Annibale Bugnini writes, "when the Constitution allowed the introduction of the vernaculars, it necessarily anticipated that the preservation of this 'treasure of sacred music' would be dependent solely on celebrations in Latin."⁹

It is unquestionable that we are in a changed liturgical and ecclesial environment from that which generated *Musicam Sacram* and that the very musical-liturgical structures for which *Musicam Sacram* is providing norms and directions have themselves changed—and sometimes changed dramatically. Does this mean that *Musicam Sacram* no longer holds ecclesial weight and is easily dismissed or ignored? The answer, of course, is no. This second

Musicam Sacram—like *Sacrosanctum Concilium* itself—has a vision of diocesan worship in which there are two forms of celebration: one in Latin and the other in the vernacular.

instruction on the implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy is still an important document, it continues to be the most comprehensive postconciliar statement from the Vatican on music, and it needs to be reckoned with. At the same time, such reckoning has to proceed in an intelligent and nuanced manner.

Interpreting *Musicam Sacram*

Canon 17 of the *Code of Canon Law* provides direction for interpreting all ecclesiastical law, including liturgical law. While *Musicam Sacram* is much more than a juridical decree, it does contain legislative as well as theological, historical, and exhortative material. Thus the advice from the *Code* could be useful here. Canon 17 reads:

Ecclesiastical laws are to be understood in accord with the proper meaning of the words considered in their text and context. If the meaning remains doubtful and obscure, recourse is to be taken to parallel passages, if such exist, to the purpose and the circumstances of the law, and to the mind of the legislator.¹⁰

Now maybe for you the proper meaning of all of the words in *Musicam Sacram* is crystal clear and needs no further interpretation or recourse to context, purpose, and circumstances of the law or the mind of the legislator. I have to admit, however, that all is not so clear to me. Thus, I wish to explore one small but important section of *Musicam Sacram* in order to understand how such a document is to be interpreted and in service of my larger question: Is this document simply an anchor to the past, or is it a true pathway to the future of liturgical reform?

The passage on which I wish to focus is in the third section of the document, entitled “Singing during Mass.” In that section *Musicam Sacram* speaks of “degrees of solemnity” within the sung Mass. This concept is offered so that, in the words of the document, “it will become easier, in accord with each congregation’s capabilities, to make the celebration of Mass more solemn through the use of singing” (no. 28).¹¹

This concept appears to be related to an idea developed in the 1958 instruction from the Sacred Congregation of Rites, *De Musica Sacra*. However, that document—which is not referenced at this point in *Musicam Sacram*—does not speak of degrees of solemnity but rather of three “stages” which are intended to help accomplish the active participation of the faithful in the singing of a solemn Mass (no. 25). These “stages” provide different priorities than those found in *Musicam Sacram*, and *De Musica Sacra* even suggests that some stages can only be accomplished by a particular type of congregation rather than by all Roman Catholics.¹² The 1958 instruction even provides different stages of participation for the “Read Mass.”¹³

Musicam Sacram, on the other hand, suggests a broader and more accessible vision of musical engagement for the faithful. To that end, it proceeds through three consecutive articles to articulate three separate “degrees of solemnity” which, in effect, provide a chart of what should be sung at Mass, distinguishing the primary from the secondary and the tertiary. The document is clear that, while all elements need not be sung—and the elements in the first degree may always be used without the others—elements in the

second and third degree are never to be used without those in the first degree also being sung (no. 28). The various degrees are given in numbers 29–31:

To the first degree belong:

- a. in the entrance rites
 - the priest’s greeting and the congregation’s response;
 - the opening prayer.
- b. in the liturgy of the Word
 - the Gospel acclamations.
- c. in the liturgy of the Eucharist
 - the prayer over the gifts;
 - the preface, with the opening dialogue and the *Sanctus*;
 - the Lord’s Prayer, with the invitation and embolism;
 - the greeting *May the peace of the Lord*;
 - the prayer after Communion;
 - the final dismissal.

To the second degree belong:

- a. *Kyrie, Gloria, Agnus Dei*;
- b. profession of faith;
- c. general intercessions.

To the third degree belong:

- a. songs for the entrance procession and for Communion;
- b. chants after a lesson or epistle;
- c. *Alleluia* before the Gospel;
- d. songs for the presentation of the gifts;
- e. the Scripture readings, except when it seems better not to have them sung.

If we interpret this text literally and attempt to implement this literal interpretation with the 1969 Order of Mass, this instruction poses what I believe to be a series of problems. Let me point out five: 1) the very high priority given to singing dialogues between priest and people; 2) assigning the Gospel acclamations to the first degree but the *Alleluia* before the Gospel to the third degree; 3) relegating the “chants after a lesson or epistle” to the third degree; 4) prioritizing the singing of the Lord’s Prayer with the invitation and embolism in the first degree, without mention of the closing doxology; and 5) the complete lack of any mention of the memorial acclamation and great *Amen* among the elements to be sung. We will give more consideration to the first two of these and, for the sake of brevity, offer fewer comments on the last three.

Five Problems

1). Dialogues between Priest and Congregation. *Musicam Sacram* places dialogues between the priest and the congregation as belonging to the first degree of elements to be sung (no. 29).¹⁴ This includes what the document calls “the priest’s greeting and the congregation’s response” in the entrance rites, “the opening dialogue” to the preface, “the greeting *May the peace of the Lord*,” and “the final dismissal” which contains such a dialogue. This is in keeping with earlier statements in the document which note that, when choosing elements to be sung, particular emphasis is given to “those sung

by the priest or other ministers and answered by the congregation” (no. 7). This instruction highlights the need for the active participation of the faithful by emphasizing that singing should be fostered in the “responses to the greetings of the priests and the ministers” (no. 16a).

Such emphasis makes sense when we hearken back to *Musicam Sacram*’s basic motivation for even offering this “principle of ‘graduated’ participation,”¹⁵ i.e., so that “it will become easier, in accord with each congregation’s capabilities, to make the celebration of Mass more solemn through the use of singing” (no. 29). What could be simpler than having the people sing back *Et cum spiritu tuo* to the priest’s greeting during the entrance rites? But please note the *Et cum spiritu tuo* to which the document is referring in the entrance rites: It’s not what we consider the response to the opening greeting: “May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.” It could not have been that because that text did not exist in the rite of 1967, when *Musicam Sacram* was promulgated. The entrance rites of the time included the sign of the cross (which the priest said by himself without any “*Amen*” from anyone, including the servers); modified prayers at the foot of the altar—the *Confiteor* and various deprecatory prayers of absolution, the versicles and responses beginning with *Deus, tu conversus vivificabis nos*; the prayers for ascending the altar; the *Kyrie*; the *Gloria*; and the opening prayer). When you look at the structure of the rites of 1967, the *only* actually dialogic moment between priest and people in the entrance rites was the *Dominus vobiscum* before the opening prayer, and it was the only time during the entrance rites that the priest was actually required by the rubrics to turn toward the people. The entire rest of the entrance rites were performed with the priest turned away from the people and facing the altar. If, therefore, you were going to get the people to sing anything—especially anything “easy”¹⁶—during the entrance rites, there were few other choices. This also made some sense insofar as this *Dominus vobiscum* was preparatory to the opening prayer, which, as Jungmann has noted, is the traditional apex of the entrance rites.¹⁷

Without contextualizing this document, as canon 17 requires us to do for an intelligent interpretation, one could argue that singing the greeting before the opening prayer is of higher priority than singing the *Sanctus*. By extension, if one extracted and isolated these texts on the importance of singing dialogues between priest and people, one might even go so far as to suggest that singing the dismissal *Ite* with its response *Deo gratias* is more important than singing the responsorial psalm! The dialogues are important not only because they foster unity but also because they mirror the dialogic nature of revelation, as Paul VI noted in his 1967 encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* (no. 70). At the same time, one need recognize that all dialogues are not of equal value.

Thus, the 2002 *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* is very clear that, while emphasis is given to singing those parts “sung by the priest or the deacon or the lector with the people responding” (no. 40), that directive is placed in a wider and primary context, i.e., “in the choosing of the parts actually to be sung . . . preference should be given to those that are of greater importance.” Thus, for example, the preface dialogue is much more important than the brief exchange before the opening prayer because the preface (as an essential element of the Eucharistic Prayer) is part of what GIRM calls the “center and

summit of the entire celebration" (no. 78).

2). **The Gospel Acclamations and Alleluia.** A second problem with the degrees of sung participation outlined in *Musicam Sacram* is placing the "Gospel acclamations" in the first degree of what is to be sung, but placing the *Alleluia* in the third degree of sung prioritization. *Music in Catholic Worship*¹⁸ defined acclamations as "shouts of joy which arise from the assembly as forceful and meaningful assents to God's Word and Action" (no. 53). *Music in Catholic Worship* goes on to specify that there are five acclamations "which ought to be sung even at Masses in which little else is sung: *Alleluia*; 'Holy, Holy, Holy Lord'; Memorial Acclamation; Great Amen; Doxology to the Lord's Prayer" (no. 54).

While *Musicam Sacram* also emphasizes the singing of acclamations, this document has a very different definition of "acclamation" than the one found in *Music in Catholic Worship*, which is precisely why *Musicam Sacram* can say that "the Gospel acclamations" belong to the first degree of singing but the *Alleluia* belongs to a ternary degree of singing. For *Musicam Sacram*—and the Tridentine Rite on which it is primarily commenting—the *Alleluia* was part of the "proper," technically classified in the books of the day (e.g., the *Liber Usualis*) as part of the gradual.¹⁹ It belonged to the choir and, in its Gregorian format, it was not only inappropriate for congregational singing but virtually impossible for any ordinary congregation to execute.

The "acclamations" that *Musicam Sacram* places at the first tier of sung preference are the *Gloria tibi, Domine* ("Glory to you, O Lord") and *Laus tibi, Christe* ("Praise to you, O Christ") that the people "acclaimed" before and after the Gospel.²⁰ This interpretation is confirmed by the current Introduction to the *Lectionary for Mass* which still speaks of the "acclamations" of the people in reference to their text before the Gospel proclamation ("Glory to you, O Lord") and after the proclamation ("Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ," no. 17).

Thus, if one takes a literal reading of *Musicam Sacram*—and does so out of context—one could argue that it is much more important in the *Ordo Missae* of Paul VI for the congregation to sing "Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ" than it is for them to sing the *Alleluia*. Such a stance makes no sense, however, given the shape of the reformed rites. Thus the Introduction to the *Lectionary* and the current *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*—both of which carry more juridical weight than an instruction on the implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred liturgy such as *Musicam Sacram*²¹—are clear that the *Alleluia* "or another chant indicated by the rubrics is sung" on Sundays (GIRM, no. 62). While GIRM does allow the *Alleluia* or verse before the Gospel to be omitted if not sung (no. 63), this is only to be done on days when there is one reading before the Gospel—which never happens on a Sunday or solemnity. Similarly, while the Introduction to the *Lectionary* notes that it is "appropriate for the greeting *The Lord be with you*, and *A reading from the holy Gospel according to . . .*, and at the end *The Gospel of the Lord* to be sung in order that the congregation may also sing its acclamations" (no. 17), when it comes to the *Alleluia* or the verse before the Gospel, this same introduction simply states that they "must be sung" (no. 23). Thus, the current instructions eclipse the directives given at this point in *Musicam Sacram*.

3). **Relegating the "Chants after a Lesson or Epistle" to the Third Degree.** Considering the 1967 context for relegating the *Alleluia* to a ternary position

in sung priority helps us understand why “chants after a lesson or epistle” are also at that level. While *Musicam Sacram* actually makes mention of a “responsorial psalm,” it does not present a vision of the responsorial psalm that was to emerge in the 1969 *Ordo Missae, General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, and Introduction to the *Lectionary for Mass*. Considered an alternative to the gradual by *Musicam Sacram* (no. 33), it is noted as the most significant of the chants for the proper and intrinsic to the liturgy of the Word, but it “is to be sung with the whole assembly sitting, listening” and only lastly with the assembly “even, if possible, taking part.” This was a bold statement for 1967, when the sung proper belonged to scholas, not to congregations, and the repertoire of the time was just beginning to develop responsorial patterns for congregational use.²² One also should remember that in the time of the dominance of the Tridentine Rite, it was commonly believed that it was merely a venial sin to miss what was then known as the liturgy of the catechumens, which included all of what we would consider the liturgy of the Word, and that one’s Sunday obligation was fulfilled by being present only for the consecration and priest’s Communion. It was widely taught, therefore, that the first *principal* element in the Mass was the offertory.²³ In this context, it is surprising and bold that the chants after a lesson or epistle even made it into the top three!

That things have changed is clear from the current Introduction to the *Lectionary* which gives priority to the language of “responsorial psalm” and puts the language of “gradual” in second place. This same text simply states: “As a rule, the responsorial psalm should be sung” (no. 20). The Latin Rite bishops in the United States not only affirm this stance but in their *Introduction to the Order of Mass* (2003), when speaking of the priority that is given to singing the constitutive parts of the Mass, offer this sequence: “Priority should be given to the Responsorial Psalm, to the acclamations before the Gospel and within the Eucharistic Prayer (for example, the *Sanctus* and acclamation after the consecration), the concluding *Amen* and the other presidential prayers, and to the dialogues between the priest and the people (for example, the preface dialogue and the final dismissal)” (no. 46). Here again, later instructions of more juridic weight have eclipsed the directives of *Musicam Sacram*.

4–5). The Lack of Attention to the Doxology after the Our Father, Memorial Acclamation, and Great Amen. Finally, we turn to what I have identified as the fourth and fifth problems with the schema of prioritization in *Musicam Sacram*: 4) prioritizing the singing of the Lord’s Prayer with the invitation and embolism in the first degree, without mention of the closing doxology, and 5) the complete lack of any mention of the memorial acclamation and great *Amen* as elements to be sung.

These are simply explained. The doxology after the Our Father never made it into the list with the Lord’s Prayer, its invitation, and its embolism because it did not exist in the liturgy at the time *Musicam Sacram* was promulgated. The same could be said for the memorial acclamation, which reappeared in the *Ordo Missae* of 1969. And then there is the Great *Amen*. There was an *Amen* in the Tridentine Rite at the end of the Canon of the Mass, but it was tied to the *per omnia saecula saeculorum*, which in structure and musical setting was traditionally divided from the rest of the *Per ipsum* that concludes the Canon. While *Inter Oecumenici* did indicate that the whole of the doxology was to be sung or recited aloud with the congregation responding *Amen*,

the doxology was not seen as a climactic moment of a Eucharistic Prayer in which the people's participation was required but still a minor elevation in the action of the Canon which was viewed as the sole work of the priest.

Things To Say

One could scour *Musicam Sacram* for other examples where the details of that document have been eclipsed by the appearance of the revised *Ordo Missae*, the new Lectionary and its *praenotanda*, or the five successive editions of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, but such seems neither necessary nor fruitful. I believe the point has been sufficiently made that *Musicam Sacram* provides instruction for the place and use of music within the Tridentine liturgy in the modified form in which it existed in 1967, at the time of *Musicam Sacram*'s promulgation. And it is not this modified Tridentine liturgy which the overwhelming majority of Roman Catholics celebrate in this country and around the world.

That being said, does *Musicam Sacram* have anything to say to us who in 2007 celebrate the *Ordo Missae* according to the fifth edition of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*? My response is still yes. I come to that conclusion because *Musicam Sacram*, like virtually every other official Vatican document, contains many different kinds of texts. Sometimes *Musicam Sacram* makes theological statements,²⁴ for example, when it notes that "a liturgical service takes on a nobler aspect when the rites are celebrated with singing, the ministers of each rank take their parts in them, and the congregation actively participates" (no. 5). Sometimes these theological statements reiterate central doctrines of the Church, for example, when *Musicam Sacram* states that "liturgical services are celebrations of the Church, that is, of the whole people united in proper order under a bishop or priest." This document also includes informational or factual statements, e.g., when in its opening paragraph it notes that "sacred music is one of the elements of the liturgical reform that Vatican Council II considered thoroughly" (no. 1). Related to these elements are some of the definitional statements in *Musicam Sacram*, e.g., the definition of "sacred music" as that which includes "Gregorian chant, the several styles of polyphony, both ancient and modern, sacred music for organ and other permitted instruments, and the sacred, i.e., liturgical or religious music of the people" (no. 4b).

Then there are everybody's favorites: the juridic norms.²⁵ Yet even these are not all of a single stripe, for they include commands and obligations in the forms of positive commands,²⁶ negative commands,²⁷ mild commands,²⁸ and exhortations;²⁹ laws permitting exceptions;³⁰ and facultative norms that allow the subject to choose among two or more options.³¹ Then there are permissive laws,³² laws granting or acknowledging rights and competencies,³³ and recommendations.³⁴

Besides assessing the various literary genres of the text, it is important to emphasize that while *Musicam Sacram* provided specific instructions for employing music in the modified Tridentine Rite of 1967, this document is first and foremost written in service of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (MS, no. 3) and is one of a series of instruction on the proper implementation of that central and dogmatic document. So while in some ways *Musicam*

Musicam Sacram continues to provide direction and inspiration for the musical reform of Roman Catholic liturgy, especially to the extent that it reinforces and elaborates the fundamental principles of sung worship embedded in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.

Sacram sits between *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and the Tridentine Rite, its primary intent was to serve the ongoing reforms of Vatican II, and it implicitly recognizes what the 1964 instruction *Inter Oecumenici* explicitly stated: that a complete reform of the *Ordo Missae* was yet to appear (IO, no. 48).

Given that *Sacrosanctum Concilium* is still at the center of the ongoing reform of Roman Catholic liturgy, and that the Tridentine liturgy as an “extraordinary usage” of the Roman Rite is decidedly not at the center of the ongoing reform of the Roman Catholic liturgy, then it is through the lens of the Liturgy Constitution (and not the lens of the *Ordo Missae* of Paul VI) that we have to read *Musicam Sacram*. To that end, I would suggest that *Musicam Sacram* continues to provide direction and inspiration for the musical reform of Roman Catholic liturgy, especially to the extent that it reinforces and elaborates the fundamental principles of sung worship embedded in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. I would further contend that these principles are revealed more in the theological and doctrinal statements of *Musicam Sacram* and less in the juridic statements, many of which have been eclipsed by subsequent ordos, general instructions, and *praenotandae*.

Let me offer a few examples. In the opening paragraph under “General Norms,” *Musicam Sacram* provides an eloquent commentary on the impact of music in worship when it states:

A liturgical service takes on a nobler aspect when the rites are celebrated with singing, the ministers of each rank take their parts in them, and the congregation actively participates. This form of celebration gives a more graceful expression of prayer It achieves a close union of hearts through the union of voices. It raises the mind more readily to heavenly realities through the splendor of the rites. It makes the whole celebration a more striking symbol of the celebration to come in the heavenly Jerusalem (no. 5).

Another favorite of mine is this little jewel of a statement about what constitutes “solemnity” in worship: “The real solemnity of a liturgical service, it should be kept in mind, depends not on a more ornate musical style or more ceremonial splendor but on a worthy and reverent celebration. This means respect for the integrity of the rites, that, is, carrying out each of the parts in keeping with its proper character” (no. 11).

Then there are the many affirmations in *Musicam Sacram* regarding that lynch-pin of the current reform, i.e., the active participation of everyone in the liturgical assembly. One of these is found in paragraph 15:

The faithful carry out their proper liturgical function by offering their complete, conscious, and active participation. The very nature of the liturgy demands this and it is the right and duty of Christian people by reason of their baptism. This participation must be:

- a. internal, that is, the faithful make their thoughts match what they say and hear, and cooperate with divine grace;
- b. but also external, that is, they express their inner participation through their gestures, outward bearing, acclamations, responses, and song.

It seems to me that it is precisely in these theological statements, explanations, and insights that *Musicam Sacram* continues to shine and to provide light for the ongoing reform of Roman Catholic liturgy. It may also be true that some of the juridic material is still useful. I particularly find the comments about the translation of texts useful, as when *Musicam Sacram* notes:

Translators of texts to be set to music should take care to combine properly conformity to the Latin and adaptability to the music. They are to respect the idiom and grammar of the vernacular and the proper characteristics of the people. Composers of new melodies are to pay careful heed to similar guidelines, as well as the laws of sacred music (no. 54).

Yet while some juridic elements of *Musicam Sacram* are helpful, there have been so many changes in the structure of the rites, so many new editions of the *General Instruction* and *praenotandae*, that the document as a whole is a less than faithful juridic guide for the *Ordo Missae* of Paul VI and John Paul II in 2007. Thus, for example, while *Musicam Sacram* forbids the use of solo musical instruments during Advent, Lent, and the Easter Triduum (no. 66), the 2002 edition of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* demurs, stating that “in Advent the organ and other musical instruments should be used with a moderation that is consistent with the season’s character and does not anticipate the full joy of the Nativity” (no. 313). Even regarding Lent, GIRM 2002 notes exceptions for solo instrumental music on *Laetare* Sunday, solemnities, and feasts (no. 313). Then, of course, there is the prohibition of instrumental music during the Easter Triduum. With the reformed rites, we now understand that the Triduum—the great three days—is calculated from sunset to sunset and thus extends from Thursday’s celebration of the Lord’s Supper to Solemn Evening Prayer on Easter Sunday. To forbid solo instrumental music on Easter—which *Musicam Sacram* literally does—is absurd.

The Canadian philosopher-theologian Bernard Lonergan, SJ, (1904–1984) believed that, although there are many different types of methods for understanding and structuring philosophical and theological reflection, each of these shares a common core of operations. Lonergan grouped these activities into four stages. While somewhat complex in their original formulation,³⁵ Lonergan abridged and summarized them in what he called the four transcendental precepts: be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, and be responsible.³⁶

In some sense, this is what we have tried to do in revisiting *Musicam Sacram*: to be attentive to its original context and intent, to be intelligent about the different literary genres and strata in the document, to be reasonable about its pivotal role in the unfolding of the liturgical reform, and to be responsible about how this official document should continue to be employed in addressing the role of music in contemporary Roman Catholic worship. Maybe if there is any learning here, more than a specific analysis of a document on its fortieth anniversary, it is to learn to strive carefully for such attentiveness, intelligence, reasonability, and responsibility in every liturgical endeavor—and to do so always with charity, through Christ our Lord.

Notes

1. According to Annibale Bugnini, this was a Mass celebrated by a priest with a reader, servers, a choir or cantor, and a congregation that would provide the norm or standard for all others; all other forms (e.g., pontifical, solemn, Mass with a deacon) would be amplifications or further simplifications of this basic Mass. See his *The Reform of the Liturgy 1948–1975*, trans. Matthew J. O’Connell (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 340. Annibale Bugnini was the secretary to the Commission for Liturgical Reform under Pope Pius XII and Pope John XXIII (1948–1960), a peritus at Vatican II, secretary for the Consilium for

- the Implementation of the Constitution on the Liturgy (1964–1969), and secretary for the Congregation for Divine Worship (1969–1975) before becoming the papal nuncio to Iran in 1976.
2. Bugnini, 348.
 3. Bugnini, 361.
 4. Bugnini, 383.
 5. Bugnini, 384.
 6. Published in New York (*Novi Eboraci*) by Benziger Brothers, 1964.
 7. The Proper of the Mass comprised the Introit, Gradual and Tract, *Alleluia*, Offertory and Communion; the Ordinary of the Mass comprised the *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Sanctus-Benedictus*, *Agnus Dei*, and the *Ite* or *Benedicamus*. See, for example, John Harper, *The Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy from the Tenth to the Eighteen Century* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1991), 63.
 8. The 1969 decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites on the interim adaptation of particular calendars, for example, notes in number 40 that the “propers of Masses” include elements in the Missal (entrance antiphon, opening prayer, prayer over the gifts, preface, Communion antiphon, and prayer after Communion) and, in number 41, elements in the Lectionary (the three readings, a proper responsorial psalm, and a proper acclamation or verse before the Gospel). Furthermore, the current *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* highlights the creed and the Lord’s Prayer as part of the “Ordinary of the Mass” (no. 42); we no longer have a tract in the *Ordo Missae* of Paul VI; while the “gradual” still exists in the *Graduale Romanum*, it is not part of the Lectionary, where it has been replaced by the responsorial psalm, which the *General Instruction* refers to as an “integral part of the Liturgy of the Word” (no. 61); and there is no requirement to sing an *introit* or even recite the “entrance antiphon” at the beginning of the Mass (GIRM, no. 48).
 9. Bugnini, 907.
 10. “*Leges ecclesiasticae intellegendae sunt secundum propriam verborum significationem in textu et contextu consideratam; quae si dubia et obscura manserit, ad locos parallelos, si qui sint, ad legis finem ac circumstantias et ad mentem legislatoris est recurrendum.*” *Code of Canon Law: Latin-English Edition*, trans. prepared under the auspices of the Canon Law Society of America (Washington, DC: Canon Law Society of America, 1984).
 11. Translations of *Musicam Sacram* are taken from International Commission on English in the Liturgy, *Documents on the Liturgy 1963–1979: Conciliar, Papal, and Curial Texts*, trans. and ed. Thomas O’Brien (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1982), no. 508.
 12. The “first stage” includes the liturgical responses: *Amen; Et cum spiritu tuo; Gloria tibi, Domine; Habemus ad Dominum; Dignum et justum est; Sed libera nos a malo; Deo gratias* (no. 25a). The “second stage” encourages the faithful to chant the “ordinary of the Mass”: *Kyrie eleison, Gloria in excelsis Deo, Credo, Sanctus-Benedictus*, and *Agnus Dei* (no. 25b). The “third stage” envisions all present as so proficient that they can chant the “proper of the Mass” (no. 25c), a form that is especially to be promoted in religious communities and seminaries.
 13. No. 31 provides four stages for a “most perfect manner of participation” in the read Mass: 1) giving the easiest liturgical responses to the celebrant; 2) reciting the responses normally restricted to the acolyte; 3) reciting parts of the Ordinary of the Mass with the celebrant; 4) reciting parts of the proper of the Mass with the celebrant.
 14. These elements are parallel to those found in the “first stage” of *De Musica Sacra*; see note 12, above.
 15. Bugnini, 911.
 16. The criteria of easy or “easier” is one set out by *Musicam Sacram*, no. 29.
 17. Josef Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, trans. Francis Brunner, 2 vols. (Westminster, Maryland: Christian Classics, 1986), I:359.
 18. Contrary to those who would consider it a set of “guidelines,” this document was affirmed by a plenary assembly of the NCCB (now the USCCB) in 1983 as “very useful . . . norms and guidelines . . . which should be followed.” National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Church at Prayer: A Holy Temple of the Lord*, December 4, 1983 (Washington, DC: USCC[B], 1984), no. 44.
 19. A document such as *De Musica Sacra*, when speaking of the proper, does not even mention the *Alleluia* and only speaks of the introit, gradual (into which the *Alleluia* is subsumed), offertory, and Communion (no. 31d).
 20. These responses, while not always in the body of the missal of the day, were noted in no. 471 in the reformed *General Rubrics of the Roman Missal*, approved by Pope John XXIII in 1960.
 21. See John Huels, *Liturgy and Law: Liturgical Law in the System of Roman Catholic Canon Law* (Montreal, Québec: Wilson & Lafleur, 2006), 90.

22. Joseph Gelineau was a pioneer in this area with publications of his psalms in the early 1950s in France. His scholarly work on responsorial psalmody first appeared in a series of articles in *L'Église qui chante* between 1959 and 1961 and was summarized in his *Chant et musique dans le culte chrétien* (Paris, France: Fleurus, 1962).

23. *The New Baltimore Catechism*, ed. Francis J. Connell (New York, New York: Benziger Brothers, Inc., 1949), p. 327, also no. 237c (p. 139).

24. These categories draw on those given by John Huels in his outline of "Literary Forms in Canon Law," in *Liturgy and Law*, Appendix IV, 233–237.

25. This section more closely follows Huels, 234–237.

26. E.g., "the prayers [the priest] sings or recites aloud are spoken in the name of the entire people of God and of all in the assembly; therefore all present must listen to them with reverence" (no. 14).

27. E.g., "solo playing of musical instruments is forbidden during Advent, Lent, the Easter Triduum, and at services and Masses for the dead" (no. 66).

28. E.g., "whenever a choice of people for a sung liturgical celebration is possible, those with musical talent should obviously be preferred" (no. 8).

29. E.g., "the reasonable expectation is that in welcoming and carrying out these norms pastors, composers, and the faithful will strive with one accord to achieve the genuine purpose of 'sacred music, which is the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful'" (no. 4).

30. E.g., "some of the congregational parts may be assigned to the choir alone, however, especially when the people are not yet sufficiently trained or melodies for part-singing are used" (16c).

31. E.g., "the chants of the Ordinary may be divided between choir and congregation or between one part of the congregation and another" (no. 34).

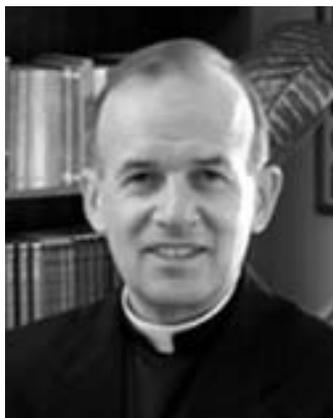
32. E.g., "in some places there is the lawful practice, occasionally confirmed by indult, of substituting other songs for the entrance, offertory, and Communion chants in the *Graduale*. At the discretion of the competent territorial authority this practice may be kept on . . ." (no. 32).

33. E.g., "the apostolic See alone has authority to establish, in accord with the norms of tradition and particularly the Constitution on the Liturgy, those general principles that stand as the foundation for sacred music" (no. 12).

34. E.g., "even in churches having a choir it is better for a cantor to be present for those celebrations that the choir cannot attend but that should be carried out with some degree of solemnity and thus with singing" (no. 21).

35. That is: "(1) experiencing one's experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding; (2) understanding the unity of relations of one's experienced experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding; (3) affirming the reality of one's experienced and understood experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding; and (4) deciding to operate in accord with the norms immanent in the spontaneous relatedness of one's experienced, understood, affirmed experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding." Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York, New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), 14–15.

36. Lonergan, 20.



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The trouble with the kind of genuine church renewal that we have gotten ourselves into is that problems and questions begin (deceptively) at a fairly superficial and manageable level. At first it looks easy. And then, almost imperceptibly, each of the problems and questions invites us deeper and deeper into the heart of ecclesial faith, where all their roots are intertwined.

Robert W. Hovda
Strong, Loving, and Wise: Presiding in Liturgy
The Liturgical Conference, 1976

Degrees of Celebration

BY JUDITH M. KUBICKI, CSSF

All of us know people who like to go to the “quiet Mass” — the one with no music — early on Sunday morning. As musicians, our response to that choice might be chagrin, since such a preference suggests that music may not be integral to worship, as we have argued it is. Or we might actually be relieved that there is a “quiet” Mass, since that means that we won’t have to provide the music for yet another liturgy in an already long schedule of multiple weekend Masses.

The label “quiet” is interesting. Certainly it does not suggest “silent” in a literal sense. All of the prayers will be spoken aloud and all of the readings proclaimed and all of the announcements made. Yet the absence of music in some way renders the Mass “quiet” or “silent.”

We also know that these same people who flock to the “quiet” Mass on most Sunday mornings would be taken aback if that were the way Christmas Midnight Mass or Easter Sunday — or their daughter’s wedding — were to be celebrated. So somehow there is embedded deep within most worshipers an instinct that knows that high holy days and special celebrations require — perhaps even demand — abundant and even lavish musical forces. Perhaps this attitude expresses an inchoate understanding of the topic of this Hovda Lecture: the principle of progressive solemnity.

More specifically, this lecture is going to continue to explore the role of music in worship as it was explicated in the instruction *Musicam Sacram*. I will consider two questions: (1) How has the principle of progressive solemnity helped or hindered the development of sung worship following Vatican II? And (2) how should the “degrees of celebration” elaborated in *Musicam Sacram* be viewed forty years later?

I will proceed by considering five points: (1) the meaning of the principle of

progressive solemnity; (2) a method for interpreting the instruction *Musicam Sacram* as a Church document; (3) the message of *Musicam Sacram* regarding the principle of progressive solemnity; (4) musings on how *Musicam Sacram*'s articulation of this principle has helped or hindered sung worship since the Council; and (5) suggestions for moving forward.

The Principle

Let us consider the following working definition of progressive solemnity as a starting point. The definition I propose reflects what is commonly understood as progressive solemnity today. It is not the specific definition found in *Musicam Sacram*; we will consider that a little later. For now, I would like to define progressive solemnity as an approach to planning the song of the assembly in a way that highlights the liturgical significance of a season, a day, a liturgical rite, or an element of a liturgical rite. The assumption made—and this is a present-day assumption—is that the amount of singing, the level of its complexity, and the sophistication of musical arrangements and/or instrumentation will heighten an experience of the solemnity of such a season, day, rite, or element of a rite.

What are the practical implications of progressive solemnity? The principle suggests that the music assigned to the more solemn and festive seasons of the year ought to be more plentiful and elaborate than that used at other times. The Easter Season, for example, would enjoy the most generous amounts of singing and the most elaborate music since it is the high point of the liturgical year. This largesse, so to speak, would include how much music is sung, the complexity of arrangements, and the type of instrumentation. This same principle would apply to the high point of the liturgical week, that is, the musical rendition of Sunday liturgies would signal the fact that Sunday is that high point. Furthermore, the rhythm and movement of the various liturgical seasons, such as Advent and Lent, would also be expressed by means of this principle. In this case, the music would reflect the development of each season. The move, for example, from the eschatological focus of the first weeks of Advent to the celebration of the “O Antiphons” that herald Christmas Day would be expressed by the nature and amount of music sung.

Within a given rite, the principle of progressive solemnity would require that the more significant ritual moments be clothed with music before the less significant. So, for example, the Eucharistic acclamations would be sung before we might decide to sing the recessional. Probably little of this is new to readers of this publication, and none of this is rocket science to the seasoned pastoral musician.

So where does the notion of progressive solemnity originate? The term is mentioned in at least three liturgical documents written shortly after Vatican II: *Musicam Sacram* (1967), the *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours* (1971), and *Liturgical Music Today* (1982). The first two are Roman documents and the last, of course, comes from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (known, in 1982, as the National Conference of Catholic Bishops). It is *Musicam Sacram*, however, that first introduces the term. Article 28 of this 1967 instruction begins by asserting that the distinction among solemn,

high, and low Mass sanctioned by the 1958 Instruction on Sacred Music and the Liturgy *De Musica Sacra* remains in force according to tradition and law. However, the article goes on to explain that it is proposing a new idea—the notion of degrees of solemnity—for pastoral reasons, in order that “it will become *easier* [emphasis added], in accord with each *congregation’s capability* [emphasis added] to make the celebration of Mass more solemn through the use of singing.”

The reason for issuing *Musicam Sacram* (MS) as an instruction was to clarify and amplify the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (1963). Since the principle of progressive solemnity is not explicitly mentioned in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, we can regard its inclusion in MS as an amplification of the Liturgy Constitution’s article 112, which says that music “invests the rites with greater solemnity.” Article 7 of MS lays the foundation for the principle of progressive solemnity—although it does not use the term—when it says:

The amount of singing determines the gradations between the most solemn form of liturgical celebrations, in which all the parts calling for singing are sung [e.g., the Easter Vigil], and the most simple form, in which nothing is sung [the “quiet” Mass]. For the choice of parts to be sung, those should be first that of their nature are more important and particularly those sung by the priest or other ministers and answered by the congregation or sung by the priest and congregation together. Later other parts, for the congregation alone or the choir alone, may be added gradually.

Two important points are raised here, and they are foundational. The first is that the amount of music assigned to those parts that call for singing contributes to the degree of solemnity. The second is that the choice of parts sung should be determined by the importance of those parts, particularly those parts sung by the priest and answered by the congregation or sung by priest and congregation together. What the document is talking about is what we have come to call “ritual music.”¹ In other words, this is not about inserting hymns at various places in the liturgy but about singing the liturgy.

Musicam Sacram goes into much greater detail about how progressive solemnity should be implemented in articles 28-31, but those specifics will be considered later in this presentation.

Four years after it was first mentioned in *Musicam Sacram*, progressive solemnity appeared in another document that is perhaps less familiar to pastoral musicians: the *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours* (1971). This document has much to say about progressive solemnity that can readily be applied to the celebration of Mass. For example, article 273 states:

Even if a celebration in which everything is sung is to be commended, provided it is of genuine artistic and spiritual value, sometimes the principle of “progressive” solemnity may be fruitfully employed. This principle may need to be applied for practical reasons but also because the various parts of the liturgical celebration are not of equal importance. This will mean that each part may again recover its original meaning and purpose Therefore, the principle of “progressive” solemnity is one which admits several intermediate stages between the singing of the Office [Liturgy of the Hours] in its entirety and the simple recitation of all its parts [a “quiet” office]. This principle offers considerable variety and thus makes the Office more attractive. The measure

This is not about inserting hymns at various places in the liturgy but about singing the liturgy.

of this variety is to be judged according to the quality of the day or Hour which is being celebrated, the purpose of the various parts which make up the Office, the number and character of the community, as well as the number of available singers.

Eleven years later, in 1982, *Liturgical Music Today* again articulated the principle of progressive solemnity when it explained in article 13:

Music should be considered a normal and ordinary part of any liturgical celebration. However, this general principle is to be interpreted in the light of another one, namely, the principle of progressive solemnity. . . . This latter principle takes into account the abilities of the assembly, the relative importance of the individual rites and their constituent parts, and the relative festivity of the liturgical day. . . . This principle likewise applies to the music sung in all other liturgical celebrations.

Many pastoral musicians—even those who have not used or even been aware of the term “progressive solemnity”—have nevertheless been guided by its goals, values, and approach to musical liturgy. In this anniversary year of *Musicam Sacram*, it is useful to examine the origin of the phrase and its particular approach to sung worship. Let us then proceed to look at the significance of MS, its relationship to the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, and an appropriate way to read and interpret its content.

The Significance of *Musicam Sacram*

Nature of an Instruction. *Musicam Sacram* is an instruction promulgated by the Sacred Congregation of Rites.² As such it falls into a particular category of Roman documents. R. Kevin Seasoltz defines an instruction as “a doctrinal explanation or a set of directives, recommendations, or admonitions issued by the Roman curia. It usually elaborates on prescriptions already set out in another document so that they may be more effectively implemented. Strictly speaking, an instruction does not have the force of universal law or definition.”³ Rather, it often serves as a commentary on another church document—in this case, Vatican II’s *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*. The *Liturgy Constitution* has logical precedence but, like other conciliar documents, it often does not go into the particulars of implementation that practitioners might be looking for.

Those details, in large part, are also missing from *Musicam Sacram*, which clearly admits in article 3 that it does not intend to provide an exhaustive collection of legislation on sacred music but rather “a statement simply of the principal norms that seem most needed at the present time.” In other words, *Musicam Sacram* was never intended to be a comprehensive treatment of liturgical music. It *was* intended to address issues that were particularly troublesome in 1967. Two of those troublesome concerns were promoting active participation and understanding music’s ministerial function (article 2). Progressive solemnity was viewed as a way of addressing those two issues. Furthermore—and this is significant—article 12 of MS acknowledges the authority of national conferences of bishops in the regulation of sacred music. This important statement—often overlooked by those who focus only on Roman documents—assigns significant authority to documents

published by the bishops. In the case of the United States, those documents include *Music in Catholic Worship* and *Liturgical Music Today*.⁴ Both of these statements are the official word of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops on music in worship. *Liturgical Music Today* speaks specifically about progressive solemnity.

Reading and Interpreting Roman Documents. There is a particular technique to reading and interpreting Church documents, especially Roman and/or conciliar documents. It begins by knowing something about how conciliar documents are constructed. This first step is particularly helpful in considering documents promulgated by the Second Vatican Council and those subsequent to them. Hermann J. Pottmeyer has pointed out that much of the material that came out of Vatican II attempted to link two concerns by using the method of juxtaposition. He explains that “alongside a doctrine or thesis couched in preconciliar language is set a doctrine or thesis that formulates some complementary aspect.”⁵ The temptation is to interpret this method as compromise, understood in a pejorative sense. Pottmeyer, however, calls such an interpretation superficial. Rather, he sees this method of juxtaposition as an example of progress, since, in complementing the older thesis, it relativizes it as one-sided and provides openings for further development.⁶

Compelling examples can be cited to demonstrate the existence of the practice of juxtaposition in the decrees of Vatican II. Allow me to cite just one example. Article 112 of the Liturgy Constitution states that the Church “approves of all forms of true art which have the requisite qualities, and admits them into divine worship.” Article 114, on the other hand, states that “the treasury of sacred music is to be preserved and cultivated with great care.” Since the time of the promulgation of the Liturgy Constitution, musicians and liturgists have wrestled with balancing the implications of these two statements. Four decades after the Council, those involved with developing the theory and practice of liturgical music are still working to create a synthesis. Such efforts to interpret and synthesize are part of the process of receiving and implementing conciliar pronouncements. In fact, examining the process whereby the decisions of Vatican II continue to be received and implemented (and that includes this discussion of *Musicam Sacram*) is itself part of the very process of that reception. In other words, our efforts to interpret and implement conciliar decisions are an important and necessary part of the conciliar process itself since such efforts can enable the Church, as an ecclesial community, to harmonize theory and practice.

Yves Congar makes another important point regarding the complexity of the process of reception. In his assessment, the reception of Vatican II, like every other reception, involves more than obedience (although it does of course involve that). It also includes a degree of consent, and often a degree of judgment (and, I might add, a healthy dose of common sense) which brings into play the ecclesial community’s own original resources.⁷

Reception requires an interpretive process that involves two steps, according to Pottmeyer. The first involves the interpretation of the Vatican II documents that are found in postconciliar legislation such as papal encyclicals and addresses, curial decisions, and declarations (*Musicam Sacram* would fall into this category), episcopal synods, and pastoral letters. This interpretation of legislation can be supplemented by the interpretation of new liturgical texts

Our efforts to interpret and implement conciliar decisions are an important and necessary part of the conciliar process itself since such efforts can enable the Church, as an ecclesial community, to harmonize theory and practice.

and forms introduced as a result of the Council. The second step involves the interpretation of theological writings, religious literature, and the actual practice and implementation of local churches. This is where all of us come in who actually do the music, week by week and year by year.

The reception of Vatican II is thus still in process. That synthesis of understandings so necessary “to authenticate the harmony between conciliar decisions and ecclesial consciousness”⁸ is a goal we have not yet realized. This is the case both doctrinally and pastorally. So our analysis here is part of the process of reception of Vatican II and the process of synthesis.

One of the key ideas expressed in the preceding summary of the process of reception, interpretation, and implementation is the importance of reading a document in context. In other words, a document can only be fully understood when it is studied in light of concurrent and subsequent documents, historical context, liturgical texts, and church practice. This is the approach we shall take in considering *Musicam Sacram*'s proposal of the principle of progressive solemnity.

Historical Context. *Musicam Sacram* was promulgated in 1967. The revised *Missale Romanum* of Pope Paul VI (known in its English version as the *Sacramentary*) had not yet been published. This is an interesting piece of chronology that needs to be kept in mind as one attempts to navigate what MS says about singing in a revised rite that had not yet been published. MS was written at a time when revisions to liturgical practice were being implemented in stages. In 1967 the Church was celebrating a revised version of the Tridentine Rite. The new Order of Mass was not promulgated in Latin until 1969, the new *Missale Romanum* in 1970, and the English-language *Sacramentary* with its *General Instruction* in 1974. Many of the remarks, therefore, that are made in *Musicam Sacram* are about a different liturgical or textual context than the one most of us pray today. The new *Sacramentary* as we came to know it may have been taking shape in the hands of those entrusted with crafting it, but it had not yet been completed.

***Musicam Sacram*'s Explication of Progressive Solemnity**

Earlier, we looked at a quote from article 7 of *Musicam Sacram* in which the foundational principles for progressive solemnity are set forth. However, it is article 28 that first uses the term. Article 28 is a good example of juxtaposition. The article asserts that the distinction among the solemn, high, and low Mass sanctioned by the 1958 Instruction *De Musica Sacra* remains in force. This is an example of the preconconciliar piece of the juxtaposition. However, it goes on to say that “for pastoral reasons,” the document is now proposing the notion of degrees of solemnity so that it might be easier to make the Mass more solemn by singing, according to each congregation's capability. This is the postconciliar piece of the juxtaposition that relativizes the preconconciliar principle and opens the way for new development.

It is the second paragraph of article 28, however, that is particularly curious. It asserts that these three proposed degrees of solemnity must be observed in the following way: The first degree may always be used without the oth-

ers, but the second and third cannot be used without the first. Article 29 identifies those elements belonging to the first degree as (a) in the entrance rite, the priest's greeting and the congregation's response and the opening prayer; and (b) in the liturgy of the Word, the Gospel acclamation; and (c) in the liturgy of the Eucharist, the prayer over the gifts, the preface with the opening dialogue and the *Sanctus*, the Lord's Prayer with the invitation and embolism, the greeting "May the peace of the Lord," the prayer after Communion, and the final dismissal. In other words, according to *Musicam Sacram*, if anything is to be sung at Mass, the parts listed as the first degree must be sung before other song is added. Notice that the first degree does not include such elements as the entrance hymn, the responsorial psalm, the *Gloria*, the memorial acclamation, or the Great *Amen*. Many of these elements do not appear in the Tridentine Rite, even in its revised form in use in 1967. So they had not yet appeared or taken the form they were to assume in the new *Ordo Missae*.

Article 30 identifies the following elements as belonging to the second degree of celebration: (a) the *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, and *Agnus Dei*; (b) the profession of faith; and (c) the general intercessions.

Article 31 identifies the following elements as belonging to the third degree of celebration: (a) songs for the entrance and Communion processions, (b) chants after a lesson or epistle (responsorial psalm), (c) *Alleluia* before the Gospel, (d) songs for the presentation of the gifts, and (e) Scripture readings, except when it seems better not to have them sung.

Musicam Sacram does not explicitly say that the third degree cannot be sung before the second, but that seems to be implied by the ranking. If that is the case, then it appears that the responsorial psalm cannot be sung unless the profession of faith is sung. Recall, however, that the responsorial psalm did not exist in its present form when *Musicam Sacram* was written. Rather, its form was the gradual, a piece of the rite usually sung by choir or schola. It might also be puzzling to see the Gospel acclamation listed in the first degree and the *Alleluia* before the Gospel listed in the third. In today's parlance, we would use the two terms interchangeably. However, the Gospel acclamation listed in the first degree refers to the dialogue between the priest and the rest of the assembly after the Gospel proclamation. The *Alleluia* did not exist in 1967 in the form it takes today. By listing the *Alleluia* in the third degree, *Musicam Sacram* appears to be saying that the *Alleluia* cannot be sung unless almost everything else in the Mass is also sung. But the instruction is speaking out of a different context about a different text.

Not surprisingly, the schema set up by three degrees of celebration in *Musicam Sacram* does not quite reflect what has become normative liturgical practice in the Roman Catholic Church since Vatican II, at least here in the United States. We often sing a Communion processional even when the various presidential prayers or dialogues with the congregation are not sung. While most Sunday congregations sing the responsorial psalm (third degree), very few sing the profession of faith (second degree). Does this mean that we have been in violation of the norms? Are the norms out of date and impractical? How should we view these norms forty years later? Let us apply some of the principles for interpreting Church documents to answer these questions.

Forty Years Later: Help or Hindrance?

Recall that *Musicam Sacram* highlights two concerns that motivated the creation of the principle of progressive solemnity. Both are pastoral in their thrust: (1) making it easier to render Mass more solemn through the use of singing and (2) doing so in accordance with each congregation's capability. Furthermore, I would suggest that, like the documents of Vatican II, this instruction is constructed by juxtaposing contrasting principles or points of view in ways that serve to relativize them.

As a result, it is important to avoid reading or interpreting statements in isolation. How does this caution work in practice? One example can serve to illustrate this important point. Almost all of the liturgical moments listed in the first degree require a singing presider. However, article 8 permits that "if the priest has no voice to sing he may recite." "This [allowance], however, is not to be done merely to suit the personal preference of the priest or minister." Furthermore, article 9 cautions that the choice of music is to be "guided by the abilities of the singers." This would certainly include both the singing presider and the congregation. Therefore, it is possible to assume that the reservation in article 8 regarding the singing ability—or lack thereof—of the priest relativizes the stipulation that the first degree cannot be omitted if the second and third degrees are incorporated. By extension, the same interpretation could be applied to the stipulation regarding the ability of the rest of the assembly.

Nevertheless, the first degree of celebration focuses first on the presider and then on the congregation when they are in dialogue with or singing with the presider. It might be a fair assessment to say that the priority assigned to elements in the first degree comes out of the pre-Vatican II perspective that viewed the role of the priest—specifically his role alone—as essential to the celebration of the liturgy. It makes perfect sense then, that if the priest's role is central, that role should be performed in a singing mode. This is primary, or the first degree of celebration. Of course, even in the post-Vatican II understanding of the liturgy, the role of the priest presider is essential and central to the celebration of the liturgy. However—and this is where the principle of juxtaposition comes in—that understanding has in some ways been relativized by the renewed understanding of the role of the whole assembly as active rather than passive in the celebration of the liturgy. This new perspective is reflected in the fact that the assembly's role as singer of the liturgy is acknowledged and also given pride of place in the first degree of celebration together with that of the priest. Recall that *Musicam Sacram* states that the purpose of proposing degrees of solemnity for sung Mass is to make the congregation's ability to sing the Mass easier to facilitate. (The term "assembly" is usually understood to include both presider and congregation. The term "congregation" does not usually include the priest. However, both of these terms are often used interchangeably, frequently without making this distinction.) At any rate, the congregation's response to the priest's song is included in several instances in the first degree, including their response to the priest's greeting, the Gospel acclamation, the preface dialogue and *Sanctus*, the Lord's Prayer, and responses to the greeting of peace and final dismissal.

My hope is that this example demonstrates why individual statements in this document—or any document, for that matter—cannot be read in isolation. There are always other statements that qualify and sometimes relativize them. Recall that article 5 of MS states that “a liturgical service takes on a nobler aspect when the rites are celebrated with singing, the ministers of each rank take their parts . . . and the congregation actively participates.” This is fundamental. Another fundamental principle is stated in the last sentence of article 6 when it asserts that “it is above all necessary that those parts *which of their nature* [emphasis added] call for singing are in fact sung and *in the style and form demanded* [emphasis added] by the parts themselves.” This principle is so fundamental to sung liturgy, I would suggest, that it must determine the implementation of the three degrees of celebration. In other words, the *Gloria* is by its nature a hymn, and a psalm is by its nature a musical form, and so both of these “of their nature call for singing.” Yet the *Gloria* is listed in the second degree and the responsorial psalm in the third degree. Thus there appear to be some internal inconsistencies in *Musicam Sacram*. But this is often the case in documents that seek to move the Church to a new moment by juxtaposing the old and the new.

It would be difficult to find many actual worshiping communities in which the principles of progressive solemnity, as they are outlined in the three degrees of celebration in articles 29–31, are fully and successfully implemented today. And it is my contention that MS’s proposed strategy for assigning music, if observed rigidly, would probably not result in an ideal liturgical celebration today. That is because the Church’s experience of sung prayer is a living and growing experience. Part of that living and growing experience is that we have a new *ordo*. But much of it is because of forty years of thoughtful praxis. The process of reception—so essential to the process of embracing the legacy of Vatican II—is still operating in the Church. It did not end with the promulgation of *Musicam Sacram*—or any other document, for that matter. As Yves Congar wisely reminds us, reception involves “not only obedience but also a degree of consent and often of judgment, which brings into play the ecclesial community’s own original resources.”⁹

The principle of progressive solemnity has provided a useful framework for guiding worshiping communities in using ritual song to highlight the significance of Sunday, the solemnity of seasons and feasts, and the high points of the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the Eucharist. Its foundational principles—that music adds to the solemnity of the liturgy, that both the presider and congregation sing the liturgy according to their capabilities, that the parts of the liturgy that are musical forms be celebrated as musical forms, that the *Mass itself* be sung—these foundational principles should continue to determine how progressive solemnity is implemented in worshiping assemblies today. However, forty years of pastoral practice suggests—quite loudly actually—that the specifics of the three degrees of celebration need to be revised to reflect what forty years have taught us.

Progressive Solemnity: Moving Forward

Those of us who have been around long enough to remember both the exhilaration and the chaos that followed the promulgation of the Constitution

The principle of progressive solemnity was proposed as a way to enable music to serve the prayer of the Church better. Specifically, its purpose is to promote the active participation of all of the faithful, priest and congregation alike.

on the Sacred Liturgy can testify to the fact that guidelines were needed in those early days to steer a course between a rigid clinging to the past and an unfocused, uncontrolled adoption of an “anything goes” policy. The principle of progressive solemnity was and still is a helpful guide for promoting sung worship in the Roman Catholic tradition when its foundational principles are understood and implemented in an intelligent and responsible way. On the other hand, rigidly following the letter of the three degrees of celebration could, in my assessment, actually diminish any possibility of observing the spirit of the Instruction. In order to discover and observe the spirit of *Musica Sacram*, both the historical context of its original inspiration and intent and the contemporary context of a Church with forty years of interpretation, reception, and practice must be taken into account.

We need to study the directives of *Musica Sacram* in light of other Church documents, including those that speak about progressive solemnity and in light of the ways that worshiping communities have implemented that principle, oftentimes through trial and error. There appears to be less focus today on “who is singing” (a criterion for at least the first degree of celebration) and more on “how the singing implements music’s proper ministerial function.” In other words, as article 23 of *Music in Catholic Worship* tells us, music serves the ritual, the texts, and the assembly. This idea, of course, was clearly expressed in chapter six of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. The principle of progressive solemnity was not inspired by an attitude that views music as a frill that provides solemnity to the liturgy. Rather, the principle of progressive solemnity was proposed as a way to enable music to serve the prayer of the Church better. Specifically, its purpose is to promote the active participation of all of the faithful, priest and congregation alike. On that point, implementation of the instruction requires a lot of flexibility and a lot of common sense.

Musica Sacram’s interpretation of progressive solemnity seems to focus primarily on the amount of music: the greater the amount, the more solemn the liturgy. Today our understanding has expanded to include not only the amount of music but also the levels of complexity in vocal arrangements and instrumentation. In addition, we operate out of a more informed understanding of how the new *Ordo Missae*, as ritual activity, possesses its own innate rhythm, that is, its own high and low points. The liturgical year, its seasons, and the days of the week all possess their own innate rhythm as well. The reflections of liturgical theologians over the past forty years have assisted us in coming to a better understanding of that truth. They have also assisted us in understanding how music can heighten our experience of solemnity and highlight the high and low points that emerge within our celebrations of them.

Perhaps instead of understanding music’s role as falling within three distinct degrees of solemnity, today we might better imagine a continuum on which the liturgy moves from the most solemn to the most simple. On that continuum, the high points of the liturgy, the season, the year, or the week would be considered first for musical rendition. Easter and Sunday would be privileged liturgical times. Within the liturgy of the Eucharist, the Eucharistic Prayer with its dialogue, preface, and acclamations would be considered first. Within the liturgy of the Word, the Gospel, as the high point of that ritual moment, would be announced by singing the *Alleluia* or an alternate Lenten

acclamation. Musical forms like the *Gloria* and responsorial psalm would naturally be sung, but the type of setting (its musical complexity, choice of instrumentation, etc.) would be determined by the season or feast. Musical settings would respect musical forms. So the Lamb of God would be set to music that suits the litany form.

To return to a point made earlier, *Musicam Sacram*'s charge is that we "sing the Mass" not just "sing during Mass." If you take a close look at the first and second degrees of celebration, all the ritual items listed there are parts of the Mass. It is not until the third degree that songs for the entrance and Communion procession and for the presentation of the gifts are listed. Of course it does serve the rite and the assembly to sing at these points, especially the gathering and Communion hymn. (Might I add, as a side comment, that if we had studied *Musicam Sacram* more carefully in the past, disputes over the recessional hymn—not even mentioned in the instruction—might have been settled a long time ago.) The point is, already back in 1967, we were being urged to think in terms of ritual music, not the more popular practice of inserting hymns at the entrance, offertory, Communion, and recessional moments. That practice, affectionately labeled the four-hymn syndrome, resulted when the 1958 Instruction allowed for popular religious songs at those parts of the Tridentine Mass. The Sacred Congregation published a response to a query regarding this practice shortly after *Musicam Sacram* was published. It clearly stated that such a practice had been superseded by the liturgical reform of Vatican II.¹⁰

Finally, worshiping assemblies, for a variety of reasons, may have discovered that their limited resources are not best expended on singing such ritual texts as the presidential prayers, the *Kyrie*, or the profession of faith. Such decisions can be made fully in conformity with the vision of *Musicam Sacram*. Thus, while on the one hand we may not want to follow the order of precedence set up by *Musicam Sacram* rigidly, nevertheless the spirit of the general principles and its focus on singing the rite can still provide invaluable guidance for us today. Our ministry calls us to a faithful, honest, and intelligent reception of the liturgical reform as we continue to minister through music to the Church at prayer.

Notes

1. Documents of both the international group *Universa Laus* and the Milwaukee Symposia of Church Composers use the term "ritual music." See *Universa Laus*, "De musique dans les liturgies chrétiennes," in *Musique et liturgie* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1988). English translation, Claude Duchesneau and Michel Veuthey, eds., "Music in Christian Celebration," in *Music and Liturgy: The Universa Laus Document and Commentary*, trans. Paul Inwood (Washington, DC: The Pastoral Press, 1992). See also *The Milwaukee Symposia for Church Composers: A Ten Year Report* (Washington, DC: The Pastoral Press and Chicago, Illinois: Liturgy Training Publications, 1992).

2. The Sacred Congregation of Rites was an office of the Roman Curia established by Pope Sixtus V in 1588 after the Council of Trent. Its purpose was to protect the legitimate rites of the Church. This congregation was replaced by Pope Paul VI in 1969 by the Congregation for Divine Worship. In 1988, after some reorganization, the title was changed to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments.

3. See R. Kevin Seasoltz, *New Liturgy, New Laws* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1980), 175.

4. The Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy of the NCCB (now the USCCB) had actually published an earlier document entitled *The Place of Music in Eucharistic Celebrations*, which appeared in the same year that *Musicam Sacram* was published. However, this document was

soon superseded by *Music in Catholic Worship* as the authoritative and foundational statement regarding music in worship in the United States.

5. Hermann J. Pottmeyer, "A New Phase in the Reception of Vatican II," in *The Reception of Vatican II*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo, Jean-Pierre Jossua, and Joseph A. Komonchak, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1987), 37.

6. Pottmeyer, "A New Phase," 38.

7. Yves Congar, "Reception as an Ecclesial Reality," trans. John Griffiths, in *Election and Consensus in the Church*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo and Anton Weiler, 43–68, *Concilium: Religion in the Seventies*, no. 77 (New York, New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), 45.

8. Pottmeyer, "A New Phase," 29.

9. Congar, "Reception," 45.

10. See "Musicam Sacram" in English translation in *Documents on the Liturgy 1963–1979: Conciliar, Papal, and Curial Texts* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1982), note R4 on page 1299.



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The Role of the Choir after Vatican II

BY JAMES SAVAGE

Forty years ago, Pope Paul VI decreed the performance of a mighty duet, a cosmic duet, a duet that unified hearts and raised minds to “heavenly things” and prefigured “the heavenly Liturgy which is enacted in the holy city of Jerusalem.”¹ It was to be a duet sung for an audience of two: God and the faithful—God to be glorified, the faithful to be sanctified—a duet to be sung in churches great and small throughout the whole world.

Who was to sing this? Whose voices did Paul VI instruct us should be the voices of the great liturgical duet? They were to be the voice of the people and the voice of the choir: holy people and ministering choir.

Forty years ago, inspired by the Holy Spirit and guided by the bishops of the Second Vatican Council, on Pentecost Sunday 1967, Pope Paul approved and confirmed the cosmic duet in a document released by the Sacred Congregation of Rites—the Instruction on Music in the Liturgy, *Musicam Sacram*.

What a glorious duet *Musicam Sacram* envisions, more glorious than any pairing of voices by Bach or Mozart or Monteverdi! The principal voice—the star role—is of course always the voice of the singing people. But Pope Paul’s instruction is clear: This is not a solo for the people; the second voice is needed. The voice of the choir is needed to encourage the principal voice, lead the principal voice, and support the principal voice. As in the more earthly duets of Bach and Mozart and Monteverdi, at times, the *secondo voce*—the choir—alternates with the *primo*—the people. At times the *secondo* introduces the star voice, at times the *secondo* sings while the *primo* is silent, but at great climactic moments the *secondo* and *primo* sing together as one. The voice of the choir alternates with, sings in place of, joins together with, and inspires.

In the “General Norms” section of *Musicam Sacram*—nearly half of the

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“rules” section, the “norms” (fourteen of the total thirty-one paragraphs) instruct the Church about the essential responsibility of the choir’s voice. Here is what the pope and the Congregation of Rites teach about the choir’s role as a voice in the great duet: “Because of the liturgical ministry it performs, the choir’s role has become something of yet greater importance and weight.”² They also said: “Those in the choir hold a special place in the liturgical celebrations by reason of the ministry they perform.”³ And again: “The faithful should also be taught to unite themselves *interiorly to what the . . . choir sing[s]*, so that by *listening* to them they may raise their minds to God” (MS, 15, emphasis added).

The instruction also includes these particular norms for the choir when, in effect, they stand in for the congregation or sing some parts in their role as a choir: Particularly as the sung Mass is introduced, sung Mass parts “may be gradually added accordingly as they are proper to the people alone or to the choir alone” (MS, 7, emphasis added). If musical settings for several voices are used, “some of the people’s song . . . can be handed over to the choir alone” (MS, 16). Of course, the document notes, the people are not to be completely “excluded from those parts that concern them.” Again, the chants “which are called the ‘Ordinary of the Mass,’ if they are sung by musical settings written for several voices may be performed by the choir” (MS, 34). Of course, “large choirs . . . [in major churches] . . . should be retained for sacred celebrations of a more elaborate kind . . .” (MS, 20). And, finally, “in selecting the kind of sacred music to be used, whether it be for the choir or for the people, the capacities of those who are to sing the music must be taken into account” (MS, 9).

Building on the work of the Council Fathers, Paul VI decreed a revolutionary new way of performing music in liturgy: a nearly continuous duet between two groups of singers—the people and the choir—the liturgical choir supporting, inspiring, leading, encouraging, strengthening, teaching and, above all, singing with the people. Most of the norms governing the choir instruct us on this revolutionary new way of performing music in the liturgy. In fact, ten of the fourteen norms for the choir explain how to link the singing of the choir and the singing of the faithful.

Internal and External

There is one sentence in paragraph fifteen of *Musicam Sacram*, reflecting a key paragraph in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, that is so familiar because it is quoted so often, from one source or another, that we could all chant it together: “The faithful fulfill their liturgical role by making that full, conscious, and active participation which is demanded by the nature of the liturgy itself.” But we don’t hear the very next sentence quite so often. In fact, I had never really paid attention to it until Pope John Paul II rhapsodized on that very sentence to Archbishop Brunett of Seattle at his *ad limina* visit to the Holy See.

That next sentence clarifies “full, conscious, and active participation” by saying: “This participation should be above all *internal*, in the sense that by it the faithful join their mind to what they pronounce or hear and cooperate with heavenly grace.” But then the paragraph continues: “This participation

must be, on the other hand, *external* also, that is, such as to show the internal participation by gestures and bodily attitudes, by the acclamations, responses, and singing.” And the paragraph completes its teaching on participation in music this way: “The faithful should also be taught to *unite themselves interiorly* to what the choir sings so that *by listening* to it they may raise their minds to God.”

Ministers and Instruments

Other norms instruct the choir in how it may best encourage the people in this extraordinary new way of making music in the liturgy. On the roles of the various ministers, the document says: “The priest, sacred ministers, servers, reader, and those in the choir should perform the parts assigned to them in a way which is comprehensible to the people, in order that the responses of the people, when the rite requires it, may be made easy and spontaneous” (MS, 26). Choir members should remember that they are part of the gathered liturgical assembly, so “the choir should be placed in such a way . . . that it is a part of the whole congregation” (MS, 23). And the “directors of choirs should take care that the people always associate themselves with the singing by performing at least the easier sections of those parts which belong to them” (MS, 20).

The duet is between the congregation and the choir, but there is (thanks be to God or, at least, to St. Cecilia) a place for instruments. Curiously, however, only one of the general norms in *Musicam Sacram* mentions instruments, and that is a passing reference to how instruments can support the duet of the people and the choir: The ordinary of the Mass, if sung in musical settings written for several voices, “may be performed by the choir according to the customary norms, either *a cappella* or with instrumental accompaniment, as long as the people are not completely excluded from taking part in the singing” (MS, 34). But, outside the set of general norms, tucked in at the end of *Musicam Sacram*, are six paragraphs that comment on the role of the organ or certain “non-secular” instruments (MS, 62–67).

And where is the “cantor” or “psalmist” or “song leader” in this great duet? These terms do not appear anywhere in *Musicam Sacram*. The great duet described here is between congregation and choir, although the document does say that “provision should be made for at least one or two properly trained singers, especially where there is no possibility of setting up even a small choir” (MS, 21).

What Happened?

Paul VI rewrote, edited, argued, approved, confirmed, ordered publication, and established that his instruction should come into force forty years ago. And yet how often today—four decades later—do the people of God, the Christian faithful, sing the great duet with the choir, hearts united, minds raised to heavenly things, and the liturgy of the New Jerusalem prefigured? Not as often as Pope Paul and the Council Fathers had boldly believed.

What happened? Many of you could tell this part better than I. Maybe there really was no possibility of setting up even a small choir in parishes. Maybe

the exhilaration of solo singing was too compelling. Maybe the absence of repertory for this new form of music making clouded the vision. Certainly, the unfortunate growing conflict between liturgists and musicians in the 1960s and 1970s played a part. Whatever the reason, the revolutionary duet heard in the mind's ear of Pope Paul and the Council Fathers faded before it was performed.

A mere four years after *Musicam Sacram* was published, in 1972, the authors of *Music in Catholic Worship* barely even mention Pope Paul's instruction in the footnotes. Perhaps responding to the realities of parishes, perhaps reflecting rapidly changing liturgical values, the authors kept the people as the *primo* voice in the liturgical duet but replaced the *secondo* voice with the voice of the cantor. This is most clearly revealed in *Music in Catholic Worship's* discussion of musical roles, where the cantor is placed immediately after the congregation and above the choir.

When I started at St. James Cathedral in Seattle in 1981, the hot new book that was expected to be on the shelves of everyone working in Catholic liturgical music was the invaluable collection *The Liturgy Documents: A Parish Resource*. It contained, of course, The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the 1967 Instruction on Eucharistic Worship *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, *Music in Catholic Worship*, and four other complete documents, but not even a reference to the now nearly forgotten (or, worse, ignored) *Musicam Sacram*.

But the third edition of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (2000, 2002) did not forget about Pope Paul's vision. Our new *General Instruction* is grounded solidly in the norms of *Musicam Sacram*. Over and over, the *General Instruction* cites *Musicam Sacram* as the authority. Yet the differences between these two instructions is a striking revelation of realities learned during the nearly forty years separating them

Oh, Paul VI's vision of a great choir and people duet is still to be found in the *General Instruction*, but the cantor—not even named in *Musicam Sacram*—is as vivid a presence as the choir in the *General Instruction*.

During the years between the 1967 instruction and the 2000/2002 instruction, a myth took root that "Vatican II" had reduced the importance of the choir in Catholic liturgy. In places, choirs were disbanded or even prohibited in the name of Vatican II. Observers both inside and outside the Church commented on the health of the choir in Catholic worship.

A writer for the American Federation of Pueri Cantores, the self-described "student choral organization of the Catholic Church," reflects a growing tendency in the 1990s to attribute the languishing of Catholic choirs to the documents of Vatican II. Alarmed by the choral condition of American Catholic churches, the diagnosis published by Pueri Cantores reads: "Reflecting general lack of support of the arts, however *and reacting to worship guidelines set forth in Vatican II*, nearly all the [choirs that proliferated in Catholic churches across the country in the 1950s] disappeared during the late 1900s."⁴

Msgr. Richard Schuler, thoughtfully eulogized in our *Pastoral Music* journal,⁵ agreed that the patient was gravely ill but disagreed with the diagnosis. The governing document of Vatican II, he announced in his usual straightforward style, was not the cause. "*Musicam Sacram* was never truly put into effect. Choirs were discouraged by the assertion that there was no longer a place for them."⁶

A professor from Westminster Choir School pronounced the patient close to death: The professor wrote: “[Following the Second Vatican] Council, choirs, instead of proliferating, virtually disappeared. In many parishes today the choir sings only for special events: Christmas, Easter, Holy Week.”⁷

A recent NPM online survey asked musicians and non-musicians what helps congregations to sing. According to the results posted on the NPM website (January 10, 2007), “the survey asked people to select from among thirteen factors those that most helped them to sing the liturgy.” Non-musicians ranked the “leadership of the choir” near the bottom (number ten of thirteen, right behind “other” (29.6 percent of respondents). Even pastoral musicians themselves ranked the “leadership of the choir” halfway down the list at number six (47.3 percent). Both groups ranked the choir below cantor and instruments.

If the Archdiocese of Seattle is at all typical, most Catholics normally do not experience a choir’s support when they gather to celebrate the Sunday Eucharist. Most Catholics in our archdiocese are sung to, led by, and encouraged by an amplified soloist accompanied by a mid-twentieth century version of the Elizabethan broken consort—a keyboard, optional obbligato instruments, a guitar in some places, and, in some places, percussion.

Poor, poor Pope Paul! His vision barely visible; his duet scarcely sung! During the forty years since *Musicam Sacram* and the Constitution on the Liturgy, the myth that Vatican II in some way reduced the choir’s importance pervades Catholic discussion. The cosmic duet has become at best, a trio. The patient is reported to be near death.

What is the prognosis for our dear friend, the choir?

A Grain of Sand

My friends, please indulge me a bit if, before braving to peer out at a larger and more daunting world, I start with the cozy familiarity of my home. In doing so I am borrowing from the wisdom of William Blake, who, as he began a reflection on the divine mystery of the cosmos, started in a cozier and more familiar place:

To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour.⁸

So, before we try to see the world of Catholic choirs, here’s my grain of sand: a brief history of music at my home parish, the Cathedral of St. James in Seattle, Washington.

This year, on the Feast of St. James, July 25, my parish will celebrate its centennial. It’s been tough thinking about the topic for this presentation—to prophesy publicly about the shape of things to come. In fact, it has been a lot easier, during the months leading up to our centennial celebration, to muse about one hundred years of music making at my own tiny corner of the globe in St. James Cathedral than it has been to grope for insightful reflections on global issues of music in liturgy and astounding prophecies of the future of choral music in the church.

Most Catholics normally do not experience a choir’s support when they gather to celebrate the Sunday Eucharist.

In 1903, a small group of pioneer Catholics in Seattle set about purchasing a great hilltop property overlooking the port town, raising money through raffles and fairs and contests, and above all—at least from our perspective—organizing a cathedral choir, a four-part choir of men and women eager to sing much-loved Catholic favorites by American composers. They worked hard to sing popular opera choruses to raise money at the Cathedral Fair. They practiced Masses by Lambillotte and Rosewig for liturgies in the temporary chapel and, of course, they began preparing grand choral music for the grand new cathedral.

Now, that same year also happened also to be the year of St. Pius, X's famous *motu proprio, Tra le sollecitudini*.⁹ But what was promulgated in Rome took time to get to the end of the earth in the Pacific Northwest, and so it wasn't until shortly before the brand-new cathedral was to be dedicated that the missile Rome had fired off landed in Seattle and blasted a huge crater. The women of the choir who had practiced so long were banned by the *motu proprio*, and the poor choir director was replaced with a hotshot Boston organist discovered in Widor's studio in Paris: Dr. Franklin Sawyer Palmer. The repertory that had been so carefully rehearsed was shelved, chant books were obtained, and the new choir of men was quickly thrown together to learn the newly mandated Gregorian chants.

Nine years later, on the Feast of the Presentation, an environmental disaster struck St. James. More snow fell in one storm than has ever fallen in Seattle's recorded history, and the cathedral's mighty dome collapsed—destroying nearly everything in the cathedral (except, fortunately, the organ in the west gallery). And all this happened before the decoration of the cathedral was finished, before the mortgage was paid, and before the Catholic population of Seattle had grown to fit the grand edifice.

The disaster humiliated the still tiny Catholic community, depleted the already depleted funds, and pretty much ended the plans to put an echo division of the organ up in the dome.

But the liturgical music program survived the Masses in the cathedral's school cafeteria and the influenza pandemic of 1918 and entered a golden period. During the 1920s and early 1930s, the still all-male choir moved from the west gallery to the east apse behind the altar, Casavant installed a second organ to accompany the choir, and Dr. Palmer and his friend, Pietro Yon, performed the Widor Mass for two choirs and two organs at the dedication of the new choir organ. In addition, eight of the city's best professional singers (men, of course!) were maintained on the payroll, the associate organist was sent off to Paris to study with Vierne, the choir's singing was broadcast weekly, and new works by Parisian Catholic composers were premiered. Further, the application in the cathedral school of Justine Ward's method for training children to sing Gregorian chant received national attention.

And then, within a short period in the mid-1930s, things changed dramatically for the worse. The enlightened pastor of many years moved on; the bishop died—the only bishop any Catholic in the diocese younger than forty had ever known; after twenty-six-and-a-half years of faithful service in the cathedral, Dr. Palmer had a fatal stroke at the organ console during the Palm Sunday postlude; and the Great Depression wreaked havoc on the budget. Singers moved on; organ maintenance funds dried up; the instrument budget evaporated; and a forty-five-year revolving door for music

directors started spinning. Talented, liturgy-loving, faith-filled musicians came, dreamed, tried their best, and soon left for greener pastures.

World War II spelled the end of any attempt to maintain a liturgical choir, and seminarians were bussed in to provide music for major solemnities. During the 1950s, a new archbishop renovated the cathedral with acres of carpeting and even more acres of acoustical materials, producing the only space in Christendom with a minus two-second reverberation. Postwar white flight to the suburbs began, and for too many successive years, the cathedral parish had a net loss of more than one hundred families a year. The already diminished budgets declined further, the organs were no longer maintained, and the revolving door for music directors continued to spin fast and furiously.

In the 1960s and 1970s, however, St. James Cathedral began to feel the effects of the Second Vatican Council for good and ill. Women returned to the choir to swell the ranks to nearly seventeen singers on a good day. (Well, maybe not on a *good day in Seattle*, since no-rain-Sundays meant fewer worshippers and choristers.) The average parishioner was past retirement age. The cathedral school closed. The cathedral's now-unused collection of copies of the *Liber Usualis* was stolen copy by copy. Latin survived only in the occasional singing of *Agnus Dei* XVII ("for the ferias of Advent and Lent"), the *Pange Lingua* on Holy Thursday, and *Tantum ergo* at Benediction. The St. Louis Jesuits set up residence across Broadway at Seattle University, and their students set up residence at the 5:30 Sunday Mass at St. James.

In the 1980s the revolving door of music directors finally got stuck and stopped spinning. I have now been the director of music ministries at the cathedral for twenty-six-and-a-half years. Two enlightened pastors have inspired and supported liturgical music. Budgets have been restored and enhanced. The 1907 Hutchings-Votey organ was brought back to its original glory. An architectural renovation and restoration brought national attention. A magnificent new organ was built by Rosales. Seattle's urban core stopped hemorrhaging.

So here's what I learned about the world to come from holding this grain of sand. No prescient observer a century ago in Seattle could have prophesied the path our parish's music program wandered. Over and over, during our short century at St. James, a structure for liturgical music seemed firmly established, but in the next day or the next decade the foundations had shaken, the musical house had fallen apart, and a new unpredicted rebuilding had to begin.

The earthquakes that shook the foundations of St. James's musical house were caused by the same plate tectonics that have affected liturgical musicians for centuries and that will continue to do so. The tremors that rocked music at St. James have rocked your parish music program and will continue to do so.

The fault lines along which the earth shook included new documents from Rome; changes in leadership in the parish, the diocese, and Rome; environmental chaos; economic chaos; war; and changing demography.

All of us who minister as liturgical musicians live in an earthquake zone. The movements of our earth's plates are predictably unpredictable. Paul VI could dream of a cosmic liturgical duet, but even he could not predict the future. That is why I have stalled for as long as I can this discussion of the

The fault lines along which the earth shook included new documents from Rome; changes in leadership in the parish, the diocese, and Rome; environmental chaos; economic chaos; war; and changing demography.

future of the choir in the liturgy. Like you, I work in the here and now and can barely predict next year. I certainly cannot prophesy the next five years at St. James. Our archbishop is two years away from mandatory retirement; our current enlightened pastor's term of office has been stretched way past its usual limits; the population of our downtown neighborhood will double in the next five years; and I am sixty-four years old.

Two Prophets

Fortunately we *do* have prophets to whom we can turn—prophets who dare to ponder the future of the Catholic Church in the coming decades. Two of our most daring prophets in recent times have been Father Robert Schreiter, CPPS, Bernardin Center Vatican II Professor of Theology at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago and Professor of Theology and Culture at the University of Nijmegen in The Netherlands, and John Allen, reporter and columnist for the *National Catholic Reporter*.

In a presentation to members of SEDOS¹⁰ on the missionary church of 2025, Father Schreiter hedged his prophetic bets by saying: "Trying to peer more than two decades into the future is a very risky undertaking. If we were to place ourselves backward for the same length of time, would we have predicted the collapse of the Soviet Union, the end of the Cold War, and the rise of globalization? The best we can do in all of this is to make some extrapolations from the present."¹¹ Still, he went forward to identify seven "salient ideas" that have "particular relevance for the work of the missionary Church in the next two decades" as well as looking at the leadership of missionary institutes in 2025.

Our other prophet, John Allen, recently prophesied "ten mega-trends shaping the Catholic Church." His prophecy held for a solid week, and then he was compelled to publish the "top five 'missing mega-trends' shaping Catholicism."¹² Allen's expanded fifteen mega-trends parallel to a striking degree Father Schreiter's view of the future. All of Allen's mega-trends are provocative and worth thought, but we need to ask ourselves questions raised by six of the fifteen trends if we wish to contemplate the future of liturgical music and the role of the choir in that future.

1. Global Shift. Allen observes that in 1900 the Catholic Church was overwhelmingly white and lived in Europe and North America. In 2000, two thirds of the world's 1.1 billion Catholics lived in the global south. "This," he says, "is the most rapid and sweeping demographic transformation of Catholicism in its 2,000 year history."¹³

How does this global shift affect the cosmic duet of people and choir? In 1985, before he was elected Benedict XVI, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger spoke directly to the matter in an address on liturgy and Church music. "In Africa, Asia, and Latin America" he said, "we are apparently on the threshold of a new florescence of the faith which could also give rise to new cultural forms." Forms which open, he continued, "new paths which we could not previously see." He encouraged musicians to look to these new musical paths of the southern hemisphere in the "hope that one day something will emerge which can belong to all."¹⁴

If we wish to continue the great duet between people and choir, then, we

might well look to the Church in Malawi where the duet is so wondrously performed, where the musical praise and prayer flow seamlessly from choir to people and from people to choir, and is always then sung by people *and* choir.

2. Catholic Identity. Another mega-trend, Allen says, “is the relentless press for a stronger sense of Catholic identity” — a growing emphasis on “efforts to reinforce distinctively Roman Catholic language and practices, our markers of difference in a rapidly homogenizing world.” According to Allen, “The emphasis on identity cuts across debates large and small from whether theologians should have a *mandatum* from a bishop certifying their orthodoxy to whether lay people should be allowed to purify the sacred vessels after Mass.”¹⁵

Shortly before he died, John Paul reminded liturgical musicians of the power of our own most “distinctively Roman Catholic language,” our musical “marker of difference.” The Pope wrote: “Gregorian chant continues today to be an element of unity in the Roman Liturgy.”¹⁶

And so the questions we need to ask as we look to the future include these: How will we as choir directors respond to the next generation’s need for choral “markers of Catholic difference”? What will the role of our “distinctively Roman Catholic language” — Latin — be in the choral music of the coming years? What will be the place of the Tridentine Mass in the music making of the future? What will the role of Gregorian chant be in the coming decades?

3. Our Wireless World. Another of Allen’s mega-trends shaping the Catholic Church is as consequential a change as that created by the printing press. “Today,” Allen says, “anyone who can find their way to a Starbucks with a laptop can be their own publisher. . . . The Catholic conversation is a wide-open marketplace . . .”¹⁷ Already that great publisher Outlook Express pours onto my desk a stream of unsolicited new works complete with sound. Frequently they are sent by composers I do not know, yet, somehow, I feel obligated to look at them more closely than the samples sent by print publishers. My e-mail in-box has a mysterious power over me that the U.S. Postal Service no longer has.

And in this wireless world, mining our historic “treasure of inestimable value” is cheap and easy. Why should I use our limited budget for a published motet when I can go online to find far more Renaissance or Baroque or Cecilian movement motets than our choirs at St. James could use in a decade, download the perfect gem for the Nativity of John the Baptist, edit it for our use, copy it, and distribute it at that evening’s choir rehearsal? What will this mean for our good friends in the print publishing industry tomorrow? Will we discover that we actually needed the cohesion, stability, and unity provided by GIA, OCP, and WLP? Will the flood of available materials create musical islands of our parishes as each music director picks through the flotsam and jetsam of “OEP” — Outlook Express Publishers?

And horror of horrors, in the dark nights of the wireless world, will some sort of “iMissalette” held in the hand of each worshiper do away with hymnals, missals, and watching the leader of song?

4. Unity for Engagement *ad Extra*. Allen traces another mega-trend to a revolution started by John Paul. The late pope, Allen says, “cried *basta!* (‘enough!’) to the season of experimentation and reform that followed the

Is it time for liturgical musicians to cry “*basta*”? Is it time to “stop tinkering” with music within the structure of the liturgy and get on to the business of spreading the Gospel?

Second Vatican Council, calling Catholics to a strong sense of internal unity in order fuel a more effective engagement with the world outside.”¹⁸ According to Allen, John Paul urged us to “end the navel-gazing, stop tinkering with church teachings and structures, and get on with evangelizing the world.”

Reportedly the new *Directory on Music and the Liturgy* will agree with John Paul.¹⁹ *Basta!* Enough! Under the heading “Liturgical Songs Must be Relatively Fixed,” the document observes that “the sheer number of liturgical songs has militated against the establishment of a common repertoire. For many reasons there is a steady output of new liturgical music. While this dynamic has often benefited the Church and her Liturgy, it also seems desirable that a certain stable core of liturgical songs might well serve as a stabilizing factor.”

Is it time for liturgical musicians to cry “*basta*”? Is it time to “stop tinkering” with music within the structure of the liturgy and get on to the business of spreading the Gospel? But before we answer these questions, we must ask: Are we willing to stop recreating the repertory every few years? Are we willing to agree on a unified repertory? How do we inspire new composers whose works are not yet in the canon?

5. Polarization and Discontent. Allen’s vibrant articulation of this trend resists paraphrasing so I will quote it in its entirety:

One of the defining features of the post-conciliar era in Roman Catholicism has been a kind of Catholic tribalism, pitting left against right, liturgically oriented Catholics against social activists, local churches against Rome, and so on down the familiar litany of internal fractures. It’s not just that there is division, a fact of ecclesiastical life that dates back to the Acts of the Apostles. Today’s Catholic tribes attend their own conferences, read their own journals, applaud their own heroes, and have developed their own languages, so that on the rare occasions when they encounter Catholics of other perspectives it can actually be difficult to communicate. In many ways, Catholics of all these tribes have been unwittingly evangelized by the secular culture, seeing the church as one more battlefield upon which interest group struggles are fought. Yet these divisions are also puzzling and disheartening to many Catholics, especially those under forty who were born after Vatican II, and there are indications of a growing desire for a different way of managing relationships in the church.²⁰

Father Schreier suggests how the new generation will “manage relationships”:

Modernity itself will not be the same kind of measuring rod for assessing all things that it was for the previous generation who came of age with the Second Vatican Council and the efforts at reform in the decade following. [This new generation] will be able to move more readily between different worlds—not so much because they feel comfortable doing so, but because they have had to within their own lifetimes. This has the potential of making them more flexible in meeting people in those different worlds.²¹

6. The Crisis of Secularism. Of this last mega-trend that seems to me to portend something about liturgical music in the near future, Allen observes that the “‘ecclesiastical winter’ of contemporary Europe” and the “rise of an increasingly pugnacious form of atheism, evidenced most recently by Richard Dawkins’ book, *The God Delusion*,” and Christopher Hitchens’ bestseller, *God Is Not Great*, continue to fuel the debate “as to whether the solution is to

‘modernize’ the church, bringing it more into line with contemporary secular expectations—or to reinforce its traditional identity, on the grounds that secularism poses a crisis not of structures or teachings, but of nerve.”²²

If the solution tilts toward reinforcing our traditional identity, where are we to find the nerve? There are musical trends that, though not yet “mega,” might be hopeful “minis.” And from these we might take courage.

The International Federation Pueri Cantores, whose business it is to know what is happening today and tomorrow in Catholic youth choirs, is represented in the United States by the American Federation Pueri Cantores. On its website, this “local branch” has observed that during the first years of the present century, “many Catholic communities are once again committed to establishing and developing new choirs of young singers throughout America. Sharing exciting and expanded vision, these choirs create unprecedented opportunities for children, families, schools, and churches.” Pueri Cantores predicts that by next year they will be reaching more than 10,000 student singers nationwide.²³

And here is more good news to encourage the faint-hearted: The American choral culture is not the same as it was when *Music in Catholic Worship* was written. In the *New York Times* (Sunday, April 22, 2007), in an article titled “A Mass by Committee, and a Test of Belief,” Meline Tourmani noted: “According to recent studies by the National Endowment for the Arts and Chorus America, choral singing is the most popular creative art form in the country. More than 23 million adults perform regularly in a choir or chorus.”

World-renowned choral conductors have also made observations that should embolden us. The music director of Chanticleer, quoted by Tourmani, said this past spring that choral appreciation in this country is on the rise. And Dom Lilievre, the music director of Solesmes Monastery, has noticed that during the past few years in France—secular France!—interest in chant choirs has grown in Catholic churches throughout the country.²⁴

In 2003, to borrow John Allen’s colorful rhetoric, Pope John Paul cried out to liturgical musicians: “*Basta!*” (“Enough!”) The time is now! This is to be our future in the twenty-first century. Quoting *Musicam Sacram*, he said: “Choirs are to be developed with great care because the choir is responsible for the correct performance of its part to help the faithful to take an active part in the singing.”²⁵ And Pope Benedict announces the way to our future in typically bold words: “An authentic renewal of sacred music can only happen in the wake of the great tradition of the past, of Gregorian chant and sacred polyphony.” And, he noted, “sacred polyphony, particularly that of the so-called ‘Roman School,’ is a legacy to preserve with care, to keep alive, and to make known not only for the benefit of experts and lovers of it but also for the entire Ecclesial Community, for which it constitutes a priceless spiritual, musical, and cultural heritage.”²⁶

Giuseppe Liberto, the current music director of the renewed, rejuvenated, and reinvigorated Sistine Choir, with the encouragement of the pope, is showing us how this renewal of sacred music might sound. Liberto’s sacred music compositions are modern polyphony—of our time, yet respectful of the Roman roots. It is music that celebrates the great duet, music for the people *and* for the choir—singable, memorable refrains for the people, real choral music for the choir. It is musical praise and prayer that, like the sacred music of modern Malawi, flows from people to choir and choir to people

in a seamless unity. Rome has put its money where its mouth is and shown new composers a way to the future.

Dreaming the Vision

I do not know the future, I do not know when or how the plates of our musical earth will shift. But I dream. I dream that Pope Paul's vision for our liturgy is our future: The great duet will be sung. I am encouraged to dream by Pope Benedict's words to the Sistine choir boys and to all of us who dream of a time when the choir takes its rightful place in the sung liturgy of churches large and small. He said:

I did not have time to prepare a talk, although my idea was quite simple: to say . . . a "thank you" to you for all that you give us the whole year round, for this great contribution to the glory of God and to the joy of the people on earth.

. . . It is true that in the singing [of the choir at liturgy] we can sense the presence of the heavenly liturgy, we can feel a little of the beauty through which the Lord wants to communicate his joy to us. . . .

. . . Your contribution is essential to the liturgy: It is not a marginal embellishment, for the liturgy as such demands this beauty; it needs song to praise God and to give joy to those taking part.

I wish to thank you with all my heart for this major contribution. . . .

I know—since my brother has, as it were, enabled me to have a first-hand experience of a choir . . .—that this beauty demands a huge commitment and many sacrifices on your part. You have to rise early, boys, in order to get to school; I know Rome's traffic and I can therefore guess how difficult it often is for you to arrive on time. Then, you have to practice to the very end in order to achieve this perfection. . . .

I thank you for all this, also because . . . while your companions go on long outings, you have to stay [in the church] to sing and sometimes even have to wait for an hour before being able to sing; and yet you are always ready to make your contribution.

. . . My gratitude . . . is too strong for words.²⁷

Notes

1. Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction on Music in the Liturgy *Musicam Sacram*, hereafter MS (March 5, 1967), paragraph/article number 5. English translation from International Commission on English in the Liturgy, *Documents on the Liturgy 1963–1979: Conciliar, Papal, and Curial Texts* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1982), document 508, nos. 4122–4190, pages 1293–1306.

2. MS, 19, emphasis added.

3. MS, 13, word order inverted.

4. <http://www.puericantores.com/Results.tpl?rnd=8674&cart=739C7B5A-8C56-486F-94EC-EE933E720E70&category=4&startat=1>.

5. *Pastoral Music* 31:5 (June-July 2007), 12.

6. You can read the rest of Msgr. Schuler's disheartening diagnosis in his article, "A Chronicle of the Reform: Catholic Music in the 20th Century," in Robert A. Skeris, ed., *Cum Angelis Canere: Essays on Sacred Music and Pastoral Liturgy in Honour of Richard J. Schuler* (St. Paul, Minnesota: Catholic Church Music Associates, 1990), appendix, 349–419.

7. Lucy E. Carroll, "Banish the Soloists, Let the People Sing," *Adoremus Bulletin*, online edition IX: 5 (July-August 2003). Dr. Lucy E. Carroll is an adjunct associate professor at Westminster Choir College, Princeton, New Jersey, and the organist/music director at the Carmelite Monastery of Philadelphia.

8. William Blake (1757–1827), "Auguries of Innocence." This poem was first published by Dante Gabriel Rossetti in his edited collection Blake's *Poems* (1863). It was edited by Rossetti from a manuscript written by Blake, probably during his stay at Felpham (1800–1803), and

later known as the Pickering Manuscript., from a Mr. B. J. Pickering who bought it and published an edition of it, more accurate than Rossetti's, in 1866.

9. Pius X, Juridical Code of Sacred Music *Tra le sollecitudini* in *Pius X: Pontificis Maximi Acta*, I:77.

10. SEDOS—the Service of Documentation and Study of Global Mission—with headquarters in Rome, is a forum open to institutes of consecrated life which commit themselves to deepening their understanding of global mission. Website: <http://www.sedos.org>.

11. Robert Schreiter, *CPFS*, "Toward the Missionary Church of 2025," an address to the 2002 SEDOS seminar at Ariccia, a suburb of Rome. See http://www.sedos.org/ariccia02/schreiter_1.htm.

12. John L. Allen, Jr., *All Things Catholic*, NCR Conversation Café, Dec 22 and 28, 2006. See <http://ncrcafe.org/node/782> and <http://ncrcafe.org/node/787>.

13. Allen, <http://ncrcafe.org/node/782>.

14. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, "Liturgy and Church Music," address to the VIII International Church Music Congress, Rome, November 17, 1985. English translation available at <http://www.musicasacra.com/publications/sacredmusic/pdf/liturgy&music.pdf>.

15. Allen, <http://ncrcafe.org/node/782>.

16. Pope John Paul II, Chirograph for the Centenary of the *Motu Proprio "Tra le Sollecitudini"* On Sacred Music (November 22, 2003), 7. English translation available at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/letters/2003/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_20031203_musica-sacra_en.html.

17. Allen, <http://ncrcafe.org/node/782>.

18. *Ibid.*

19. This text was approved by the Latin Church bishops of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in November 2006, and it has been sent to Rome for approval.

20. Allen, <http://ncrcafe.org/node/782>.

21. Schreiter, "Toward the Missionary Church of 2025," 7.

22. Allen, <http://ncrcafe.org/node/787>.

23. www.puericantores.com.

24. John Tagliabue, "At the Local Abbey, Singing Unto the Lord an Old Song," *New York Times*, April 10, 2007.

25. Pope John Paul II, Chirograph on *Tra le Sollecitudini*, 8.

26. Pope Benedict XVI, address at the end of a concert offered in honor of the Holy Father and sponsored by the Domenico Bartolucci Foundation, Sistine Chapel, June 24, 2006. English translation at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/june/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060624_fondazione-bartolucci_en.html.

27. Address of his Holiness Benedict XVI to the members of the Pontifical "Sistine" Choir, December 20, 2005. English translation at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2005/december/documents/hf_ben_xvi_spe_20051220_cappella-musicale_en.html.



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A Council of the Church . . . has published to every community of believers throughout the world a manifesto of reform in worship—so profound, so evangelical, so moving that it has precipitated a crisis in the Catholic conscience. It is no longer possible—in any parish or diocese or religious house on the planet—to pretend that nothing has happened. The full extent of what has happened none of us knows, nor will we know for many years to come.

Robert W. Hooda

*“The Paschal Mystery and the Liturgical Year”
Twenty-Fifth North American Liturgical Week, 1964*

The Heritage of Sacred Music

BY EDWARD SCHAEFER

I have been asked to address the topic of the liturgical use of music from the Church's treasure of sacred music with particular focus on *Musicam Sacram* (MS), the instruction that was issued by the Sacred Congregation of Rites in 1967, shortly after the Second Vatican Council concluded.¹ I can only speculate that the request was directed to me because of my near fanatical devotion, first, to Gregorian chant over the last couple of decades and, second, to the restoration of the sung liturgy and the preservation of the Church's treasure of sacred music in this context. So it is a topic with which I have struggled greatly, about which I have come to some unique conclusions, and with which I have also enjoyed some unique successes. So I am very pleased and honored to be able to share my thoughts and my story with you.

In order to look adequately at MS and the topic of the liturgical use of music from the Church's heritage, it is critical to understand both the document and the topic in a broader context, most particularly in the context of the perceived tension between the idea of full, active, and conscious participation and that of using the great music from the Church's polyphonic treasury. In another essay in this series (see page one), Father Edward Foley discussed how the concept of full, active, and conscious participation has changed our very understanding of the term "sacred music." It was a timely presentation. Our notions about participation have, indeed, changed the way we perceive sacred music. This is also a concept that has been taken up by Father Michael Joncas in his book *From Sacred Song to Ritual Music*.² My thesis will not take issue with either of these fine scholars. Rather, my purpose will be, first, to acknowledge the tension that these changes have created between those who are dedicated to preserving the Church's musical heritage and those who see this preservation as antithetical to full participation, and, second,

to offer some reflections and options that may suggest a different path for the future than that of polarization and hostility.

I propose to approach this task in four steps: first, by offering a brief look at the history of the term and the concept of active participation; second, by giving a summary of the historical context which led to the writing of *Musicam Sacram*; third, by taking a look at MS itself and its aftermath, that is, the development of the document *Music in Catholic Worship*, the divergent paths that these documents proposed, and the ensuing actual practice; and finally by offering some reflections about the current situation, about my own work in trying to address the tension to which I have just referred, and about some options for the future.

Active Participation

On November 22, 1903, the feast of St. Cecilia, just three months and eighteen days after his election as pontiff, Pope Pius X (1903–1914) issued a type of decree known as a *motu proprio*, which was directed toward the reform of music in the Church. Entitled *Tra le sollecitudini*, it was modeled after reforms of music he had initiated as bishop of Mantua in 1888 and as patriarch of Venice in 1895.

The document codified some principles that had been established by the Council of Trent and reinforced by groups such as the Cecilian societies of the nineteenth century. It also forged the principles that would be the basis for music making in the Church for more than half a century. In general terms, these principles called for music that would support the purposes of the liturgy, which the *motu proprio* defined as the glorification of God and the sanctification and edification of the faithful,³ purposes which would be affirmed sixty years later by the Second Vatican Council.⁴

None of Pius X's reforms was dramatically out of context with any of the musical reforms in the Church during the preceding four centuries—with the exception of one. The Holy Father mandated that Gregorian “chant be restored to the use of the people, so that they may take a more active part in the [ecclesiastical] offices, as they did in former times.”⁵ However, the first version of this document was published in Italian, and the translator of *Tra le sollecitudini* who prepared the official Latin version was evidently uncomfortable with Pius X's rather radical use of the term “active.” The official Latin text renders the phrase, in an English translation, this way: “Above all Gregorian chant should be restored to the people, so that they, as Christians, again may *more strongly* participate in the sacred liturgy.”⁶ The Italian “attiva” was not translated into Latin as “*actuosa*” (“active”) but rather as “*more maiorum*,” (“more strongly”). The discomfort felt by the document's translator and the tension created by this little word “active” have clearly not dissipated more than a century later!

Pius XI revived the term “active participation” in *Divini cultus*,⁷ and Pius XII repeated the terminology of Pius XI,⁸ but he also contextualized the notion of active participation by saying that its “chief aim is to foster and promote the people's piety and intimate union with Christ and His visible minister and to arouse those internal sentiments and dispositions which should make our hearts become like that of the High Priest of the New Testament.”⁹ That

is, externally active participation is a vehicle toward a deeper interior disposition; it is not an end in itself.¹⁰

At the Second Vatican Council, however, the council fathers placed an even greater emphasis on the external elements of participation, boldly stating that in the reform of the liturgy the “full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered *before all else*.”¹¹ I can only speculate, but I would image that if the council fathers were asked, they would certainly agree with Pius XII’s admonition that externally active participation is only a vehicle toward a deeper inner disposition and not an end in itself. The emphasis that it be “considered before all else,” was most certainly an attempt to convey their conviction of its value in leading to this deeper interior disposition. How could it be otherwise?

Unfortunately, however, the council’s emphatic mandate that active participation “be considered before all else” has become in practice a mandate applied with a kind of rigidity totally uncharacteristic of any liturgical reforms in the history of the Church—with the possible exception of the replacement of local chants with Gregorian chant by the Holy Roman Empire as it spread from Gaul to Rome between the ninth and the twelfth centuries. The rigid application of the council’s mandate has only heightened the tension surrounding the meaning and purpose of “active participation.”

Musicians and liturgists have perhaps been the most vocal exponents of opposing interpretations of this phrase. Musicians, with their background in the Church’s great “treasure of sacred music” and their intimate understanding of its spiritual value, have emphasized strongly that “active” participation does not preclude participation through “listening,” in particular listening to the great works of the Church’s artistic repertoire.

Liturgists, with their emphasis on pastoral matters, have promoted the outward elements of participation, emphasizing the belief that, using St. Augustine’s terminology, “a congregation that is devoutly present at the sacrifice . . . cannot keep silent, for ‘song befits the lover’¹² and, as the ancient saying has it, ‘he who sings well prays twice.’”¹³

Of course, an accurate interpretation is to be found more in a holistic amalgamation of the extreme positions than it is in either one or the other.¹⁴ Too, at some level, most people—even musicians and liturgists—agree at least conceptually that full and active participation has both external and internal elements.

When we examine some options for the future, we will revisit this topic of active participation. For the moment, however, its role in the discussion of the use of music from the Church’s treasury of sacred music, that is, music that will typically be sung by a choir and not by the congregation, should be sufficiently apparent. Openness to the musical treasury will be directly influenced by how the term “active participation” is interpreted and applied.

The Historical Context of *Musicam Sacram*

In the same way that an understanding of the history of the term “active participation” is important to a discussion about the liturgical use of polyphonic music, so too is the historical context of *Musicam Sacram* critical to

The rigid application of the council’s mandate has only heightened the tension surrounding the meaning and purpose of “active participation.”

a full understanding of its contribution to the same discussion. So we must take a brief look at this context.

In addition to its revolutionary thoughts about active participation, the *motu proprio* of Pius X gave a strong impetus to the most pervasive revival of chant in the Church's history. Pius X certainly addressed the use of the polyphonic treasury of the Church at Mass, but clearly the promotion of Gregorian chant as *the* music of the Church was the centerpiece of the document. Both papal documents and reform activities over the next several decades embraced this concept wholeheartedly.

Polyphony was in no way excluded or even diminished in its value. It was simply always placed in a certain context, a context in which chant was the preeminent music of the Church and a context in which active participation took on increasing importance.

While it is certainly possible to quote chapter and verse from the lineage of documents regarding this interpretation,¹⁵ it may be more useful to examine how the reforms unfolded, that is, to see how the documents affected the liturgical/musical life of the Church.

Certainly the environment in which Pius X wrote *Tra le sollecitudini* was already providing certain elements of reform, in particular in the Cecilian movement and in the chant restoration movement spearheaded by the monks of Solesmes in the mid-nineteenth century. The Cecilian movement generated an intense interest in Gregorian chant and in the music of Palestrina. The restoration work of the monks of Solesmes, including the monumental series *Paléographie musicale*, in addition to such ventures as Franz Xavier's reprint of the Medicean Gradual, the so-called Ratisbon edition,¹⁶ and Haberl's edition of the complete works of Palestrina¹⁷ are but a few examples of the serious musicological efforts spurred either by the Cecilian movement itself or by sympathetic thinking.

However, while the early years of the Cecilian movement generated a great deal of interest in chant and in the music of Palestrina, they were not as successful in inspiring new music of comparable artistic merit to that of Palestrina and the great composers of the High Renaissance. Most composers slavishly imitated the *a cappella* style of Palestrina without producing comparable artistic results. The great twentieth-century Catholic musicologist Gustav Fellerer mentions Michael Haller (1840–1915) and Franz Nekes (1844–1914) as two composers who were “successful in imitating the old *a cappella* style.”¹⁸ However, today we would view both of these as relatively minor composers. They are virtually unknown. Even so, while many of the reform-inspired compositions may have lacked great artistic value, they were useful in restoring a balance between music and its liturgical role. They provided music that was both an alternative to the excesses of the monumental symphonic-operatic repertoire and accessible to most parishes.

Following the promulgation of *Tra le sollecitudini*, the efforts of chant restoration that had begun in the previous century were given a remarkable boost in the United States by Justine Baylor Ward, one of the foremost supporters of the chant restoration movement in the early decades of the twentieth century. Beginning in 1910, Justine Ward taught at the Sisters College of The Catholic University of America. There she developed the *Ward Method*, a music curriculum based on Gregorian chant for Catholic students in grades one through eight.¹⁹ From 1916 to 1917, she taught at Manhattanville College of

the Sacred Heart, where she established a chair of sacred music. In 1918 she founded, along with Mother Georgia Stevens, the Pius X School of Liturgical Music at the college. She gave and sponsored regular workshops and courses on her method, and in 1920, at a Sacred Music Congress in New York, 3,500 children trained in the Ward Method sang for Mass, singing Mass VIII, while an adult choir of seminarians sang the proper.²⁰ It was a high point in the chant renewal movement, giving tangible proof that Pius X's goals of chant and congregational singing were not only compatible but also attainable.

In addition to the chant restoration efforts in the United States, similar efforts were initiated throughout Europe. The present-day Pontifical Institute for Sacred Music at Rome was also established as a result of *Tra le sollecitudini* so that there would "be an official center for the music of the Church in order that from it the true principles of liturgical music should go forth to the Catholic world."²¹

Also following the *motu proprio* of Pius X, there was renewed energy in societies affiliated with the ideals of the Cecilian movement, not only with regard to fostering the use of Gregorian chant but also with regard to developing polyphonic styles that were purged of the excesses of the nineteenth century symphonic-operatic repertoire and that more closely imitated the more pristine Palestrina style. Perhaps the most dramatic testimony to this effort was *The White List of the Society of St. Gregory of America*, first published in 1919,²² with subsequent revisions in 1938 and again in 1939.²³ The *White List* contained three elements that are of particular interest. The first is "a selection of papal documents . . . pertaining to Catholic church music." The documents included the most recent publications of both Pius X and Pius XI in addition to numerous others dating back to Pope John XXII (1316–1334). The collection is a reminder, both directly and indirectly, of the seriousness with which the reforms of Pius X were addressed.

The second part of the *White List* contains a voluminous listing of music that is "approved and recommended by the Society of St. Gregory" as being in full conformity with the mandates of the reform, including various editions of chant and polyphonic music of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century masters and more contemporary music that emulates the style of "classical polyphony."²⁴

Finally, the publication contains a "black list" of "disapproved music."²⁵ This list includes specific works that are deemed inappropriate for liturgical use, according to the norms of the *motu proprio* of Pius X. In addition, it names several composers whose music is considered generally out of conformity with the norms as well as numerous hymnals and choir books that are likewise inappropriate.

It is reasonable to assume that the music specified in this black list must have been used at least in some places. Otherwise the compilers would not have felt the need to condemn it. Indeed, the list confirms that the titles it mentions are "only a few of the 'most popular' of the objectionable."²⁶ Thus, this black list offers at least some insight into the kind of music that the reformers were trying to purge from liturgical use.

For example, the list condemns numerous specific settings of the *Ave Maria*, including the Bach-Gounod arrangement. It also denounces "all arrangements and adaptations of Operatic Melodies, such as [the] Sextet from 'Lucia di Lammermoor,' [the] Quartet from 'Rigoletto,' arias from 'Tannhauser,'

While it cannot be presumed that all parishes were engaged in the reform movement with equal enthusiasm, it does seem clear that many parishes did take the reform efforts seriously.

‘Lohengrin,’ ‘Othello,’ etc.,” in addition to “ALL Songs in English, such as ‘I Love You Truly,’ ‘There’s a Beautiful Land on High,’ ‘Good Night, Sweet Jesus,’ and others. The Wedding Marches from ‘Lohengrin’ and from ‘Midsummer Night’s Dream’ are also listed as unacceptable.”²⁷ So evidently, not everything about the reform movement was perfect!

The list also condemns the Masses of Mozart, Haydn, Schubert, Rossini, and von Weber, not on musical grounds but because of their “liturgical unfitness according to the principles outlined in the *motu proprio* of Pius X, and the Apostolic Constitution of Pope Pius XI.”²⁸ It also notes that the contemporary efforts of some publishers to edit the Masses of these and other composers and bring them into conformity with the requirements of the *motu proprio* by deleting many of the repetitions of text is completely unacceptable: “No amount of revision,” it contends, “editing or truncating can create a devotional composition out of a work that is intrinsically secular in character.”²⁹ Evidently, the concerted Mass tradition continued in popularity, at least enough to require its inclusion on this condemned list and enough for publishers to want to find ways to accommodate it within the restrictions of the reform.

The black list also shows how seriously the mandates of Pius X were being taken. It criticizes the efforts of certain publishers to “‘hoodwink’ a gullible public by using in an indiscriminate manner the caption ‘In accordance with the *Motu Proprio*’”³⁰ when it was not true. The list also notes that “a flagrant example of this attempt to pull wool over the eyes of the innocent is found in the publication of the popular song, ‘Silver Threads among the Gold’ as an ‘Ave Maris Stella’ under the caption ‘In accordance with the *Motu Proprio*.’”³¹ It would seem, then, that there was a certain market value to publishers if their publications conformed to the mandates. That is to say, a significant number of people must have wanted to work within the requirements of the *motu proprio* strongly enough to want some assurance from publishers that the music they sold would be acceptable.

While it cannot be presumed that all parishes were engaged in the reform movement with equal enthusiasm, it does seem clear that many parishes did take the reform efforts seriously.³² Additionally, several of the resources that both appeared on the white list and that also gained a high degree of popularity can offer a picture of what parishes that did take the reforms seriously used to implement those same reforms.

Some of the most widely used resources were the *Proper of the Mass for the Entire Ecclesiastical Year* and *The Liturgical Organist*,³³ both produced by Rev. Carlo Rossini (1890–1975), the organist and choirmaster of St. Paul Cathedral in Pittsburgh from 1926 to 1949; the *Anthologia Secunda Vocalis*, Opus 66,³⁴ compiled and edited by Orestes Ravanello and widely used in the Catholic parochial school system; and several hymnals such as the *St. Basil Hymnal*, published and revised many times between 1889 and 1958, *The St. Gregory Hymnal and Catholic Choir Book*, published and revised several times between 1920 and 1966, and certainly the *Pius X Hymnal*, first published in 1953 by Justine Baylor Ward’s Pius X School of Liturgical Music in New York. This list allows a reasoned speculation regarding a picture of parochial music in parishes committed to the reforms of Pius X. During High Masses the music was exclusively Latin, with the choir—either adults or children from the school³⁵ or a combination of the two—singing the proper of the Mass,

either in chant or in polyphonic settings. The choir might also sing additional polyphonic compositions, virtually all of which were drawn from a repertoire of either master composers of the Renaissance or composers that emulated them. Low Masses might have some of this music and/or, possibly, the singing of vernacular hymns, which were also sung during various devotional celebrations. The organ seemed to have essentially an accompaniment role, either providing accompaniments for the choir, music for the Mass itself, or accompaniments for the hymnody.

The sources are generally filled with fairly simple music, ostensibly directed toward amateur musicians, who likely lacked the training to sing the more complex chants of the *Graduale* or to sing the more sophisticated polyphony of the masters or to play the major works from the organ repertoire. From this it is reasonable to assume that the vast majority of parish musicians were not professionals and that perhaps the reforms lacked the “polish” that professionally trained musicians could have brought to them. Monsignor Richard Schuler affirms this, acknowledging that “if there was one single difficulty that surfaced as the main problem in the country in implementing fully the orders of the Church, it would be the lack of professional training of those who were trying to fulfill the decrees.”³⁶

This sampling of available resources also demonstrates a certain lack of artistic creativity associated with the liturgy. While the promotion of music of the masters of the Renaissance is certainly noteworthy from an artistic viewpoint, much of the newer music promoted in these resources was not penned by composers who have come to be recognized as masters of the twentieth century. Certainly, some of the more significant composers of the early twentieth century made important contributions to the development of the Church’s music.³⁷ However, it would be difficult to conclude from examining some of the more popular resources of the period that the use of these composers’ music was widespread.

Even so, there was a high level of enthusiasm for and commitment to the ideals of Pius X. Schuler confirms this in his observations regarding the developments in the reforms prior to World War II:

Seminary music courses had been established; departments of music that gave training in church music existed; religious orders of Sisters had prepared their members to teach the chant in the parochial schools; societies of church musicians continued to publish their journals; several firms made materials available for study and performance; many dioceses had issued regulations based on the Roman decrees; guilds of organists and choirmasters had been founded; . . . many parishes had good choirs; and dedicated musicians worked hard to carry out the reforms.³⁸

While World War II may have slowed the reform movement somewhat in the United States, the peace that followed the war certainly reinvigorated it. Degrees in church music were established at The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, at DePaul University in Chicago, and at Alverno College of Milwaukee, to name a few.³⁹ In Boys Town, Nebraska, Monsignor Francis Schmitt established a series of church music workshops that both featured the more prominent leaders in the movement and brought a high level of notoriety to his own accomplishments with the boys at the institution.⁴⁰

While there were some who continued to follow the ideals of the Cecilians rather strictly,⁴¹ others felt a need to move beyond the rigidity of strict “Cecilianism,” that is, they felt a need to follow the mandates of Pius X and his successors—in particular Pius XII—with a certain sensitivity to more contemporary developments. For some this involved the use of “Gregorian modal idioms or [incorporating] Gregorian themes into a freer polyphonic style.”⁴² For others, it involved the cultivation of some of the more innovative practices of Europeans, to which they had been exposed during the war itself.⁴³ This increased sense of artistic freedom was reinforced by the encyclical of Pius XII, *Musicae sacrae disciplina*, in 1955,⁴⁴ and the instruction of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, *De musica sacra et sacra liturgia*, in 1958.

The continued efforts of the various musicians’ guilds, the focus on church music by the Catholic Music Educators Association, and the renowned work of music leaders such as Mario Salvador in Saint Louis; Charles Meeter at Holy Name Cathedral in Chicago; Father Joseph R. Foley, CSP, who “carried on the traditions of Father Finn’s Paulist Choir;”⁴⁵ Roger Wagner, who “gained international acclaim with his chorale and his performances of Catholic music”⁴⁶ and who was knighted by Pope Paul VI in 1966 for his contributions to the cause of the Church’s music; Monsignor Richard Schuler in Minneapolis-St. Paul; Sister Theophane Hytrek, OSF, at Alverno College in Milwaukee; Paul Koch at the cathedral in Pittsburgh; Theodore Marier, who founded the Boston Archdiocesan Choir School;⁴⁷ and Father Francis Missia, who headed the music department at the St. Paul School of Divinity seminary of the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota, from 1907 to 1955⁴⁸—to mention but a few outstanding names—all bear witness to the health of the movement, as do some of the recordings produced under the direction of these leaders in the reform.

In 1961, in his classic text *The History of Catholic Church Music*, Gustav Fellerer referred to the twentieth century “revival of interest in church music,” the emphasis placed on the importance of music by the Holy See (as indicated by the establishment of the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music), and the tremendous strides that had been made in the fields of musicology and chant research, saying “all this augurs well for the future.”⁴⁹

Not everyone, however, shared this viewpoint. Some reformers reflected a perspective that can be traced back at least to the early years of the twentieth century in the work of Pius Parsch (1884–1954) and others who came to the conclusion that the singing of Gregorian chant and the singing of Latin texts in general, even though admirable ideals, were ultimately impediments to the deepest level of congregational participation.⁵⁰

As the century progressed, the rift between those espousing these opposing points of views widened, and by the end of the 1950s there were several areas of contention in which there seemed to be no common ground: the value of High Mass, the role of the choir, the place of Gregorian chant, and the use of Latin in the liturgy—all of which the more traditionally minded musicians saw as keystones in the reform but which many liturgists saw as a hindrance to full congregational participation. In addition, there was little agreement about the very nature of “active” participation, that is, exactly what it was and how best to achieve it.⁵¹ Father Anthony Ruff sums up the conflict:

What had begun with Guéranger and Pius X as a mission to renew the church's sung worship had led ineluctably to a conflict between song and worship, between musicians and liturgists. It is that conflict that provided the backdrop for the decisions of the Second Vatican Council.⁵²

... and, I would add, for the reforms that followed the council.

The conflict between the liturgists and musicians can be seen in numerous well publicized conflicts around the time of the council itself. For example, there is the well-known animosity between the Jesuit liturgist/composer Joseph Gelineau, who created the *Gelineau Psalter*, and Jean Langlais, one of the great organists of the twentieth century. For Langlais, it was Gelineau and his music that "represented everything that had gone wrong with the Church since the new liturgists had gained control."⁵³

Again, Maurice Duruflé (1902–1986), renowned French organist and a composer highly recognized for his subtle handling of Gregorian themes in his music, composed his *Messe cum júbilo* (Opus 11) in 1966, just after the close of the Council, somewhat as a protest against the collapse of art music in the Church and especially against the condemnation of chant by the progressive liturgists. The work sets the chants of Mass IX—the Mass in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary—for unison men's choir with an orchestral accompaniment.⁵⁴ It is a stunningly beautiful work, and it was a striking attempt by Duruflé to demonstrate how the chant could—and should—serve as the foundation from which new music should "grow organically."⁵⁵

However, perhaps the most dramatic conflict occurred around the Fifth International Church Music Congress,⁵⁶ which was held in Milwaukee in 1966, just after the Council.⁵⁷ The Congress had been carefully planned to address the theme of *actuosa participatio populi* (active participation of the people). Several of the musical leaders of the era were intimately involved in the preparations⁵⁸ along with many other experts.⁵⁹ Planning for the Congress worked from the perspective that Vatican Council II was another chapter in furthering the reforms initiated by Pius X, that is, that the reforms of Vatican II were not meant to transform radically the work of the first two-thirds of the century but simply to enhance it or to further it, just as had been the case with the reforms of Pius XI and Pius XII. The music of the Congress ranged from chant to polyphony, from the middle ages to the present, and it was all chosen to preserve the musical treasury of the Church, to add to the treasury with new artistic works, and to explore ways in which congregational singing could be integrated into the liturgy without sacrificing either the historical treasury or the artistic merits of new works being added to it.

However, the Congress was harshly criticized by some, including the president of the hosting Church Music Association of America, Archabbot Rembert Weakland, OSB, who claimed that American delegates to the Congress were "distressed and shocked at the narrow, restrictive tone of everything being pushed."⁶⁰ Father Clement J. McNaspy, SJ, a musicologist and Jesuit historian from New Orleans, claimed that "a cabalistic air surrounds whispers of secret meetings, reputedly designed to promote the most reactionary attitudes in liturgical-musical thinking."⁶¹ While Rev. Richard Schuler, the secretary for the CMAA, carefully repudiates these and all the claims made by the critics, the whole scenario gives a glimpse of the kind of warfare that was being waged on the battleground of the liturgy's music.

After the Congress, Archabbott Weakland issued an open invitation for those who had “been seriously disturbed by certain aspects of the program of the Fifth International Church Music Congress, such as its decidedly conservative character, the lack of celebrations of the liturgy relevant to a parochial situation, the absence of any music in a fully contemporary style, the secret meetings that preceded the Congress and to which only the most reactionary persons – with but few exceptions – were invited, etc.,”⁶² to write letters of complaint to officials at the Vatican and the Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy in the United States.

However, Weakland’s concerns about the narrow and restrictive tone being pushed were perhaps a bit exaggerated. Within two to three decades following the Council, virtually none of the music espoused at the Congress was to be found – with scant exceptions – in Catholic churches anywhere in the United States. The contemporary music which Weakland longed to be present at the Congress had all but consumed American liturgical life.

Musicam Sacram and Music in Catholic Worship

Yet the activities leading up to and immediately following Vatican II are not the only testimonies to the conflicts around liturgical music and participation. The documents produced during and after the council also testify to this conflict. We will look now at the two most germane to this discussion: *Musicam Sacram* and *Music in Catholic Worship*.

Shortly after the Council, in 1967, the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship issued *Musicam Sacram*. This document was an instruction, designed to give some specificity to the general principles about music in the liturgy outlined in the conciliar constitution itself. In terms of participation in the Mass, *Musicam Sacram* viewed the reforms of Vatican Council II as a continuation of the reforms of Pius X and his successors rather than as a radical departure from those reforms.⁶³ Thus the instruction followed the general outline that had appeared in the 1958 instruction *De musica sacra et sacra liturgia*,⁶⁴ offering three degrees of participation to be followed in order. I will just summarize them:

- the first degree: the dialogues, the responses to the orations, the responses in the Canon of the Mass, the *Pater noster*, and the *Sanctus*;
- the second degree: the remainder of the ordinary parts of the Mass and the newly reinstated Prayer of the Faithful;
- the third degree: the proper chants of the Mass and the readings.

This document represents a practice so different from the norm today that I think it is important to take a minute to understand its ethos. Principally, and as I just mentioned, *Musicam Sacram* sees itself not as a radical departure from past practice but as an organic development of past practice. As such, its first focus is to promote a deeper participation in the Mass as it existed at that time, not in a Mass that would soon be radically transformed. We can see this very clearly if we just examine the elements of the first degree of participation, that is, the dialogues, the responses to the orations, the responses in the Canon of the Mass, the Lord’s Prayer, and the *Sanctus*. If it

is Christ who offers the sacrifice in the Mass, then when the prayers are offered through the intercession of Christ our Lord, does not our “Amen” join our voice intimately to that of our Lord and Savior as he intercedes personally on our behalf to our Father in heaven? Is it not a profoundly deep way to participate in the Mass to add our “Amen” to Christ’s intercession? (The dialogues are a bit more complex symbolically, but there, too, is a similarly profound uniting with the Lord himself.)

In the Canon of the Mass, it is Christ who makes the offering. Our participation in the Canon is participating in the very heart of the Mass,⁶⁵ intimately joining our voices to that of Christ offering himself to the Father.

The Lord’s Prayer consists of the very words of Christ, traditionally a sacerdotal prayer. By joining that prayer, we are participating in a very real way in the priesthood of Christ (not in an ordained way, but, nonetheless in a very real way).

So, in truth, the items in the first degree of *Musicam Sacram* are, indeed, the most profound ways in which we can participate externally in the Mass, even if they are also the easiest. Curiously, many of the elements of this first degree are also—for the most part and apart from the *Sanctus*—elements of the Mass that are typically not sung in most parishes.

A second focus of *Musicam Sacram* is to leave open the use of the great polyphonic treasury of the Church, but we’ll set that issue aside for a moment.

Five years after the publication of *Musicam Sacram*, a very different document was produced by the United States Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy. Based on *The Place of Music in Eucharistic Celebrations*—a text produced by the bishops in 1968 as a response to *Musicam Sacram*—*Music in Catholic Worship* was far more influential than *Musicam Sacram*, essentially reshaping the entire scope of musical participation in the Mass throughout the United States and in many countries influenced by practices in the United States. With regard to participation in the Mass, *Music in Catholic Worship* broke radically from the tradition of local documents reinforcing and explicating the instructions and mandates of their Roman counterparts. *Music in Catholic Worship* took an entirely different approach to the reforms than did *Musicam Sacram*:

Two patterns formerly served as the basis for creating and planning liturgy. One was “High Mass” with its five-movement, sung Ordinary and fourfold sung Proper. The other was the four-hymn “Low Mass” format that grew out of the *Instruction [on] Sacred Music* of 1958. . . . It is now outdated, and the Mass has more than a dozen parts that may be sung as well as numerous options for the celebrant. Each of these parts must be understood according to its proper nature and function.⁶⁶

From this viewpoint, *Music in Catholic Worship* (MCW) established a new paradigm for participation at Mass, based on six hierarchically ordered categories, in addition to new paradigms for the nature and function of various parts of the Mass. I am sure that you are familiar with the six categories of acclamations, processional songs, responsorial psalm, ordinary chants, supplementary songs, and litanies.

Music in Catholic Worship also established three criteria for the selection of appropriate music for the liturgy: liturgical, musical, and pastoral. While these three criteria had in some ways already been part of the Church’s tradi-

So, in truth, the items in the first degree of *Musicam Sacram* are, indeed, the most profound ways in which we can externally participate in the Mass, even if they are also the easiest.

tion in selecting appropriate music for the liturgy, this document now gave them a new articulation. In particular, by formalizing the pastoral dimension and by putting it on an equal plane with the liturgical and musical dimensions, *Music in Catholic Worship* also elevated this criterion to a public level not previously experienced in the Church.

The Result: The Present Situation

With these two dramatically contrasting documents in play, it is not hard to understand the lack of unity that exists in understanding how to implement the reforms of the Second Vatican Council. In his essay, "Paradigms in American Catholic Liturgical Music," Monsignor Francis Mannion offers six broad categories of musical practice in American Catholic parishes that have developed as a result of the reforms:

- Neo-Caecilianism and the Restoration Agenda,
- The Folk Movement and Popular Culture,
- The Development of Ethnic Expression,
- Functionalism and Scholarly Constraint,
- The Ideals of Modern Classicism,
- The Influences of Ecumenism and Eclecticism.⁶⁷

While Mannion's paradigms are most insightful, he does not attempt to quantify them. For example, he never asserts that the "Neo-Cecilians" represent a certain percentage of the musical practices, while the "Folk" musicians represent another certain percentage. Thus it is tempting to assume that all of these paradigms exist with relative equivalence. The truth is that they do not.

Unquestionably, the most prevalent paradigm of Mannion's list is that of "the Folk Movement and Popular Culture." Quentin Faulkner⁶⁸ observes that much of the music in U.S. Catholic churches today is "derivative" music, that is, music that is not the Church's own but music that is drawn from the popular culture and adapted for liturgical use.⁶⁹ We have only to observe the most widely used music during the past several decades to confirm this: the compositions of the St. Louis Jesuits, whose music still forms a base for the repertoire in most parishes, and Marty Haugen's *Mass of Creation*, which has sold more copies than any other of piece of music in the history of GIA's catalogue, to mention but two sets of compositions from a myriad of examples.

Mannion observes that "Catholic liturgical music in the United States appears to be outgrowing much of the divisiveness, controversy, and acrimony that have beset it in recent decades."⁷⁰ I am not convinced that this is true, but rather than contribute to a divisive, controversial, or acrimonious state, I will say that, at the least, there is a certain longing for something more than the current situation has produced. There are questions being raised of whether or not the reforms have produced the spiritual rebirth and the evangelization that they had hoped to produce, of whether or not the musical reforms have genuinely resulted in a greater and deeper participation "in" the Mass rather than simply increased activity "at" Mass.

A few recent events also indicate that there is at least some interest in exploring other paths for implementing the Council's reforms than that which has become the one most traveled by Catholics in the United States. For example, there are indications of a renewed interest, on the part of at least a few, in chant in the liturgy.⁷¹ Too, there has been a dramatic increase in the building of pipe organs in Catholic churches in recent years.⁷²

In truth, opposing viewpoints about the implementation of the reforms of Vatican Council II represented by *Musicam Sacram* and *Music in Catholic Worship* have not been fully reconciled. With regard to music specifically, it is unlikely that the debate will ever resume with the intensity it had in the decade following the council. The rancor that characterized the debate then produced little of lasting value; it is unrealistic to assume it would produce something better today. Rather, what may be emerging is a kind of truce in which, perhaps, in a Church committed to plurality, there is room for more than one viewpoint to exist.

The Future: Some Options

In this light, I will conclude by offering some thoughts about the future and its possibilities. My observations not only take into consideration the historical situation but also my own work, which has been largely focused over the past decade on the sung Mass. On Sunday evenings on the campus of Gonzaga University, there is a sung Mass. The proper chants are sung by the schola, the ordinary chants, in Latin, are sung by the congregation and the schola, and the remainder of the chants of the Mass are sung to Gregorian formulas adapted to English. Everything is sung except the homily, that is, this Mass observes the ancient tradition of the high Mass, in which all audible parts of the Mass are sung, but in the Mass of Paul VI.

So, based on our history, present experience, and my own work, I might offer five suggestions for the future.

1. For the polyphonic treasury of the Church to find a rightful place in the liturgy, the innate controversy between MS and MCW must be acknowledged and the fundamental differences in the concept of participation that they embrace must somehow be addressed. While we can theorize abstractly about unifying elements, the practice of the past four decades demonstrates very clearly that the ideals of MCW do not encourage—or really embrace at all—the preservation of the Church's musical treasure. MS was designed at least to attempt to preserve the polyphonic treasury while encouraging more active participation in the liturgy. My own practice affirms that it could have been successful. However, the document has largely been ignored.

2. Also, for the musical treasure of the Church to find a home again in the liturgy, I think it will be critical to restore the sung Mass. Again, my own practice seems to point toward a kind of broad understanding in the congregation that when the entire liturgy is sung, we all move to a deeper level of participation, and whether a particular part is sung by the congregation or by the choir becomes less and less relevant. Too, I think that when the congregation sings the responses of the Mass, as I discussed earlier, there is a deeper sense of participating *in* the Mass than can be achieved by singing extraneous texts—as most hymns are—at Mass.

3. This process of rediscovering the sung Mass should also include a similar rediscovery of the proper of the Mass. The proper of the Mass is a veritable jewel of concise scriptural phrases and paraphrases.⁷³ It brings various elements of any particular day's celebration into sharper focus for our contemplation, and it symbolizes the unity of the Church as she prays the same texts throughout the world on any given day. It also gives a unique identity to each Sunday of the year. Its loss to hymns and other songs, even though they have been of some benefit in their facilitation of more congregational singing, is tragic.

It is, perhaps, unreasonable to think that every Mass can or should be sung. However, it is quite possible to re-establish the practice of a single, principal Mass in each parish that is sung. On a technical level, this is a very achievable goal, especially given the various tools available today that can be of assistance.⁷⁴ However, it must be acknowledged that on a cultural level it may present a more significant challenge. Re-establishing the *Missa cantata* as the parochial norm will not be easy in a culture that has fully embraced the *Missa lecta* as the standard for its public worship. However, even if a full scale return to the *Missa cantata* as normative may be unrealistic as a first step, we must at least reestablish it as the pre-eminent means of liturgical prayer, the model, if you will, toward which we strive. If our liturgical reforms regarding music are ever to claim a true sense of authenticity, they must be based on the historical model for public worship, of which the *Missa cantata* is a direct descendent, rather than the historical model for private worship, from which we have received the *Missa lecta*.⁷⁵

4. We must rededicate ourselves to bringing our best musical offerings to the altar. The issue of active participation has given rise to criteria for judging appropriate music that effectively, if not in theory, have eliminated great art music from our liturgies. It is a sad commentary on us when we say that art music has no place in our liturgical life. The truth is that music is powerfully formative: It will, indeed shape our faith. Great works of art have at least the potential to raise our sights toward a life that is empowered by the beauty of God, a life whose contours are revealed through the works of those people chosen by God to express divine beauty in the unique ways that are experienced in the arts.

Active participation is a noble—even critical—goal in the liturgy. However, to accomplish it through music that embraces the popular culture puts at risk the very reason for the goal of active participation. We are called to participate actively in the liturgy so that we may more deeply enter the mystery of Christ's sacrifice through which we are given the hope of salvation. Popular culture is not Christ-centered; it is self-centered. If our music not only excludes the artistic world but even more so embraces wholeheartedly popular culture, how will a culture that is self-centered form us to become Christ-centered?

5. Fifth and finally, we must not give up hope. In the same way that Christ admonished Judas that "the poor will be with you always,"⁷⁶ so too will we always be plagued with less than perfect music for our most perfect prayer, the liturgy. The Church in all her collective wisdom and with all her divine guidance has not yet developed a perfect solution to this continuous problem.

At the same time, the Church has always persisted in the effort of striving

toward perfection. The battle to overcome our imperfections is a noble and necessary one, and we must not abdicate. Our very willingness to engage in the struggle is in itself one step toward accomplishing the goal.

Notes

1. Parts of this lecture were drawn from my forthcoming text, *The Music of the Catholic Church: The Search for an Acceptable Offering* (Chicago/Mundelein, Illinois: Hillenbrand Books).

2. Jan Michael Joncas, *From Sacred Song to Ritual Music: Twentieth-Century Understandings of Roman Catholic Worship Music* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1997).

3. Saint Pius X, *motu proprio Tra le sollecitudini* (November 22, 1903), 1.

4. Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, hereafter SC (December 4, 1963), 10.

5. Part 3, section II, par. 3: “*In particolare si procure di restituire il canto gregoriano nell’uso del popolo, affinché i fedeli prendano di nuovo parte più attiva all’ufficiatura ecclesiastica, come anticamente solevasi.*” *Acta Sanctae Sedis* 36 (1904), 334. Translation from Hayburn, *Papal Legislation on Sacred Music: 95 A.D to 1977 A.D.* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1979), 225: “Especially should this [Gregorian] chant be restored to the use of the people, so that they may take a more active part in the [ecclesiastical] offices, as they did in former times.”

6. Part 3, section II, par. 3: “*Praesertim apud populum cantus gregorianus est instaurandus, quo vehementius Christicolae, more maiorum, sacrae liturgiae sint rursus participes.*” *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 36 (1904), 390.

7. “*Quo autem actuosius fideles divinum cultum participant, cantus gregorianus, in iis quae ad populum spectant, in usum populi restituatur.*” *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 21 (1929), 39–40, par. IX.

8. Pius XII, *Mediator Dei*, 192. *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 39 (1947), 528–529; translation from Adoremus: Society for the Renewal of Sacred Liturgy: www.adoremus.org/MediatorDei.html.

9. *Mediator Dei*, 106.

10. Certainly, one could assert that externally active participation is also an expression of an already existing deeper disposition. However, while the discussion of active participation as expressive and/or formative of an interior disposition is an important one, it is beyond our immediate purpose. In either case, there is an intrinsic relationship between the external and internal, and the importance of that relationship is all that is critical to this discussion.

11. SC, 14, emphasis added.

12. Saint Augustine, Sermon 335, par. 1; cited by Pope Pius XII in *Mediator Dei* (November 20, 1947), 192.

13. *Mediator Dei*, 192.

14. See Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, trans. John Saward (San Francisco, California: Ignatius Press, 2000), 171–177.

15. Father Joncas’s text assumes this role admirably. See *From Sacred Song to Ritual Music*.

16. Cf. Hayburn, 145–168.

17. *Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina: Werke*, 33 vols. (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1862–1908). Haberl edited volumes 10–33, beginning in about 1881 and presenting the last to Pope Pius X on Easter Monday 1908.

18. Gustav Fellerer, *The History of Catholic Church Music*, trans. Francis A. Brunner, CSSR (Baltimore, Maryland: Helicon Press, 1961), 188.

19. The method is still published by The Catholic University of America Press, and courses for teachers are taught regarding its methodology and application at Catholic University.

20. Dom Pierre Combe, *Justine Ward and Solesmes* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1987), 4.

21. Hayburn, 295.

22. It seems to have been first published in 1919 by Nichola Montani (1880–1948), the founder of the Society of St. Gregory, as a “white list” of acceptable music and followed in 1922 by a “black list” of unacceptable music. Cf. Lucy E. Carroll, “Hymns, Hymnals, Composers, and Choir Schools: Philadelphia’s Historic Contributions to Catholic Liturgical Music,” *Adoremus Bulletin*, June 2004, 7–9.

23. *The White List of the Society of St. Gregory of America*, ed. by the Music Committee of the Society, 3rd ed. (New York, New York: Society of St. Gregory, 1939).

24. Evidence of at least some political influence is noteworthy. The listing includes the Mass *Dilectus Meus Mihi et Ego Illi* by Pietro Yon, the organist of St. Patrick Cathedral in New York and one of the more prominent Catholic musicians of the day, even though it acknowledges

that the *Gloria* of the Mass contains a “cut” that is “not approved.” *Ibid.*, 36.

25. *Ibid.*, 72–73.

26. *Ibid.*, 72.

27. *Ibid.*, 73.

28. *Ibid.*, 72.

29. *Ibid.*, 73.

30. *Ibid.*

31. *Ibid.*

32. See Keith F. Pecklers, SJ, *The Unread Vision: The Liturgical Movement in the United States of America 1926–1955* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press: 1998), 255–287, for additional observations.

33. Carlo Rossini, ed., *The Liturgical Organist*, 7 vols. (New York, New York: J. Fischer & Bro., 1937); reprint ed. (New York: J. Fischer, 1956).

34. Orestes Ravanello, *Anthologia Secunda Vocalis*, Opus 66 (Boston, Massachusetts: McLaughlin & Reilly, no date).

35. From 1884 until Vatican Council II (1962–1965), virtually every Catholic parish had a school as mandated by the 1884 Plenary Council held in Baltimore. See Thomas Bokenkotter, *A Concise History of the Catholic Church*, 1st ed. (New York, New York: Doubleday, 1977), 371.

36. Richard J. Schuler, “A Chronicle of the Reform,” in *Cum Angelis Canere: Essays on Sacred Music and Pastoral Liturgy in Honor of Richard J. Schuler*, ed. Robert A. Skeris (St. Paul, Minnesota: Catholic Church Music Associates, 1990), 356.

37. Cf. Fellerer, 202ff.

38. Richard J. Schuler, “A Chronicle of the Reform,” 356.

39. Fellerer, 210.

40. In 1989 the music library used by Msgr. Schmitt with the choir at Boys Town was transferred to Duquesne University, where it is now a part of the choral library of the university’s Mary Pappert School of Music.

41. Cf. Fellerer, 210.

42. *Ibid.*, 211.

43. *Ibid.*

44. Pope Pius XII, Encyclical on Sacred Music *Musicae sacrae disciplina* (December 25, 1955).

45. Richard J. Schuler, 363.

46. *Ibid.*

47. *Ibid.*, 364.

48. Mary Christine Athans, BVM, *To Work for the Whole People: John Ireland’s Seminary in St. Paul* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2002), 115, 402–405.

49. Fellerer, 218.

50. Cf. Anthony W. Ruff, *Integration and Inconsistencies: The Thesaurus Musicae Sacrae in the Reformed Roman Eucharistic Liturgy* (Dissertation, Graz, Austria, 1998), 154ff. Ruff also cites several reports from the 1950s, all of which indicate that “despite the tireless labors of individuals such as Schwake and Ward, and striking success stories notwithstanding, in most countries Gregorian chant had found only limited success among congregations,” 177.

51. *Ibid.*, 171–187.

52. *Ibid.*, 187.

53. Ann Labounsky, *Jean Langlais: The Man and His Music* (Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 2000), 221.

54. Duruflé actually provided three versions of the work: one with full orchestration, one with organ accompaniment only, and a third with reduced orchestration. The recorded examples for this text were made with the reduced orchestration version.

55. SC, 23; *Musica Sacram* (hereafter MS), 59.

56. See Johannes Overath, ed., *Sacred Music and Liturgy Reform after Vatican II: Proceedings of the Fifth International Music Congress Chicago-Milwaukee, August 21–28, 1966*. (Rome: Consciatio Internationalis Musicae Sacrae, 1969).

57. Labounsky also chronicles some of the struggles in *Jean Langlais: The Man and His Music*, 210–232. Archbishop Annibale Bugnini describes similar difficulties with regard to the development of the instruction *Musica Sacram*. See his *The Reform of the Liturgy 1948–1975* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 898ff.

58. See Edward Schaefer, *The Music of the Catholic Church: The Search for an Acceptable Offering* (Chicago/Mundelein, Illinois: Hillenbrand Books, forthcoming), chapter seven.

59. Some of the additional figures mentioned in the *Proceedings* include Karl Gustav Fellerer, Monsignor Johannes Overath, Rev. Francis A. Brunner, CSSR, Rev. Robert A. Skeris, Archabbot

Rembert G. Weakland, OSB, and Monsignor Richard B. Curtin.

60. Overath, *Proceedings of the Fifth International Music Congress*, 285.

61. *Ibid.*, 284.

62. *Ibid.*, 288.

63. See MS, 4.

64. Sacred Congregation of Rites, *De musica sacra et sacra liturgia* (September 3, 1958). See also Edward Schaefer, *The Music of the Catholic Church: The Search for an Acceptable Offering* (Mundelein, Illinois: Hillenbrand Books, forthcoming), chapter eight.

65. Cf. Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 171ff.

66. Bishops Committee on the Liturgy, *Music in Catholic Worship* (Washington, DC, 1972), 52.

67. M. Francis Mannion, *Masterworks of God: Essays in Liturgical Theory and Practice* (Chicago/Mundelein, Illinois: Hillenbrand Books, 2004), 116–143.

68. Quentin Faulkner is the Larson Professor of Organ and Music Theory/History at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He also teaches courses in church music, and he has studied the historical relationships among the liturgy, music, and culture extensively. See his *Wiser Than Despair: A History of Ideas in the Relationship of Music and the Christian Church* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1996).

69. Quentin Faulkner, “Pius X and Vatican II on Participation: Sixty Years and a Culture Apart” (paper presented at the annual conference of the Society for Catholic Liturgy, Mundelein, Illinois, September 23–25, 2004).

70. Mannion, 116.

71. Major publishers serving Catholic musicians, such as World Library Publications, GIA Publications, and Oregon Catholic Press (now OCP), all have numerous recent chant-related products in their catalogues. There also seems to be a renewed interest in chant workshops, such as those presented at the University of St. Mary of the Lake/Mundelein Seminary’s Liturgical Institute (2004 and 2006), Duquesne University (2003 and 2005), and St. Joseph’s College in Rensselaer, Indiana (annually).

72. René Marceau, interview by Edward Schaefer, October 11, 2004, citing unpublished statistics kept by the American Institute of Organ Builders and the Associated Pipe Organ Builders of America.

73. See Edward Schaefer, *The Music of the Catholic Church*, chapter one, for a more detailed explanation of the proper.

74. Some of these resources include Edward Schaefer, *Missa Cantata: A Notated Sacramentary* (Spokane, Washington: Priory Press, 2001); *Singing the Readings and Prayers at Mass* (Spokane: Priory Press, 2003); *Evangelia Cantata: A Notated Book of the Gospels* (Spokane: Priory Press, 2007). Also noteworthy is that the 2003 *editio typica tertia* of the *Missale Romanum*, while perhaps not a widely useful aid in the United States, is most encouraging nonetheless. The Order of Mass is presented with the text of the priest notated throughout the body of the book, rather than in an appendix. This is a clear effort by the Vatican both to facilitate the celebration of the *Missa cantata* and to signal its importance in the liturgical life of the Church.

75. See Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, reprint ed. (Westminster, Maryland: Christian Classics, 1974), 165–167.

76. John 12:8.



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Our public worship is revealed as source and summit of an all-embracing life rather than an oasis in the desert. The sacramental signs are treated not as constituting some kind of separate sphere but as penetrating the whole of human existence and through it all of creation.

Robert W. Hooda
"The Deepest Meaning and Value of All Creation"
Twenty-Sixth North American Liturgical Week, 1965

New Wine, New Wineskins!

BY ALAN J. HOMMERDING

Chapter seven of *Musicam Sacram* offered principles for creating new music for new vernacular liturgical texts. In light of forty years of experience and the challenge of inculturation, how adequate and enduring have these principles proven to be?

One summer day, about twenty years ago, I was at an amusement park. The friend I had gone with convinced me to abandon my first love—the roller coasters—for a moment, so we could go on one of those rides that hoist you ten to fifteen stories into the air and then let you drop back to earth. The experience was that delightful mix of exhilaration and fright, reinforced by the temporary relocation of my stomach to just underneath my larynx. It was a rather slow day at the park, and there wasn't much of a line, so we headed back around to go on the ride another time. As we did so, people who had been standing in line were filing out of the queue rails. When we inquired why, one of them said: "They just found a bunch of bolts missing from one of the support columns." Again, my stomach relocated, with no sense of delight this time.

It was that second feeling that most closely resembled my emotional and physical state when, later that year, at the oral examination portion of my comprehensive exams, I was asked the following question: "How would the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy be different if it had been written as the last Council constitution and not the first?" I discovered that I had a bunch of bolts missing from my support columns. In my preparation for the exams I came to a place where I *knew* the documents of Vatican II. But here they were, for heaven's sake, expecting me to have *thought about* the documents as well!

I have, of course, "answered" that question innumerable times since that day. (I have no recollection of what answer I actually gave; evidently it sat-

isfied, though it left me feeling distinctly unsatisfied.) What I'd learned in my preparations and the lesson I learned in the examination have proven invaluable over the course of time. Removing the conciliar and postconciliar documents from an overly narrow context has often allowed them, in my experience, to be more fruitful than any sort of attempt to understand them, or sections of them, in isolation. Like sacred Scripture itself, the documents are best read from a critical (in the best and broadest sense of that word) perspective rather than with a strict literalism. These are documents meant to form or shape the faithful people of the Church universal over the course of time, but they also came from particular people of faith at a particular place and time.

And so, as we prepare to revisit chapter seven of the postconciliar document *MUSICAM SACRAM*, as we speak about its "New Wine, New Wineskins," as we speak of the reform and the ongoing work of liturgical reform, I would invite you to ask yourself these two questions, and keep them in mind: What is the wine? What are the wineskins?

Hermeneutic Principles

I rely here on the approach of Australian Ormond Rush in his book *Still Interpreting Vatican II: Some Hermeneutical Principles* (see "Suggestions for Further Reading" at the end of this essay). Three of his basic principles are very useful for this discussion. If we are truly going to continue the work begun in the conciliar and postconciliar documents—and this is true of *MUSICAM SACRAM*—it is to our benefit to do the following:

1. Apply interpretation or hermeneutics to the documents. Not only to individual documents, but we must read them with awareness of their order and subject matter. One of the large "movements" of the conciliar constitutions is that they began *ad intra* (the Church looking "inside" to its own life, especially in the liturgy) and concluded *ad extra* (looking "outside" to the relationship of the Church to the world around it).
2. Apply a hermeneutic to the authors of the documents. Recall that they were working in a highly pressured environment and daily went through all the things that human beings go through when they're together. They laughed and prayed and fought and ate meals (and probably drank a bit of wine, both old and new). Whereas some have faulted the documents for compromises and inconsistencies, Rush posits that this manifests a conscious choice on the part of the Council fathers, perhaps knowing that the subsequent generations of wrangling over these documents might be difficult but would truly allow the whole Church to come most fully to the fruits of the Spirit in them.¹
3. Apply a hermeneutic to the recipients of the documents, not just in the immediate period of the first postconciliar documents but also through the course of years and generations. Rush states a need for a "reception pneumatology" that will help us discern the ongoing work and presence of the Holy Spirit as the whole Church continues to live out the work and the insights of the Council.

A distinction that Rush applies to the conciliar documents is to refer to their “style” as a way out of the battles that have emerged trying to establish a “spirit” or focus on the “letter” of the documents. It is very important, he insists, to remember the fact that Vatican II differed from most other councils (especially its two immediate predecessors) in that it didn’t attempt to address specific errors or establish a lot of particular legislation but rather defined the Church’s nature and beliefs and its relationship to the world around it. We must also recall that Vatican II was the first of the councils to operate with what we may call a “modern” consciousness about its own history and its reception of tradition.

In addition to keeping Rush’s principles at hand, I’d also like to frame the paragraphs from the pertinent chapter of *Musicam Sacram* (MS) in these contexts:

1. Based on the theology of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, with a particular awareness of how the main concerns and aims of the constitution are present in the instruction.
2. Within the whole of *Musicam Sacram*; this is significant when addressing the issues of the adequacy and enduring character of chapter seven.

We would also do well to recall the theologies of *Dei Verbum* and *Gaudium et Spes*; *Musicam Sacram* lives closer in time to both of these documents than it does to *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, and their respective theologies or understandings of revelation, ecclesiology, and society are present in MS.

Text and Commentary 1: *Sacrosanctum Concilium*

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (SC) was formally approved during the second session of the Second Vatican Council, on December 4, 1963. In all of the constitution, composers are mentioned only twice (and authors of vernacular texts are not mentioned at all):

115. Great importance is to be attached to the teaching and practice of music in seminaries, in the novitiates and houses of study of religious of both sexes, and also in other Catholic institutions and schools. To impart this instruction, teachers are to be carefully trained and put in charge of the teaching of sacred music.

It is desirable also to found higher institutes of sacred music whenever this can be done.

Composers and singers, especially boys, must also be given a genuine liturgical training.

121. Composers, filled with the Christian spirit, should feel that their vocation is to cultivate sacred music and increase its store of treasures.

Let them produce compositions that have the qualities proper to genuine sacred music, not confining themselves to works that can be sung only by large choirs, but providing also for the needs of small choirs and for the active participation of the entire assembly of the faithful.

The texts intended to be sung must always be in conformity with Catholic doctrine; indeed they should be drawn chiefly from holy scripture and from liturgical sources.

The fundamental assumption made in paragraph 115 is that composers will have had musical training; competence in musical composition is not the

Vatican II differed from most other councils . . . in that it didn’t attempt to address specific errors . . . but rather defined the Church’s nature and beliefs and its relationship to the world around it.

issue, but formation in the understanding of music serving the rite as it was about to undergo revision was the main concern. To put it another way, it was assumed that the twentieth-century descendants of Palestrina knew how to write a musically well-crafted *Kyrie* (an assumption, frankly, that was not borne out many times), but they needed to comprehend the role of the entrance rites or the theology of penitence at the beginning of the Eucharistic celebration.

Paragraph 121 is a beautiful passage, speaking of the Spirit invoked at the Council's beginning filling composers, their "vocation" (notably, not their "work") expressed organically as cultivation and materially as treasure-makers. Musically, it presumes that composers' primary focus will be the choral repertoire, the customary repository of most of the work of composers of previous generations; there is a bit of side-by-side tension with the need for the musical participation of the faithful (the tradition of inherited Mass ordinaries being largely choral; proper chants were not "composed" in this mindset. Most likely paragraph 121 is not envisioning a huge body of new music for the singing faithful. Remember, at this point in time there was no revised Order of Mass in place.) The sentence about texts is interesting; it will make a re-appearance in MS. This could possibly be a prescient glimpse into the upcoming world of vernacular hymnody, though the singing of vernacular hymns at Mass was already occurring to varying degrees throughout Europe.

As we proceed directly into MS, I'd suggest keeping the following in mind:

1. It can be difficult, forty years later, to remember that this document is *not* speaking of the Mass of Paul VI. MS is written in the midst of a highly unstable, transitional time. We will see that it was intended to address more immediate issues or concerns.
2. Though MS no longer has any juridical or rubrical force within liturgical law (except as it is quoted in current law), we are still able to look to it and find ways to benefit from it in our own day.
3. To invoke Rush's "reception pneumatology" when speaking of this document in its U.S. context, we ought to remember that right around the time of MS, Jack Kerouac and his beat generation had begun to speak of a group of people as "the new hipsters." This term evolved into "hippie," and a few months after MS was promulgated thousands of them descended on San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district for the "summer of love." Those of us who have any recollection of the effect this huge cultural phenomenon had on the Church, its liturgy, and (especially) its music have a living memory to frame MS's discussion of language and culture.
4. A primary image of the convening of the Council is of Blessed John XXIII wanting to open the Church's windows to allow a fresh wind of the Spirit to blow through. But I'm certain that good Pope John and the Council Fathers were thoroughly aware that, when you open a window, you don't get only fresh air blowing in. You get germs and bugs and all sorts of other things. A bit wiser perhaps, after the windows have been flung wide, to put in a bit of screening. I think that, by and large, is a workable metaphor for understanding both *Inter Oecumenici* and the document we turn to now, *Musicam Sacram*.

Text and Commentary 2: *Musicam Sacram*

The Sacred Congregation of Rites issued the instruction *Musicam Sacram* on March 5, 1967, two years after the close of the Second Vatican Council. The text includes a preface and eight sections. Here, I will highlight and comment on parts of the preface and chapter one, with a lengthier examination of chapter seven.

PREFACE

2. The recently begun reform of the liturgy is already putting the conciliar enactments into effect. The new norms relative to the faithful's active participation and the structuring of the rites, however, have given rise to some problems about music and its ministerial function. In order to draw out more clearly the relevant principles of the Constitution on the Liturgy, it is necessary to solve these problems.

Comment: We see here the natural outcome of the tension, briefly articulated, in paragraph 121 above. More specifically, these are particular concerns generated following the First Instruction *Inter Oecumenici* (September 26, 1964; see paragraph 3, below). The use of the word "problem" and the assignment of "ministerial function" to music show the ongoing negative and positive forces present in developing articulation of how music is not an adornment upon but the vital lifeblood of the liturgy's prayer.

3. Therefore the Consilium set up to implement the Constitution on the Liturgy, on the mandate of Pope Paul VI, has carefully considered these questions and prepared the present Instruction. This does not, however, gather together all the legislation on sacred music; it only establishes the principal norms which seem to be more necessary for our own day. It is, as it were, a continuation and complement of the preceding Instruction of this Congregation of Rites prepared by this same Consilium on September 26, 1964, for the correct implementation of the Liturgy Constitution.

Comment: Though *Inter Oecumenici* had a more legislative focus than SC, some of the conciliar "style" of not speaking in an absolute or legalistic sense is still present in MS, preferring to establish "norms" instead. This establishes the immediate postconciliar vision of these sorts of instructions; it is also what empowers us to ask the question about the adequacy or the enduring quality of its principles.

I. GENERAL NORMS

9. In selecting the kind of sacred music to be used, whether it be for the choir or for the people, the capacities of those who are to sing the music must be taken into account. No kind of sacred music is prohibited from liturgical actions by the Church as long as it corresponds to the spirit of the liturgical celebration itself and the nature of its individual parts, and does not hinder the active participation of the people.

Comment: Even though chant, polyphony, the choir, and the pipe organ all received noteworthy treatment in the documents, there is still a reticence present here to make absolute or final statements about one musical style or source (though some would argue that the phrase "sacred music" vs. "music" is a style/source qualifier), musical forces, or musical instruments. The

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“organic” nature of the rites and SC’s concern for the active participation of all are once again invoked as guiding principles.

11. It should be kept in mind that the true solemnity of liturgical worship depends less on a more ornate form of singing and a more magnificent ceremonial than on its worthy and religious celebration, which takes into account the integrity of the liturgical celebration itself and the performance of each of its parts according to their own particular nature. To have a more ornate form of singing and a more magnificent ceremonial is at times desirable when there are the resources available to carry them out properly; on the other hand it would be contrary to the true solemnity of the liturgy if this were to lead to a part of the action being omitted, changed, or improperly performed.

Comment: The phrase “on the other hand” may be taken to be a signal that conflicting viewpoints from the documents’ contributors were operative, perhaps well entrenched. To indulge for a moment in a hermeneutic of suspicion, the phrase “action being omitted, changed, or improperly performed” could lead one to wonder what types of “abuses” were already occurring or to what extent the existing work of the council and the papal Consilium was being ignored.

And so we arrive at our well-framed and solidly-contextualized chapter seven and the pertinent paragraphs I’d like to look at for this discussion.

VII. COMPOSING MUSICAL SETTINGS FOR VERNACULAR TEXTS

54. Translators of texts to be set to music should take care to combine properly fidelity to the Latin and adaptability to the music. They are to respect the idiom and grammar of the vernacular and the proper characteristics of the people. Composers of new melodies are to pay careful attention to similar guidelines as well as the laws of sacred music.

Comment: I will confess, in all honesty and humility, that when I was first invited to be part of this lecture series, I was mystified as to why I had been asked. But when I read paragraph fifty-four, my mystification cleared up. MS, in this paragraph, had absolutely no vision of somebody like me, which is to say a person who creates new texts, not translations of the proper or ordinary Mass texts or even necessarily texts based on them, to be sung at liturgy. The authors had no vision of someone who would sit down with an already-vernacular Scripture translation and render the *Magnificat* into a strophic poem; nor of someone who would take the Lectionary Gospels of Year A’s initiatory cycle and craft one unified text from them; much less someone who would sit, at sunrise, on the shore of the Atlantic Ocean and fashion a morning hymn in English in the form of a haiku. It did not envision someone who—as I have been on occasion—is not only the author or translator of the vernacular text but is the composer of the music for that text as well. And if MS did not envision someone like me who, again in honesty and humility, is rather safe and “traditional” as these things go, it certainly did not envision the singer-songwriter *qua* rock star, touring concert-giving author/composer(s) who became (at least under partial influence of pop music post-1967) something of a norm in the United States.

I introduce this background as a means of addressing the issue of the adequacy of chapter seven of MS. The instruction envisions only that the

vernacular texts sung at liturgy will be translations of Latin sources, not newly written texts. The application of the principle of respecting the idiom and grammar of a musical vernacular and the proper characteristics of its people really allows a good deal of latitude. But in typical fashion for these documents, we see a curtailing of that by the application of “fidelity” to the original liturgical language and the “laws” of sacred music.

To us, forty years later, paragraph fifty-four seems like an exceedingly tame statement, but we need to recall how bold and radical this was, even within some its own restrictions. The permission for use of vernacular was finally present in official documents after more than a century of occasional illicit use and of petition and study on its behalf. The concern for a vernacular translation to be adaptable to music was also novel; it very much expands the Latin Rite’s inherited mindset of a fixed text to which the music was always written or adapted. For both translators and composers, the acknowledgment of diversities present as the “characteristics of the people” recognizes the important role of those who would be the receivers of these texts and their music. Again, this is a brand new consideration or concern.

56. Among the melodies to be composed for the people’s texts, those which belong to the priest and ministers are particularly important, whether they sing them alone, or whether they sing them together with the people, or whether they sing them in “dialogue” with the people. In composing these, musicians will consider whether the traditional melodies of the Latin liturgy, which are used for this purpose, can inspire the melody to be used for the same texts in the vernacular.

Comment: It is very important to note here that MS expects the priest *and the other ministers* to sing as part of the regular function of their ministry (i.e., the lector is expected to initiate a sung dialogue with “*Verbum Domini*” at the conclusion of the scriptural proclamations). Though the documents name cantor, psalmist, choir, and organist as particular ministries, it has no designation (as we do today) for a “music ministry” within the liturgy but rather views the liturgy’s various ministries as all having a musical dimension. We also read here SC’s concerns for that organic “cultivation” of the Latin Rite’s musical heritage in the second portion of the paragraph in its language of a dynamic “inspiration” from the Latin melodies rather than a strict conformity to them.

59. Musicians will enter on this new work with the desire to continue that tradition which has furnished the Church, in her divine worship, with a truly abundant heritage. Let them examine the works of the past, their types and characteristics, but let them also pay careful attention to the new laws and requirements of the liturgy, so that “new forms may in some way grow organically from forms that already exist,” and the new work will form a new part in the musical heritage of the Church, not unworthy of its past.

Comment: Another overarching concern from SC is evident here—that the work of the reform not be seen as a break from the traditions of the past. But the “modern” mindset about the inherited tradition is present as well—that current work is always part of a dynamic process that contributes to an ongoing heritage, not merely making static accretions to it. Words like “development/continuity/organic” occur a number of times. Benedict XVI

(and in his work as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger) often uses a somewhat rigid “discontinuity” argument as a litmus test as to whether or not something is truly in keeping with the reforms of Vatican II. Ormond Rush offers a more nuanced position—that there are no “macro-ruptures” but there are definite “micro-ruptures” in the work. (The illustration he uses is the openness to the surrounding world in the council’s fourth constitution vs. the previous campaigns against such openness as found in the “Syllabus of Errors” and “Oath against Modernism.”) A rigid application of the “discontinuity” principle also necessitates a rather uncritical attitude toward the past, as if the received musical and liturgical traditions prior to the twentieth century were error- or excess-free.

61. Adapting sacred music for those regions which possess a musical tradition of their own, especially mission areas, will require a very specialized preparation by the experts. It will be a question in fact of how to harmonize the sense of the sacred with the spirit, traditions, and characteristic expressions proper to each of these peoples. Those who work in this field should have a sufficient knowledge both of the liturgy and musical tradition of the Church, and of the language, popular songs and other characteristic expressions of the people for whose benefit they are working.

Comment: Here *Musicam Sacram* addresses the dawning work of inculturation. More accurately, we see here some of the first articulation about the work of musical inculturation, which had already been occurring for centuries. The presuppositions are, understandably, very Eurocentric. What regions do not have musical traditions of their own? Likewise, the language of “mission countries” betrays such a mindset. We can say, with some certainty, that when MS says those who work in this area should have sufficient knowledge of “popular songs” they were not thinking of the upcoming summer in San Francisco’s Haight-Ashbury and (I’d be happy to have it proven otherwise) were not listening to John Phillips’s “(If You’re Going) to San Francisco.” Some of this discussion pertaining to what does and doesn’t constitute an authentic culture or tradition will appear again in 1994’s Fourth Instruction *Varietates Legitimae*.

Adequate? Enduring?

How adequate or enduring are these principles regarding the music for vernacular texts provided in chapter seven of *Musicam Sacram*, especially in the light of inculturation? I would like to turn first to the matter of inculturation and offer the briefest examinations of two types, based on the two types of Vatican II documents: *ad intra* and *ad extra*.

INCULTURATION

Ad Intra. This approach to inculturation focuses on the week-by-week ways various cultures celebrate the Roman or Latin Rite. It is the process that John Paul II referred to, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, as the “taking root” of the liturgy in different cultures. The preliminary observations of the Fourth Instruction also include the phrase “intimate transformation of the authentic cultural values by their integration

into Christianity and the implantation of Christianity into different human cultures.”² As with the Constitution itself, both documents chose an organic image or metaphor.

This kind of *ad intra* work is what currently takes the expenditure of much time and energy, in the same manner that the revision of rites and books and the first waves of the work of translation took most of the time and energy in the decades immediately following the Council. Even the most recent instruction on inculturation still uses “mission” language and presumes autonomous cultures in stable geographic locations. For many places around the world, this remnant of the initial vocabulary of inculturation isn’t always helpful in addressing the needs of multiculturalism that exist in many places, especially large urban areas.

Those who have tried to plant living things in climates or soils to which they are not native have discovered that this is often a frustrating process, that plants will sometimes *not* take root, or that the manner in which they grow, and how they subsequently look or taste, will be different than in their place of origin. Botanists tell us that the vast array of flora around the globe comes from a very small number of originating plants that have changed dramatically as they adapted in various places over the course of time. This is why, for example, the onion and the iris are very close botanical cousins, though they bear little resemblance to each other. I think that anyone truly committed to an organic development of an inculturated Roman Rite needs to be ready for this kind of grand variation and adaptation over the course of time.

Ad Extra. I would propose that in the same way that the work immediately following the Council caused the turning of a blind eye to things like formation and catechesis while the work of reform and revision took place, the work now necessary to appropriate and utilize the customs and traditions of autonomous cultures is causing us to turn our focus away from the ways that values from the surrounding culture are having or could have an effect on liturgical celebration. The impact of the surrounding culture on the Church and its prayer is a result of the Council’s work of opening itself to dialogue with the world that surrounds it. In our nation (and in much of the Western world and beyond) what will cut across boundaries of language, music, gesture, and other religious custom is the whole set of values that increasingly guide and drive us (the acquisition of things and the willingness of people, for example, to wait in line for ten hours or more to get an iPhone™). It has been advertised that soon there will be a televised version of *American Idol* on every continent except for Antarctica. This is a show that promotes a definite value system about music, about people who do and don’t (and should and shouldn’t) make music, and about how an assembled people receive that music.

This is the sort of thing that will, in the long run, have a worldwide potential impact. Listen, for example, to the song written in China a year ahead of the 2008 Olympics to tell the world that Beijing is ready (at <http://www.bjreview.com.cn>). It seems to have been written at some location halfway between Disneyland and Las Vegas. It is fair to ask if, in the same way linguists are noting the growing extinction of dialects and languages worldwide, we are about to experience a diminishment of music that is truly representative of a variety of cultures.

Anyone truly committed to an organic development of an inculturated Roman Rite needs to be ready for this kind of grand variation and adaptation over the course of time.

By way of an example more related to this discussion: If you think that Scripture means you throw out the old wineskins to get or make new ones for the new wine, you have succumbed to the values of your surrounding culture and not those of the biblical culture, where “old” wineskins would have been rehabilitated as often as possible. A God who makes all things “new” isn’t a God who tosses out everything old to replace it with different things, but a God who *re-news* all things in Christ.

COMPOSITION

We are also to inquire here about the adequacy and enduring character of the principles for the composition of music for new vernacular texts. Though these are two separate characteristics, any answer to an inquiry into these two characteristics will be, by and large, the same.

When looking at the adequacy or enduring nature of these principles, it is easy but extremely unfair to set up the Council Fathers and the authors of this instruction as straw men to knock down.

Yes, these principles were adequate for the way that a liturgical vernacular was being envisioned at the time. Whether this particular vision of the liturgical vernacular was adequate is a separate matter and does not have real bearing on addressing MS’s adequacy in this particular matter. This document, like any document (including the sacred Scriptures) that the Church uses for its ongoing life, cannot be adequate for situations it was not intended to address or envision. This is the theology of *Dei Verbum*³ at work: The Church needs and will always need an ongoing revelation to continue its mission of spreading the Good News of Christ.

And yes, these principles are also enduring. As stated earlier, this is not a juridical/legalistic observation. As already noted, MS itself did not intend to set principles or norms except for those to be used in its own time of extreme transition in the liturgy. But a careful reading of it yields much wisdom, a wisdom that joins the great stream of revelation given to us by the grace of God, lived out day by day and year by year in the Spirit.

Questions Revisited

And so let us revisit the two questions asked at the beginning: What is the wine? What are the wineskins?

I think the answer is (by way of a short metaphorical bridge) “in order to find out, go work in the vineyard.” The discussion about the wine and the wineskins can keep us focused too much on *stuff* and the *things* that the stuff goes in. More than a few of the squabbles of this past generation originated with the stuff and the things. As important as these matters are, our toil to keep producing the vintage and tending the vessels is more important. As the U. S. Catholic bishops have recently reminded us in their document on ecclesial ministry and the laity, we are all co-workers in the vineyard of the Lord.⁴ Those of us who exercise a ministry of music are no exception. We allow what has grown before to grow back anew, and we care for it with the wisest stewardship we can exercise. I don’t want to press (pun somewhat intended) this metaphor excessively, but it is a valid and valuable way for

us to continue our examination of and reflection on the way we are called to use our Spirit-given talents for the service of God's people when we join together as the Body of Christ to offer our living sacrifice of praise.

In all things may God be praised
In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ
Through the power of the Holy Spirit,
One God, forever and ever.

Notes

1. I am most grateful to Father Columba Kelly, OSB, for confirming this in a delightful anecdote from his postconciliar days as a student in Rome with Father Annibale Bugnini (Secretary of the Consilium for the Implementation of the Constitution on the Liturgy).

2. Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Instruction Varietates legitimae: Fourth Instruction for the Right Application of the Conciliar Constitution on the Liturgy* (Inculturation and the Roman Liturgy, March 29, 1994), 4.

3. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* (November 18, 1965).

4. U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2005), online at <http://www.usccb.org/laity/laymin/co-workers.pdf>.

Suggestions for Further Reading

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The use of symbols and sacramental acts requires a sensitivity—a regard for things and deeds—which seems especially difficult and hard to come by in a technological culture. We may, for example, condemn the ancient symbols as “irrelevant” when all we really mean is that it is not easy for us to experience anything symbolically. We are so accustomed to looking at things pragmatically, using them, manipulating them, that we do not readily stand back and see things, contemplate things, appreciate things. . . . The sign of the water of baptism retains its power only so long as we ourselves are in wonder before the rivers and the rain.

Robert W. Hooda
“Familiar Rites and Deeds”
in Virginia Sloyan and Gabe Huck, eds., Children’s Liturgies
(Washington, DC: The Liturgical Conference, 1970)