

# One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism . . . One Song

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There is one Lord," St. Paul told the Church at Ephesus, "one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5). Therefore, he urged the Ephesian Christians "to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace" (4:3). At the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church committed itself to the ecumenical movement, an exploration of the faith, principles, and practices that unite Christians. In fact, the bishops of Vatican II called this movement—and the Catholic Church's participation in it—a "grace" and a "divine call" (Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 1).

The Catholic bishops at Vatican II also noted that communities divided from the Catholic Church "use many liturgical actions of the Christian religion. These most certainly can truly engender a life of grace in ways that vary according to the condition of each Church or Community," the bishops said. And they affirmed: "These liturgical actions must be regarded as capable of giving access to the community of salvation" (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, 3).

Now, nearly five decades after that conciliar decree, we are reaping the fruits of dedicated work, shared study, common prayer, and a profound respect for "the riches of Christ and virtuous works in the lives of others who are bearing witness to Christ" in the various Christian communities. We are also learning about each other's "various forms of spiritual life and discipline, . . . different liturgical rites, and even . . . theological elaborations of revealed truth" (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, 4).

One of the truly joyful results of the ecumenical movement has been a discovery of one another's repertoire of worship music, different uses for that repertoire, and the key role that music—particularly singing—plays in the various forms of Christian worship. We have struggled to hold onto the strong traditions that mark our church even as we incorporate new repertoire, new ways of singing, and new uses for music in worship borrowed from one another.

So Catholics of the Latin (Roman) Church have discovered hymn texts and melodies that originated in Protestant churches, and Protestants have learned to sing hymns from Catholic sources. Catholics have learned how to incorporate hymnody into Mass in ways that connect it to the seasons and Scriptures of the day. Protestant churches have begun to offer "contemporary" Sunday services, for

which they draw on the repertoire of Catholic composers. All of us have become more scripturally attentive through the use of richer lectionaries based on the model of the Catholic *Lectionary for Mass*, and many churches have been moving toward a central Sunday celebration of the Eucharist (or Lord's Supper).

We have all learned new ways to sing the Book of Psalms and the biblical canticles, and Protestant hymnals have incorporated non-hymnic forms like the litany and the ostinato (some with Latin texts). We have struggled together to find appropriate repertoire for our multicultural and multilingual society, looking to global music as a possible resource, and we have shared various ways to incorporate the music and prayer forms of the "praise and worship" movement into our ritual practice.

We have also recognized the need for well-prepared music ministers who not only know their instrument and the church's repertoire but also the shape of a particular tradition's liturgy, its history, and its pastoral application. Lutheran and Presbyterian musicians, like their Catholic colleagues, are encouraged to attend not only to musicianship but also to theological and liturgical study and the development of pastoral skills. Catholic pastoral musicians nod their heads in agreement when a prominent Presbyterian observes that it is the church musician "who in large part is responsible for the faith formation of the people" through the selection of music and texts, even though the musician's "voice is not heard . . . in the Church's governing bodies" (Alan Barthel, *Pastoral Music* 33:2, 31). All agree, as well, that the clergy play a critical role in realizing the potential of music to build up the Church.

But as we share our common concerns and interests, borrowing from one another's repertoire and learning from each other's ritual practice, let us pay close attention to the challenge that the bishops of the Second Vatican Council gave us: "There can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without a change of heart. For it is from renewal of the inner life of our minds, from self-denial and an unstinted love that desires of unity take their rise and develop in a mature way. We should therefore pray to the Holy Spirit for the grace to be genuinely self-denying, humble, gentle in the service of others, and to have an attitude of brotherly [and sisterly] generosity toward them" (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, 7).