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In This Issue...

We return to Thomas Day's book, Why Catholics Can't Sing. Members who have read the book consistently gave me this reaction: "It is a very interesting and entertaining book. He says so much that is true... and has the courage to name names. But, you know, he is so far off on a number of things that it just limits the usefulness of the book." I agree.

So this issue takes each section of Day's book, Why Catholics Can't Sing, and approaches it from the point of view: "What did Thomas Day say about the topic that was right, and what else needs to be said about the topic?" The six topics we chose to focus on were de-ritualization, narcissism, the assembly's participation, the role of the clergy in fostering participation, true motivation, and American Catholic worship.

The topic of De-ritualization (Day, Chapter Four) draws Mark Searle's comments about trusting the ritual. Narcissism (Day, Chapter Five) brings Rory Cooney to develop the boundaries in our and examines the clergy's role in creating and changing the "Catholic look" (Patrick Collins); and American Culture and American Catholic Worship (Day's Chapter Eight and Nine) leads to a new look at enculturation from Ed Foley. The issue concludes with Daniel Connors, the former editor of Pastoral Music, as guest editorialist.

Thomas Day's book was debated at our National Convention and discussed afterward by our membership. There is no doubt that the concerns raised in this book have stirred the thinking of the pastoral musician.

Our hope is that this issue leads to the most important task, that of "naming the problem." Day does not spend much ink on finding solutions, and he has been criticized by some people for this approach. I agree with the approach that we must first "name the problem" and name it accurately, even if we find out, as Walt Kelly's Pogo once said, "We have met the enemy and they is us." The truth sometimes hurts. But if we are ever to assume responsibility for the field of pastoral music, we must claim our weaknesses and attempt to correct them, together with recognizing the great contributions that our members have made to developing the field of pastoral music.

This issue should be read and reread by everyone working in the field of pastoral music.
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BY J. MICHAEL JONCAS

FOR MUSICIANS: SPIRITUALITY
Eight Beatitudes for Musicians, Plus One
BY M. VALERIE SCHNEIDER, S.N.D.

Trust the Ritual or Face “The Triumph of Bad Taste”
BY MARK SEARLE

Narcissism: “I Celebrate Myself, and Sing Myself”
BY RORY COONEY

Seven Steps Forward . . . and a Plea
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Culture according to Day: The Triumph of Opinion over Research
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St. Lawrence (a 1,300-family parish) was the first in the Sioux City Diocese to hire a full-time music liturgist (1982).

Six years later, when the pastoral musician moved to another job, new administration offered me the job, but changed the job description to salaried part-time.

CELEBRATE with me—after two years, I negotiated for a salaried full-time position as director of music ministry (October 1990)!

Marcy M. Braun
Carroll, IA

Programs Praised

Congratulations on your fine offering of programs for parish musicians and choir directors! Thank you for the information packet. Keep up your good work!

Fr. W. Opalewski
Fage, AZ

Double Thanks for Registration

I wanted to take a moment to thank you for the complimentary registration which I received through our Diocesan Lay Ministry Formation Program. I have only attended one Regional Convention, which was held in Peoria a few years ago, but I still talk with great excitement about the experience. Needless to say I’m very grateful and very excited about attending the National Convention. I know that not only will I benefit from the week’s activities, but so also will the parish of St. Mary’s in which I minister. I’ll be looking forward to the NPM Convention with much enthusiasm.

Jane Olson
Sterling, IL

Anyone Using Real Bread?

The April-May 1991 edition of Pastoral Music was of particular interest with its thematic coverage of the Communion Rite because I have just completed a Master’s project with a liturgy team which entailed refining a parish Communion Rite. For the most part, the project went well, and we believe that we have developed a rite for this parish that reflects the elements outlined in your articles. But we had one major failure: we were unable to carry out the attempt to introduce substantial bread that looks like “real food.” This particular parish, at this time, simply was not ready for this kind of break with their usual practice.

In view of the difficulties we encountered in this attempt, I would be interested in hearing from parishes that have successfully implemented this change. How did they do it, and has it enhanced the rite? Also, have there been parishes that have introduced substantial bread and then dropped the practice? Why was it dropped? This information would be of great help to me in working on future projects of this kind.

Anyone who would like to offer advice or input on this subject can

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Carol Swiderski
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...But No Cigar

I have read most of your excellent issue devoted to remembering the Holocaust [June-July 1991]. I feel two issues were either ignored or camouflaged.

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A sensitive issue with Catholics is the passive collusion of Pius XII in the annihilation. There have been public attempts to justify the passivity of the most powerful religious organization on earth—they do not wash.

Camouflaging this role under the nomen of collective societal guilt amounts to a red herring that to many observers must seem transparent.

The second issue is screams between each line is the church's continued persecution—not far removed from the Nazi example—of homosexual people. This tarred brush virtually gives the stink of hypocrisy to everything else in the well-meaning work contained in the magazine.

Hitler first tried his maniacal theories on homosexuals, as he knew virtually no one would object—EVER. Rather like the Anschluss of the same period, and equally successful.

"As you have done to the weakest among you, so have you done to me!" makes the sacrament sound hollow, yet full of the will of man.

Until repentance can be real and true, perhaps the ritual is best left for those who can more closely approach His supreme commandment in all of its manifestation and beauty.

No cigar.

Gary Jordan
W. Linn, OR

Sound Bomb, May Procession

On Monday, May 13, we here at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church (Spaulding Avenue) in Chicago had our annual May Crowning. The liturgy consists of sung prayers plus a living rosary done by our school children inside the church, plus an outdoor procession...

Ideally, everyone in the procession is supposed to sing "Immaculate Mary" and/or "Daily, Daily Sing to Mary"... I say "ideally" because up to now it was not reality. We had tried putting the choir at various places in the line and singing without accompaniment. It didn't work... We even tried broadcasting our carillon outside. That didn't work either, because the wind blew the sound waves the wrong way.

Then... I called our sound man, Jim Herrmann... and we set about making what I call the Daley-Hermann Sound Bomb...

The "Bomb" consists of a small un-amplified Radio Shack PA speaker, a Radio Shack amplifier, the cigarette lighter connector, and two 12-volt lantern batteries... (one on standby in case it is needed). All of this was connected properly and was held together with duct tape. The entire thing was placed on a two-wheeled luggage cart so it could be wheeled down the street.

For the accompaniment itself, I used my little DX100 (a junior version of the DX21 synthesizer made by Yamaha) ... carried... over my shoulder via a guitar strap... We ran a patch cord from the output of the synth to the input of the amplifier...
bor through each page, each word and each article, no matter how the years fly and add to my 86th year.

Tomorrow I will don red and play Pentecost Sunday 10:30 Mass, and the first thing I'll play is the Gregorian rendition of Veni, Creator—and then go into “Come, Holy Ghost.”

The articles in Pastoral Music are most helpful—I loved Helen Kemp [October-November 1990 (15:1) 38-41] and wish I were young again to put into practice all of her beautiful work; at least I can play “Lenten Love Song” and also, at various services, the 6/8 version of Liber Cantarum . . . beautiful, no matter how many times you hear it.

Seriously, about the print—is it different from October 1978, or is it my years?

Mary Jarboe
Parsons, KS

There’s good news and bad news for Mrs. Jarboe. The present typeface is modestly different from the one we used in 1978, when we began our third volume of Pastoral Music, but the computer process we use now actually produces a slightly larger and cleaner type—one that would appear to be moderately easier to read than the older one. In fact, a comparison of the most recent issue of Pastoral Music with the one dated October-November 1978 confirmed in an informal survey of several people at the National Office that the new typeface is better than the old one, though a minority opinion (including our resident expert on typefaces and layout) held out for the older style. The good news is—according to the majority—that we are producing a more legible magazine now (which means that the bad news is: check out those new lenses). Or, the bad news is—according to the minority report—that the old typeface is better (which means that the good news is: it’s the magazine, not your eyes).

Letters Welcome

We appreciate letters from our readers. Shorter letters have a better chance of publication than longer ones, but because of space demands we cannot promise to publish every letter we receive. All letters are subject to editing. Address your thoughts to: Editor, Pastoral Music, 225 Sheridan Street, NW, Washington, DC 20011-1492. Or fax the editor at (202) 723-2262.

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Association News

Member News

Convention Scholarships

Thanks to a special arrangement between the Association and the Diocese of Rockford, Illinois, two people were able to attend this year’s National Convention on scholarship. The arrangement was this: NPM provided two full Convention registrations to participants in the diocesan ministry formation program, and the diocese arranged to cover the cost of travel and lodging. The two scholarship winners were Mary Jo Hare and Jane Olson.

In her application letter, Mary Jo Hare described our National Convention this way:

Such gatherings offer tremendous opportunities for personal spiritual renewal and for learning a lot of practical information useful in serving our parish assemblies...

A convention of the magnitude of the NPM national convention offers a great amount of high-quality liturgical resources in a very short time and space—resources that are not so readily available to most of us. This allows me to draw on the expertise of a wide variety of major presenters to obtain new information, insights, and approaches to better meet the challenges of my ministry and serve the needs of my parish.

How right she is!

Other dioceses interested in this scholarship arrangement should contact Rev. Virgil C. Funk at the NPM National Office.

Convention Issue Next

The next issue of Pastoral Music will contain a complete report of our doings in Pittsburgh, articles based on the major presentations, and lots of pictures. Don’t miss it!

Winter Institutes

By now, all members and subscribers should have received a brochure about our new winter institutes at the San Pedro Center in Maitland, Florida, this winter. The NPM Institute on Liturgical Law will be held January 27–31, 1992, and the NPM Composition School will take place February 3–7, 1992. If you have not yet received a brochure, contact the National Office. Phone: (202) 723–5800; Fax: (202) 723–2262.

Music Educators

National Education Goals Ignore Arts

The Music Educators National Conference (MENC), the National Association of Secondary School Principals, and other national organizations have expressed concern that the arts have been excluded from a statement of national education goals for the year 2000 drawn up by a committee headed by Governor Roy Romer of Colorado and endorsed by President Bush and the secretary of education.

The national organizations all heartily endorse the aim of the six goals: school readiness, school completion, student achievement and citizenship, improvement in mathematics and science, adult literacy and lifelong learning, and safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools. But they are concerned particularly about goal #3, which contains a list of subject matter in which students should be competent, but completely excludes the arts. Here is the text of goal #3:

By the year 2000, American students will leave grades four, eight, and twelve having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, history, and geography, and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy.

A letter to Governor Romer from Mr. John J. Mahlmann, executive director of MENC, put the issue clearly: “The arts continue to suffer and disappear from our schools and subsequently our lives, and this need not be the case... In the statements being made, however, whether you meant to our not, you and your colleagues ‘de facto’ did exclude the arts, and that very exclusion in words translates into a perception that they (the arts) are simply not as important as the ‘challenging subject matter’.”

Whenever the national goals are discussed, members of NPM/ME should take the opportunity to raise the issue of arts education. As Mr. Mahlmann said in his letter: “Music and the other arts contribute far beyond the confines of the discipline itself. It is hard to find a more ‘challenging’ area in the curriculum where rigor and excellence are such an integral part of the discipline.”

Meetings & Reports

Ministry Research Notes

Using research funded by a grant from The Lilly Endowment, Educational Testing Services (ETS) in Princeton, NJ, is distributing a series of occasional reports title Ministry Research Notes. These go to religion editors and writers. The first two reports contain some interesting information about the education, age, and number of seminary candidates in Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish seminaries in the United States.

The age of seminarians in general is going up. Of those who took the GREs in the years between 1981 and 1987, the average age increased from 26.5 to 28.9, and it is still climbing. Large numbers of older women are entering the ordained ministry; for many of these, this is a second career choice, and it frequently comes after a divorce. In general,
women seminarians scored above the national average on the GREs, while men in seminaries scored below it. Most of the students planning to earn an M.Div. scored lower on the GREs than many other professionals, but above those people going into such helping professions as nursing, education, and social work.

One very disturbing result of these studies affects Roman Catholics directly, and that is the acute clergy shortage and the likelihood that we will not pull out of it very soon. According to "Ministry Research Notes" (Spring 1991), 12:

The only major denomination that has an acute shortage of clergy is the Roman Catholic Church. The number of those preparing for the priesthood at the high school, college, and theological school level dropped from 42,900 in 1966 to 8,394 in 1989-90; the number enrolled in Master of Divinity programs fell to 3,698, a modern low. Today there is approximately one Roman Catholic priest—active and retired—for every 1,000 American Catholics. (This compares to one Episcopal priest—active and retired—for every 150 Episcopalians and one Presbyterian minister—active and retired—for every 190 Presbyterians.)

Three-Summer Masters

The University of Portland has revised its program for the Master of Music in Music and Worship so that it can be completed in three summers, making it very practical for parish and school musicians. Some courses will also be offered during the fall and spring semesters to allow for part-time study through the academic year. The program includes courses in musical skills and styles, church music, liturgy, and a final thesis/project. For more information, contact: Dr. Michael Connolly, Director of Liturgical Music, University of Portland, 5000 North Willamette Boulevard, Portland, OR 97203-5798. Phone: (503) 283-7228.

Who Will Replace Us?

Like ministers of music in every denomination, who know the number of students is down in music programs generally and especially in organ and religious music programs, the Association of Anglican Musicians (AAM) is wrestling with the problem of its successors. Ronald Arnatt, a past AAM president who has just completed his term as president of the American Guild of Organists, has proposed that the AAM open its membership to “young men and women who show interest in our cause.” He points out that AAM has evolved from the American Cathedral Organists and Choirmasters Association, “a small club for Cathedral (and ‘cardinal’ parish) organists,” to its present structure, which requires proposing and seconding prospective members who “must be in a position of primary responsibility for music performance.” Now he proposes to abolish proposing and seconding in order to “welcome, with gratitude, all those who show interest in supporting Anglican Church Music.” Does this begin to sound like the Anglican version of NPM, which is open to anyone “dedicated to fostering the art of musical liturgy”? Good!

More Grace Notes

Grace Notes, the quarterly newsletter of the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians (ALCM) edited by Dr. Victor Gebauer, is becoming a bimonthly publication this summer. According to Dr. Gebauer, “The association is growing steadily, intent on serving the church by supporting church musicians.” A free sample of Grace Notes is available from ALCM, 9100 Colesville Road, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Phone: (301) 588-4363.

Organ Library

The first specialized organ library in the United States has been established by the Boston Chapter of the AGO. It was founded with donations of several private collections, including the holdings of E. Power Biggs. The library now houses more than 800 books, thousands of periodicals and musical scores, 600 records, 1,000 tapes, and various miscellaneous items. The Organ Library is located at the School of Theology at Boston University, 745 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA 02115.

International Chant Festival

The fourth international Festival of Gregorian Chant was held in Watou,
Belgium, May 10-12. The festival is held every two years; over five thousand people attended the events this year. Music was performed by sixteen choirs specializing in Gregorian chant. The only two non-European countries represented were the United States and Korea. The U.S. choir was Gloria Dei Cantores, headquartered in Orleans, MA. They sang vespers on Saturday, May 11.

CMA Colloquium

The Church Music Association of America collaborated with Christendom College (Front Royal, VA) in sponsoring a colloquium on "Liturgical Music and the Restoration of the Sacred." June 28-30. Presentations were made by Msgr. Richard J. Schuler, Dr. Theodore Marier, Mr. Paul Salamunovich, and Rev. Robert A. Skeris. The meeting's purpose was to gather church musicians around the "profoundly pastoral conviction that the healing and hallowing powers of a truly sacred music" are essential for celebrating the liturgy.

New Publication for Music with Children

Cokesbury, a division of the United Methodist Publishing House, has begun a new quarterly publication for those who work with church music with children (preschool to sixth grade). Quarter Notes offers practical ideas for the coming quarter and contains a bound-in music booklet for children and a record. A one-year subscription is $12, or you can request a free trial issue. Write: Cokesbury Subscription Services, ATTN: Cindy Solomon, PO Box 801, Nashville, TN 37202-9931. Cokesbury also publishes a new magazine for church musicians who work with adult choirs: Church Music Workshop. Free information is available at the same address.

Resources on Orthodoxy

The Western church continues to draw on the resources and experiences of the Eastern church, especially the Orthodox churches. Yet for many Western Christians, these ancient churches remain strange, foreign, and unfamiliar. SVS Press provides resources to introduce Western believers to Orthodox belief and practice. Of particular interest is a new release called The Orthodox Liturgy: The Development of the Eucharistic Liturgy in the Byzantine Rite. Written by Hugh Wybrew especially for a Western Christian audience, this historical survey traces the evolution of the present form of the Divine Liturgy. Another new publication, written by Michel Quenot, examines The Icon: A Window on the Absolute.

Of particular interest to NPM members are the many publications on the music of the Orthodox liturgies. There is a new edition of the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts as well as two other collections of music for Holy Week and Pascha (the Easter Vigil). The fourth and fifth volumes of Studies in Eastern Church offer the latest research in Byzantine, early Slav, and other Eastern chants. For a complete catalogue of publications, write: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 575 Scarsdale Road, Crestwood, NY 10707-1699. Phone: (914) 961-2203 or -8313. Fax: (914) 961-5456.
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The official English translation of the Liturgia Horarum appeared fifteen years ago (1975–76) in four volumes, and it was soon followed (in 1976) by one-volume abridgements intended for popular use in praying the “hinge” hours of morning prayer and evening prayer. ¹ These official books were accompanied by a flurry of official and unofficial commentaries, adaptations, and supportive material (including an extensive Hymnal of the Hours [GIA Publications, 1989]). ² In spite of such publishing activity, it would be safe to say that the liturgy of the hours has not become a regular feature of Roman Rite parochial liturgical life in the United States. ³

The reasons why the reform of the hours has not been “received” in this culture are complex and would probably prove difficult to determine. They may include any or all of the following: the disappearance after Vatican II of parochial “Sunday devotions” (vespers or compline conjoined to Benediction, a sermon, and/or the recitation of the rosary) as a pattern for noneucharistic community prayer; the use of quasi-invariable “little offices” (the “Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary” being the most popular) rather than the highly variable official text when non-clerical individuals and religious communities prayed the daily office; the nonexistence in our national history of official liturgy of the hours, scriptural illiteracy leading to difficulties in appropriating psalm texts as Christian prayer; nonexistent or difficult musical settings for vernacular translations of the office; a consumerist mentality applied to public worship (one “gets something” out of other rites, i.e., holy communion at the eucharist, but one “gets nothing” from the office); the difficulty of coordinating dawn and/or dusk prayer in church buildings when people’s work schedules or fear of urban violence interfere; a change in family patterns of devotion; and our increasingly multilingual and multicultural worship, with differing devotional emphases for each linguistic or cultural group.

Three Articles

Three recent articles suggest further reasons why the liturgy of the hours has not taken root in American parochial liturgical life. In the first, Peter Waters declares that the general “psychologization” of worship stands in the way of liturgical “ecstasy.” That is, the purpose of worship is understood as satisfying the individualized spiritual needs of worship rather than as the corporate act of the assembly-as-church. This pervasive attitude of “psychologization,” he believes, makes the liturgy of the hours, with its repetition, routine, and ritual, a difficult communal prayer form to renew. ⁴

In a second article, Janet Baxendale notes three “fallacies” contaminating the present renewal of the hours: 1) if it is not sung, people claim, the office should not be celebrated publicly; 2) if the office is not prayed in common, i.e., with other people, it is better not to pray it at all; and 3) the liturgy of the hours is too complicated for the lay person. In contrast to this negative approach, Baxendale believes that certain “target groups” of the faithful in parishes might be the best candidates for praying the liturgy of the hours. Such groups include retired people, women with school-aged children, people recoiling from the frenetic pace of business or social life, isolated individuals, and students. It would be better to encourage the prayer of the hours in such limited groups, she says, than to expect full parochial celebrations. ⁵

In a third examination of the failure of this part of the liturgical reform, Paul Bradshaw locates the problem with the parochial restoration of the liturgy of the hours in the divorce between liturgy...
and spirituality, between “formal ritual prayer” and “real prayer from the heart,” suggesting that the office will not take root in parish life without a profound restoration of liturgical spirituality.6

Mixed Audience

Another possible reason for the difficulty we have experienced in restoring the liturgy of the hours in American liturgical life is that the official books and their official and unofficial adaptations have addressed quite diverse worshiping groups with the same structures and sets of texts.

At one extreme are the deacons, priests, and bishops of the Roman Rite bound to the recitation of the office. Since many of these ministers live in situations where they cannot or will not join with other people to celebrate the hours, their individual recitation turns the Liturgy of the Hours into a “clerical prayer book.” From this perspective, the office of readings, understood as daily “spiritual reading” detached from any particular time of day, is probably the most “successful” part of the office, while the dialogues, responsories, and hymnody of the other hours, which underlie its communal character, prove problematic.

At the other extreme, enclosed contemplative communities may find in the Liturgy of the Hours a treasury for constructing a daily round of prayer and a weekly resurrection vigil, yet they may also find its selection of hymnody confining, the psalm-prayers banal, and the absence of music in the four-volume edition a drawback to choral celebration of the office.

Between these two extremes lie at least three other groups: nonenclosed religious communities, parish staffs and leadership groups, and parishioners who seek a daily devotional prayer form in addition to the eucharist. In many cases, if they have attempted to use the Liturgy of the Hours as their communal daily prayer, these groups have judged it as too rigidly structured, abstract, and/or divorced from concrete ministerial concerns to support their daily prayer life. Other forms of “creative” daily prayer have been substituted for the liturgy of the hours, or noneucharistic common prayer has been abandoned altogether.

Another approach to noneucharistic 14 daily prayer intended for individuals and groups such as those listed above has recently made an appearance in the Netherlands. Known as the Psalmschrift (“Psalmscript”) project,7 it is being developed by Kees Waaijman and Lætitia Aarnink, two members of the Titus Brandsma Institute of Spirituality associated with the Catholic University of Nijmegen.8

The next article in this series will outline the theoretical bases of this project, describe its celebrational pattern, and offer some reflections on its possible application to American patterns of daily noneucharistic prayer.

Notes

1. The content of these one-volume abbreviations varies from publisher to publisher, but all include morning prayer, evening prayer, and night prayer; some include selections from the office of readings and/or music for the hymns, psalms, canticles, and responses.

2. The Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions has also attempted to popularize the prayer of the hours by publishing five collections for parochial celebration using the official ICEL texts. Each collection comes in three fascicle: a “leader’s edition” containing all the texts, rubrics, and music needed for presider and cantor; an “accompaniment edition” containing keyboard accompaniments for the music and a “people’s edition” containing only the texts, rubrics, and music needed for the assembly. In addition to evening prayer for Advent and Lent, these collections include the office of readings for Good Friday, the hours for the Easter Triduum, and evening prayer for feasts of Mary.

3. As an example of an “official” commentary, see the Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy, Study Text VII: The Liturgy of the Hours (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1981)


5. Empirical research on American Roman Catholic worship practices is still in its infancy. The most extensive study to date forms part of The Notre Dame Study of Catholic Parish Life, ed. David C. Leefe and Joseph Gremillion, 15 vols. to 1989 (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984–9). Report Five from this study, “The Celebration of Liturgy in the Parishes” (presented by Mark Searle and David C. Leefe in August 1985), concentrates on the celebration of the eucharist. Therefore the assertions and assessments of this and the next two paragraphs must remain impressionistic.


10. Born in 1942, Kees Waaijman has specialized in Jewish mysticism and biblical spirituality. His doctoral dissertation explored the mysticism of Martin Buber’s I and Thou. Since 1969 he has served as an editor for Speling, a journal devoted to issues of spirituality. Waaijman teaches spirituality in Nijmegen and Heerlen and is a member of the board of directors for the Titus Brandsma Institute. His primary contributions to the Psalmschrift project include translating and providing exegetical commentary for the psalms, composing the texts for the opening and closing songs, and overseeing the project.

11. Lætitia Aarnink was born in 1935, studied theology at Nijmegen, and has specialized in dogmatics and spirituality. She contributes to Speling, primarily focusing on prayer, religious belief, and biblical exegesis. She also teaches spirituality at the Theologisch Katedralschol Institutte in Sittard. Her primary contributions to the Psalmschrift project include writing the prayer texts and selecting the appended readings.
For Musicians: Spirituality

Eight Beatitudes for Musicians, Plus One

BY M. VALERIE SCHNEIDER, S.N.D.

Ever since Matthew told us how Jesus sat on a hill and promised his listeners happiness in the "Beatitudes," Christians have felt themselves called to receive beatitude and be a beatitude for others. Pastoral musicians are not excepted from the challenge to be poor in spirit, gentle, merciful, and pure in heart despite difficulties and the Beatitudes' eighth "promise"—persecution.

But the way pastoral musicians live the Beatitudes is as unique to them as it is unique to all persons according to their state in life, profession, and personality. All Christians "rewrite" the Beatitudes, as it were, as they rework every Scripture passage in concrete and personal terms. "Love your enemies," for example, sounds easy when Jesus says it, but it's a very different thing when I apply that general principle to people I can't stand.

In that spirit of applying the Scriptures to our lives, then, the following eight beatitudes (plus one), are "rewritten" for pastoral musicians to show some specific blessings we can be for others and can receive from them.

Blessed are they who consider the assembly before all else; they will inherit the music ministry of the many. Church musicians must do everything in their power to help the assembly achieve their purpose: to hear the word of God and give thanks. One place to begin is by helping the ministers understand that their role is to serve the people of God. Workshops on the various ministries should stress the transparency that ministers need, the importance of welcoming and hospitality, and the need for a good example shown in reverence and participation. Musicians must have insight into the aptitude, religious disposition, cultural background, and age of the assembly. Such insight will help musicians select appropriate, appealing music that will avoid useless repetition but still give stability to the repertoire. This beatitude is the bottom line for all other considerations, for when the other ministers give attention primarily to the assembly, then they will exercise their central ministry of music more readily.

Blessed are they who provide unity for the liturgy; they shall know its power. Throughout the liturgical year musicians must look at the meaning and structure of the seasons, the readings, and the art being used to give

Because the Catholic tradition is one of acclamations, not hymns, musicians should...look for acclamations that flow easily from the actions and words that precede them. Blessed are they who step aside for

unity to a whole season in a local assembly. On a daily basis, musicians have to tie together the four main actions of the eucharist: take, bless, break, and give. When possible they should use music that respects and supports the macrostructure of the rite. For example, they could link the various litanies in the eucharist with similar music, or they could keep the acclamations during the eucharistic prayer in the same key. And when selecting new service music, they should choose an entire set designed to work together.
the action of Christ; they shall be recognized as children of God. Because the "Church musician is first a disciple and then a minister,"² belonging first to the assembly, church musicians like all ministers should serve the people, not overpower the congregation or draw attention to themselves. A church musician may spend months preparing for a particular liturgy (such as the Easter Vigil), but once the service begins, the musician steps aside while Christ takes over. Though continuing to play or direct, the musician is upstaged by God, who continually says "thank you" to all the ministers. God chooses to be placed personally on the table to feed both the battle-fatigued musicians and the parishioners reluctant to pay them a just wage. As a worshiper, the musician must let go, trusting that God will fill in all the cracks. God can do things that even the most forward-looking liturgical planner could never imagine.

Blessed are they who capitalize on the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults; their emphasis on initiation will push the church toward deeper renewal. Some people feel that the RCIA is the church's last chance to get beyond the tip of the iceberg that is Vatican II. Although we have changed some externals, we still wait as the church for internal conversion. Many people hope that the RCIA will prove to be the catalyst that will help us gain the other ninety-eight per cent of the iceberg of renewal: discipleship, ecumenism, evangelization, community prayer, and a renewed sacramental life—to name a few facets of that iceberg. To the extent that this hope is well founded, the liturgical musician has the responsibility to help the presider and the RCIA team make the rites meaningful. Done well, the rites can inspire baptismal commitment in every parishioner.

Blessed are they who trust the symbol; they will see God by achieving the inexpressible. Edward Foley has claimed that "ritual achieves the inexpressible by means of symbols..."³ Liturgists must trust the inherent power of the symbol, performing the signs and actions "in such a way that its full meaning and impact shine forth in clear and compelling fashion."⁴

An example of this trust at its most agonizing level occurred during the 1989 Easter Vigil at St. John the Evangelist Church, Delphos, Ohio. A small fire in a basement electrical box had caused the loss of ninety-eight per cent of power in the church building—the line to the organ was the only one still working. The assembly did not notice the loss at first; they were still standing with their lighted candles at the beginning of the service. But the liturgical coordinator (who was also the choir director), anticipating what was yet to come, knew how dire the situation was. She wondered if the ritual could sustain the power of the symbols with most of the electric power gone.

Candles remained lit and needed throughout the long liturgy of the word; lectors proclaimed the readings and the homilist preached without the aid of microphones; the psalmist used lung power he never knew he had. Meanwhile, two electricians who (miraculously) had been scheduled as greeters for the service went to work in the basement. Would the electricity ever return? It hadn't by the time we reached the presentation of the candidates. During the litany of the saints not even Saint...
God chooses to be placed personally on the table to feed both the battle-fatigued musicians and the parishioners reluctant to pay them a just wage.

weaken or destroy it." It's important to note that the verb applied to poor celebrations is only may. God can push through the sloppiest of liturgies, and all liturgy is an upward spiral reaching along with all creation to the Pleroma. Liturgists who lead the sacrifice of praise will sometimes gaze in wonder and at other times gasp in horror. The woman in the pew, the server in the sanctuary, the organist on the bench, the lector at the ambo, the presider at the chair—and the liturgist—are all healed, lifted, celebrated in every liturgy. Liturgists, therefore, do not need to kick against the goad of trying to live in the not-yet.

Blessed are they who remember that they do not have to make the perfect liturgy. The perfect liturgy occurs in the risen Lord and is echoed in the heavenly reign. Until we enter that reign, we are blessed to remember this: The risen Lord dwells in our midst, already singing the great hymn to which we are invited to join our voices. This final beatitude contains the greatest joy. Blessed are they who pass it on.

Notes
4. Music in Catholic Worship #77.
5. Ibid. #13.
6. Ibid. #6.
Trust the Ritual or Face “The Triumph of Bad Taste”

BY MARK SEARLE

One of the more serious issues raised by Thomas Day is the one that he calls “de-ritualization” or “the sincere and calculated disrespect for the beauty of the liturgical forms.” It is a pity that he had to introduce the word “beauty” here, for that suggests a concern for ritual that is primarily aesthetic, whereas I believe that what is at stake is not merely good or bad taste, but the very nature of the liturgy itself.

We should begin by asking whether the phenomenon of “de-ritualization” is as widespread as he seems to think it is. He gives enough recognizable examples for one to conclude that it is, both in the “progressive” parishes where a great deal of effort is expended in creating “good liturgy” and in the more average parish where the style of liturgical celebration suggests a lack of conviction about its connection with any reality, let alone Ultimate Reality. But whereas Dr. Day blames this on some inexplicable loss of aesthetic sensitivity among U.S. clergy in the 1940s, there are good reasons for thinking that it is not in fact a purely Catholic problem. As a culture, we tend to be distrustful of “rituals.” We exalt spontaneity, creativity, individuality, and innovation, but we often relapse, for lack of energy, into the fixed, routine, collective, and predictable.

Ritual, on the other hand, can only flourish where there is a belief in the efficacy of instituted rites and a sensitivity to condensed symbols. That we have lost faith in the efficacy of instituted rites is manifest in the way we commonly regard the liturgy as something that we do for God or ourselves, rather than as something that God (in Christ) does for us. We are profoundly aware of the humanness of the liturgy, but dubious about its divine dimension. Our reduced sensitivity to condensed symbols means that it is difficult for the symbols (e.g., the rite of immersion or the eucharistic bread) to introduce us into another world. We tend to assign them a single meaning and to see them in ethical terms. (Baptism either washes away sin or makes us members of the community; the eucharist is either a sacrifice for sin or a symbol of our unity with one another.)

In acknowledging the problem it is all too easy to point the finger at incompetent presiders, untrained musicians, dictatorial liturgists, or conservative congregations, and Thomas Day has shown how much fun can be derived from setting up one or more of the above for ridicule. It is like blaming inflation on management, labor, or politicians, depending on whom you most love to hate.

Ecclesiastical professionals are likely, by their education and cultural background, to be at odds with the ordinary pew dweller.

Symptoms of Social Organization

A different tack was suggested by the British anthropologist Mary Douglas twenty years ago in a book called Natural Symbols (1970). She propounded the thesis that ritualism and antiritualism are less matters of personal taste than symptoms of the way society is organized. It is not the case, she argued, that “primitive” societies are highly ritualized and modern societies are not, or that de-ritualization is a sign of progress: it has much more to do with how the individual is related to the society of which he or she is a part and how that society, in turn, sees itself in relation to the larger world. Where the individual is defined as part of the whole, and where society has a clear sense of its own boundaries, ritualism will be strong. Where the culture is individualistic and boundaries are blurred, ritualism will be correspondingly weak.

Dr. Mark Searle is associate professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN.
Our culture is characteristically weak in both dimensions: the individual is assumed to have priority over the community, and the boundaries of the groups we belong to are permeable enough that we can pass to and fro without much notice. Nonetheless, if this is true of the culture as a whole, it is not true of all its subcultures. There are subcultures that are very individualistic, but they have a clear sense of their distinctness and are by no means universally accessible—the professions, for example, or exclusive clubs, or acting troupes. On the other hand, there are sects like the Amish or the Moonies, in which the individual is clearly subordinate to the group and which also have a clear sense of their difference as a group from the larger society.

Douglas’s point is that groups that grip their members in strong social bonds and have a strong sense of collective identity are more likely to ritualize their collective lives than societies that are more open, more fluid, and less inclined to assign roles to their members. Conversely, subcultures or social strata that are more individualistic, Douglas argues, will be less likely to depend on tradition and authoritarian structures and more likely to operate out of general ethical principles.

Mary Douglas gives a vivid illustration of how both types of society can coexist even within the church when she compares the Catholic intellectual elite who pressed for abolition of Friday abstinence in England with the “Bog Irish,” as she calls them. The intellectuals argued that it was a meaningless shibboleth and that voluntary forms of penance would be more meaningful, but for working-class Irish in an alien culture, the practice was closely tied up with their religious (and national) identity. Here, as elsewhere, ecclesiastical professionals are likely, by their education and cultural background, to be at odds with the ordinary pew dweller (though in the U.S., the professionals find support in the suburbs whose denizens, increasingly, share the same kind of education and thus the same cultural presuppositions). In this connection, Douglas made a comment that has broader applications:

Those who are responsible for ecclesiastical decisions are only too likely to have been made, by the manner of their education, insensitive to non-verbal signals and dull to their meaning. This is central to the difficulties of Christianity today. It is as if the liturgical signal-boxes were manned by colour-blind signalmen.

Liturg vs. Sacrament

But the problem of anti-ritualism, as we experience it today, also feeds off a longer intellectual tradition in Catholicism, namely the distinction, going back to the high Middle Ages or earlier, between “liturgy” and “sacrament.” Sacrament was always defined as a sign instituted by Christ to confer grace. As such, it was at most the small kernel of the rite as a whole and consisted of the essential matter and form. This was God-given, guaranteed, and—apart from emergency baptisms and marriage—strictly in the hands of the priest. Liturgy was identified with the rest of the rite and with those rites that had no sacramental center to them, like the liturgy of the hours or rotation day processions. These, according to the Council of Trent, were edifying and even instructive. They surrounded and embellished the seven sacraments, but they could, if necessary, be omitted without loss.

The bitter harvest of this tradition is with us today in celebrations where the consecration is really all that counts or in creative liturgies where everything is up for grabs because, after all, it’s all just ceremonies.

One of the major teachings of Vatican II, however, was that the whole of the liturgy, beginning with the very congregating of the people, is sacramental. The whole ritual—gestures, words, and music—from beginning to end is symbolic of something more than meets the eye. At the very moment when “educated” Catholics were beginning to think of liturgy more as the work of the congregation, Vatican II was teaching us that it is, on the contrary, the work of Christ in the Spirit: Christ, who is present and active through the very assembly itself and its ritual actions.

The Dilemma of Sacramentality

The issue of de-ritualization, then, is not a question of good or bad taste. It is not a question of whether or not you like the priest altering the rite to say “Good morning” or “Haverniceday” or whether you think that the St. Louis Jesuits do a better or worse job than the Solesmes Benedictines. The issue is one of sacramentality: How is this congregation to act like the Body of Christ? How? Are we to sing so that it is Another who sings and prays in us? How is the presider to preside in such a way that his personality is effaced by the presence of Christ? The point about ritual is that, unlike creative, innovative, attention-grabbing performances, it cannot be taken at face value. Ritual is a way of paying attention. Ritual words, songs, movements, and actions direct attention away from themselves to that which they mean: Christ among us.

This is the dilemma of the church today. Culturally, we are a people whose relationship to the larger community is the opposite of traditional Catholicism: culturally, we find ourselves first and then look for community, instead of finding ourselves in community. In this country, the dividing line between believer and nonbeliever, between Christian and non-Christian, between Catholic and non-Catholic is simply inoperable most of the time. We eat the same food, watch the same shows, respond to the same ads. We have little sense of boundaries, so we have little need of rituals.

But the fact of the matter is that the Christian Tradition cannot survive without ritual, for that Tradition is more than doctrines and beliefs; it is first and foremost a way of life, a way of defining ourselves in the world in continuity over time. The church cannot survive without ritual because its identity is tied up with its collective vocation to be a sign / sacrament of
something other than itself and because the church has to be prior in every way to those whose vocation it is to compose it. And in the end, I doubt that God can survive without ritual, at least as our God, because without public ritual this God of all the earth will become the private, intimate, personal God of each individual and will cease to be a public God at all.

If Mary Douglas is right, de-ritualization is often just a phase, associated with times of social upheaval and cultural transition. There was a great repudiation of ritual in the sixteenth century, but the churches of the Reformation, having rejected the rituals of Rome as idolatrous, soon developed their own. Studies of non-ritual churches today soon show that their services are in fact quite highly ritualized. In each case, however, the upheaval has resulted in symbolic impoverishment. It would be ironic indeed if the postconciliar reforms that set out to restore the fullness of meaning to the central symbols of our tradition should have unwittingly advanced the symbolic poverty of our age.

What then should we do? I would suggest four things:

1. We should heighten our general awareness of the impact of the world on the church. We often talk of the church’s mission to convert the world, not recognizing that the world has usually, without fanfare, subverted the church.

2. As a people, we need to immerse ourselves in the Scriptures. In so doing, we will become aware of the profound differences between the Gospel and our culture and of what is distinctive to the church, namely, its vocation to be the sacrament of Christ in the world. Then we will be more appreciative of the need to maintain a style of ritual music, ritual architecture, ritual speech and gesture that helps us identify ourselves over against the larger culture.

3. In light of that conscious self-differentiation from the larger culture, boundaries will be re-established, and attention will be paid to the points at which those boundaries are crossed. This is already happening with the restored catechumenate and the order of penance, developments that make no sense in a society that boasts of its impatience with boundaries and its distaste for ritual.

4. Most of all, perhaps, we need to ask the meaning of what we do and to answer that question not in terms of ethics, as all too many sermons and religious instructions do, but in terms of mystery. In ethics, as in liturgy, the emphasis is typically put on what we ought to be doing. In the moral life, as in the ritual life of the sacraments, however, Christian faith gives the priority to what God does. It is God’s gift that evokes our response. That, in the end, is why we have to put our trust in the efficacy of the instituted rites and the ineffable richness of our symbols. To do otherwise can only be to trivialize them and turn them into human performances. Now that is what I would call the triumph of bad taste!

Notes


Narcissism: “I Celebrate Myself, and Sing Myself”

BY RORY COONEY

In chapter five of *Why Catholics Can't Sing*, Thomas Day takes us to the heart of what he perceives to be wrong with the American church’s sung worship. Summarized briefly, the main lines of his argument are these:

- There is a narcissism in the rites as they are being celebrated in our churches. This narcissism, to the extent that it exists, is diametrically opposed to worship, which is other-oriented. Some of its manifestations are the self-insinuation of the presider’s personality into the rite, the song leader’s use of amplification to turn the assembly into a captive audience, and the texts of most music in what Day calls the reformed-folk genre.

  - Composers and song writers are writing music for these narcissistic assemblies that manipulates its accompanying text and thus proclaims to the singer and hearer: “Feel this way.”
  - Text writers are composing literally egocentric texts full of first person pronouns as well as texts that promote a self-congratulatory kind of narcissism in the singing assembly. Such texts are characterized by the “revolutionary” voice-of-God text (Day’s expression), in which the assembly sings “I” when the “I” is God or Christ.
  - The style of worship engendered by this singing and egocentric kind of ministry is the result of a retreat from “hard” theology, an orthodoxy that Day characterizes by such expressions as “the Trinity, the Incarnation, Calvary, the Lamb of God slain for sins, and the intricate dogmas of the Mass.”

The “hard . . . holy” God of Scripture has, in his view, been replaced by a softer “God is my friend” image; the *mysterium tremendum* has been replaced by a domesticated pretender. The 1984 edition of the *Glory and Praise* hymnal is the psalter of this idolatry.

- Finally, Day takes issue with those who call the reformed-folk music “people music,” for as a rule he finds it difficult to sing, unpredictable in its leaps of melody (as in “Sing to the Mountains”), rhythmically complex (like “Be Not Afraid” and “Hail Mary, Gentle Woman”), or “irrational” or “delirious” in its composition (as in “One Bread, One Body”).

My agreement and disagreement with Dr. Day weave in and out of his text paragraph by paragraph, and I have covered many of those areas elsewhere. But here I want to comment on this question: What values is the church reaching for in her worship, and how can our present dissatisfaction give impetus to our pushing into the future together?
short in my eyes or in Day’s eyes, and how can our dissatisfaction with the present state of things give impetus to our pushing into the future together? One can discern important values that underlie the peccata and the peccadillos, real and imagined, in Dr. Day’s thesis. Restricting ourselves to the main lines of his argument from chapter five, outlined above, let us see if we can progress from them and find a hope for the future. The values I see at work are the importance of participation and ecclesial inculturation and the discovery or recovery of a richer Christology, ecclesiology, and theology of the Spirit.

Participation and Inculturation

Full, conscious, and active participation of the faithful has been the elusive goal of liturgical reform for over twenty-five years. Every tool has been used to encourage it, from threats to cajolery, and the response has ranged from hesitant to thunderous. “Father Chuck” and “Father Bob” in Thomas Day’s demography overstep their bounds as presiders when they try to become the whole “Good Morning, America” team before the sign of the cross at Sunday eucharist. But Father Eugene Walsh was right when he told us for most of the past twenty-five years that the assembly is not an assembly just because it’s geographically concentrated in one building. Community-building techniques need to be used—introductions, mutual greetings, good mornings, announcements, rehearsals, and so on—but they need to be done before the ritual begins. They need not, and probably should not, be done by the priest.

Microphones became a necessity in churches that were never meant to have such systems installed when it became necessary (only twenty-five years ago!) for people to be able to hear what was going on at a distance and respond to it. But not every church community has the technical know-how to use its amplification system properly.

I have begun to wonder whether much of the diversity in opinion over appropriate musical styles for worship may not involve architectural considerations as well. The music of Taizé, which sounds ridiculous in the not-very-resonant parish church where I work, sounds lovely in a more acoustically alive space, like our basilica in Phoenix. Similarly, amplified ensembles, especially those with drums, find hyper-resonant spaces extremely unfriendly, and much of the music in the “reformed-folk” tradition will therefore not be at its best in such spaces. New liturgical music, indeed, the new liturgy, is new wine, and there is some doubt whether old wineskins can hold it, or whether it’s reasonable to expect that they should. Older buildings certainly do exaggerate the theological differences between the times before and after Vatican II. That’s another story, but one that needs to be told . . .

The question of appropriate architecture raises the issue of inculturation. We are familiar by now with the two-pronged approach that the Second Vatican Council took to liturgical renewal. First there was an attempt to discern the church’s genuine tradition, that is, to separate the unchanging teaching of Christ, as it was passed on through the apostles, from its historical manifestations in various eras. Some of these manifestations were venerable or ancient enough to have carried the weight of practice and even of law, but they had lost their meaning in the world of the twentieth century. After attempting to discern the authentic tradition, then, the Council sought to initiate through competent local authority a process of inculturation, that is, of adaptation of the rites, their language, and the artistic expression of their symbols to the cultural vernacular of the people.

The struggle for inculturation in the multicultural American church has been manifest in areas like language, ministries, and music. Is this inculturation supposed to be syncretistic or polycultural (those are two options) in the urban melting pot of the United States, or should it seek to preserve ethnic traditions in homogeneous communities? Some people seek polycultural blending (syncretism), at least until an American culture emerges in some future century. Others see the term “polycultural” as self-contradictory because prayer, even public prayer, is so intimate an experience that the multiplication of ethnic expressions is destructive.

Nowhere is the ambivalence (perhaps schizophrenia?) of this situation more apparent than in the world of liturgical music. Well-intentioned composers have sought to be inclusive by writing bilingual liturgical music, but most of the music itself is not bicultural. It is, in effect, Anglo music with texts partially translated into, for instance, Spanish.

Thomas Day’s concern about “manipulative” music concerns the music written for the English-speaking American church, which he finds to be manipulative in the way that “program” music is, or the music of motion pictures. This is certainly a confusing argument. The extreme rejection of “program” music leads to the option that music be emotionally neutral and only serve as a pitched way of communicating text. But the work of worship surely requires more than that. Perhaps there must be a continuum, from pure cantillation on the one hand to emotionally manipulative “program” music on the other.

It seems to me that the reason we use music in liturgy in the first place is to give emotional weight to our words. Liturgy is an innately musical event; because words are not enough: we resort to music in prayer for the same reason that we sing songs of love and war.

In giving emotional weight musically to the text, restraint becomes a concern for composers in two areas. First, the composer must communicate the text musically with respect for the meaning it has for the church, and not simply for the composer. Second, the music must be humble enough that its natural home is the
singing voice of the assembly accompanied by the leaders of its music ministry.

Those two restraints still leave a playground that seems almost big enough for everyone, but it does leave out some games. For instance, "functional" music is out. Pitched text chanted to singable but emotionally detached music is an affront both to music and prayer, at least vis-à-vis the "American" style of worship (with all the appropriate multicultural caveats). At the other end of the spectrum, music that cynically uses tone color, ornate orchestration, clichés, or conventions to coerce the emotions is out as well. This exclusion is not limited to the syrupy intimacy that Day finds (wrongly, in my opinion) in such melodies as "On Eagle's Wings." It includes brass fanfares and timpani that stir up martial emotions to turn God's pilgrim people into an imperial Roman phalanx in service of a false triumphanistic Christ. It also includes music of other periods that suggest a heaven in the ether or propose that the Beyond is captured in the metaphor of the unintelligible or the past.

A "New" Christology: Christ Is a "We"

Day's distaste for the "voice of God" songs he finds throughout the current repertoire would be understandable if he had no knowledge of the workings of Vatican II or if he did not acknowledge its validity. But this criticism is less defensible if one accepts the Council, for Christian poetry and song could hardly have avoided being captivated by the insights into Christology, ecclesiology, and sacramental theology developed in the last thirty years in the Council documents, the revised Sacramentary, and the advances in Scripture study that have made the Bible much more intelligible.

The Christology operative among the conciliar bishops seems to have been one that developed from Pauline theology as it appears in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4, and Colossians 3, interpreted in the encyclical Mystici Corporis (1943), and systematized by Edward Schillebeeckx in Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God and other works. Some of the main lines of that Christology are that the great pray-er of the liturgy, the only true worshiper, is Christ. Only Christ

The great pray-er of the liturgy, the only true worshiper, is Christ.

is the true priest, whose worship of the Abba is pure self-abandonment, an image of God's self. But by virtue of creation, the incarnation, and the paschal mystery, the whole of humanity—and in a particularly visible way, the community of the baptized—has been taken into Christ's own self. This Christ is like a body whose head is Jesus the Christ and whose members are the rest of us, whose Spirit is God's Spirit, the one life that lives at the heart of everything.

Christ's mission in the world has been given by Abba, and Jesus passed it on with his Spirit at the hour of his death: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (John 20:21, but also 17:18). The church in every place and time lives out that mission. It serves the world in whatever ways the world shows its need, accomplishing this service through the great diversity of gifts given it by the Spirit of God. When the body of Christ gathers in liturgical assembly, it acts there too as a body with many functions, in service of one another, in union with Jesus Christ, the head of the body.

This approach is a substantial departure from the frequently negative Christology and ecclesiology with which average Catholics of the baby-boom generation (or older) grew up. "Lay" Catholics, to parody that older view, were at the bottom of an inverted pyramid of grace, the beneficiaries of a trickle-down theory of salvific economics invented by those higher up the ziggurat. With exposure to the "new" Christology, however, lights went on; a new enthusiasm for the
church and the liturgy was born in us. And many of us came to the same brilliance of inscape in different ways.

Naturally enough, the new theological vision gave birth early to Whitmanesque poetry. “I sing the body of Christ electric” was the theme of our larger work, “Songs of Ourselves.” I know what Thomas Day means about such texts. I am more grateful, however, that so many people entered into the childlike joy and adolescent exuberance of the past few decades than I am worried that others were sitting on the sidelines intellectualizing about how infantile we were.

Day and other highly educated musicians rightly complain about the quality of the music and its average performance level, but a great deal of growth has happened for most of its composers in twenty-five years. We’ve suffered a lot at each other’s hands, but major changes have taken place. Parishes have begun to support several choirs instead of just one (or none). More people have gotten involved in music ministry, and year by year, we’ve gotten better at it. The National Association of Pastoral Musicians was born, an organization to support and update a group that did not even exist (the term did not even exist) ten years earlier. And you don’t need a doctorate to join.

What is arguably the most beloved song of the last twenty years is both difficult to sing and a “voice of God” song: “I Am the Bread of Life” by Suzanne Toolan, S.M. Covering the spectacular range of one and one-half octaves and written in the first person, it has nevertheless been reproduced in every important hymnal and worship aid since it was introduced. It is sung in cathedrals and in “downstairs” prayer meetings of the charismatic renewal. It endures because it is true. The song sets several verses from John 6 that make connections between the eucharist and the paschal mystery. In my parish, whether we do it with brass quartet, organ and choir, or rock ensemble for the teens, in any key between G and B flat, the response is predictably strong.

But this may be the least objectionable kind of “voice of God” song to Day. Really sinister songs for him seem to be those where the “I” is intentionally ambiguous. Rather than guess about the intention behind others’ compositions, I volunteer my own “Bread of Life.” In light of the Christology outlined above, I submit that it is perfectly legitimate that the sinful, fragile congregation that counts me among its members says to the world: “I myself am the bread of life, / You and I are the bread of life, / Taken and blessed, broken and shared by Christ / That the world might live.” Or we might sing: “Come to me, you who labor and are burdened,” or “I shall be with you,” or “I am the resurrection and the life,” or any of the words of Jesus, as long as we sing them as a body and strive to live them day by day. God’s word is alive, incarnate in us, small as we are. We do not exhaust the presence of Christ in the world, but we are nothing less than Christ’s chosen manifestation. God has given us that name; we have not chosen it. God willing, that word will shape us into what we sing and hope to be: truth, life, bread, living water, resurrection, light to the world.

A Paschal, Pilgrim, Praxis People

It is hard to argue with Day’s sweeping statement that the “hard... holy” God has been replaced by a “God is my friend” model. The Council invited the church to shape an image of God from the full range of its biblical sources, and what emerged was a God of creation, exodus, and restoration; a God-who-is-with, a healer, liberator, covenant maker; a God whose existence sustains all being and is therefore an inner thorn reminding us to live in justice and hold on to one another and the world in reverence. Here is no wimpy, milquetoast deity: the Council gave us again the paschal mystery as creation’s crucible and destiny. Jesus, murdered and then known to live, is our pattern and our hope. To say that God is love is not to quote Hallmark but the apostle; such love is not romantic ecstasy but pure ecestasy, a being outside-of-self that comes from emptying self for the other. If this is easy, and if this is a wimpy God, I still choose her over the mighty fortress, victor, ruler, Lord—and any curia that serves him.

I reject categorically the insinuation that the arcane, unintelligible, or exotic is an appropriate metaphor for God. The teaching of Jesus indicates that finding comes from losing self in the service of others, and one could make out of this an assertion that the only appropriate metaphor for the mysterium tremendum et fascinans is the mystery of another person, or better, all other persons. Hospitality, service, and the labors of love, being together and singing together: these are icons of the living God. Everything else is bells, whistles, and smoke screens—distractions from reality.

This is not to say that frequently music fails to embody the spirit that drives its creation, but this is surely nothing new in the history of sacred music. Glory and Praise contains its share of dead weight, but show me a hymnal that doesn’t.

The Holy Spirit is not big on details, and charisma is messy: ask anyone involved in the RCIA. There are musical problems with melodies and rhythms, and that kind of stuff really bothers trained musicians. But the Spirit surprises: suddenly congregations can sing an octave and a half with enthusiasm, or we wind up singing something wrong, but we sing it wrong together. The “irrational” or “delirious” melody works just right, and people have a new way to express their spiritual insight together.

We are at the beginning of something that we have not yet attained. Given the paradigm of pilgrimage and the parameter of inculturation, good liturgy must be an act-in-process rather than a pot of gold and the renewal rainbow’s end. The windows that the magnus John XXIII threw open in 1959 have only begun to refresh the air in the church’s ancient spiritual edifice (the best
efforts by certain princes of the church to close them to the contrary). But the proof is in the musical pudding: Congregations enjoy singing the new compositions because they truly reflect the faith of the American church in our day. The way those pieces are performed would be helped if church employers would seek out good musicians in the contemporary style and train them in liturgy or give them guidance in the context of a parish team.

Six Steps Forward

Based on Thomas Day’s insights and complaints in chapter five of *Why Catholics Can’t Sing* and my reactions to them, I suggest these six steps to take us toward the future.

1. **Focus. Center.** Anything does not go. Eucharist is not just prayer, it is *ritual* prayer. Not the presider, nor the musician, nor anyone else can do whatever they want. Ritual expresses and shapes belief. The heart of the Christian truth is the fundamental equality of all people, a principle based in the Jewish tradition that God’s life is the one life by which all things live. Jesus offers this principle as an a priori argument from the Jewish Law: The first and greatest commandment is to love God, and the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. To realize that the other—friend, stranger, or enemy—is the same as us and to act from that knowledge is to keep the first commandment as well as the second.

   Catholic rite makes us act as equals, members of a body with different gifts and functions. All of our gifts are given for service, and when we use them that way, they become ministries. All ministries exist to support the whole, not for personal gratification or aggrandizement. In authentic Catholic rite, everyone performs her/his ministry and then becomes part of the whole again.

   Everyone, especially presiders, should reread the General Instruction of the Roman Missal to see again where spontaneity is called for and where, for ritual reasons, it is not. The first words that the priest speaks should always be the sign of the cross, except in those cases where the ritual begins in other ways. Presiders shouldn’t cheerlead, or explain, or “star,” or improvise unduly. The gathering is something we work at together, so when we begin a journey into a mutual beyond and the presider suddenly becomes Willard Scott, we have a ritual catastrophe. Probably for this reason, God has made it plainly clear through the prophetic tradition that liturgy is not her bag. God wants *hesed*, not sacrifice (or meal). Thomas Day is correct in urging us toward better, more “formal” celebration. He is wrong to say that the rite is at fault, however, or to allege that the preconciliar rite was better.

2. **Liturgical prayer is meant to be sung.** Our long-range goal is to look beyond mere song singing...
toward more completely musical liturgy.

4. Judge a text as you would a homily. How does it help to reveal the spectrum of meaning in the paschal mystery? What kind of language does it use to help us make connections between our everyday life and life in the reign of God? Does it help build bridges between people, or does it just build a bridge of sighs to the heavens?

5. Never sing any song in church that Roseanne Barr has sung at a baseball game.

5½. When someone suggests a national hymnal, run

Never sing any song in church that Roseanne Barr has sung at a baseball game.

the other way. We need a national hymnal like an eagle needs an anchor.

6. Do not place sacred music into folders labeled “good,” “better,” “best,” or “bad” based on style. Heads of music departments and liturgy offices need to start admitting with the rest of us that Joan Baez is not just a great “folk” musician, she is a great musician. Count Basie was not just a great “jazz” musician, nor was Leonard Bernstein just a great “classical” musician: they were great musicians. Their music was different, but classical music is not “better” than folk music, as chant is not “holier” than jazz. Complex is not always “deeper” than simple, just different.

Day can rage against Dufford until the cows come home, but I will never admit that Latin chant belongs on the lips of American Catholics. Maybe we all ought to look again at Snoopy’s great contribution to theology: Has It Ever Occurred to You That You Might Be Wrong? It is a tome that I have gift-wrapped and sent to friends in the Curia; every crusader should have one.

Notes


3. Those of us in the Southwest and the suburbs have a little bit of an advantage here over our urban sisters and brothers: most of our churches have been built based on the new liturgical paradigms. How do you add and use appropriate amplification in a place like St. Patrick’s in New York City, or in any of the marbled neogothic or basilica structures in New England, the East, and the Great Lakes states?

Dr. Day demonstrates some ignorance in the matter of amplification himself when he criticizes “Mr. Caruso” for singing “with a mouth only inches from a microphone” (see Why Catholics Can’t Sing, p. 51). Virtually all microphones work best when the speaker is “only inches” away; the problem is the sound levels set in the sacristy (or wherever the amplifiers are).

4. My own first encounter with the “new” Christology in an intensive class during novitiate (1969) was a life-changing experience.

5. From the collection, Mystery, ©1987 by North American Liturgy Resources (NALR), 10802 North 23rd Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85029. All rights reserved.

6. Glory and Praise lacks adequate psalmody, and it should have used updates of traditional hymn texts, such as those in the Lutheran Book of Worship. But it also deliberately “lacks” the readings, eucharistic prayers, and other texts not pertinent to the assembly’s role, which other hymnals and worship aids include as a matter of course. Considering price, appearance, longevity, quality, and versatility, the Glory and Praise Comprehensive Edition acquits itself against any single hymnal currently available.

7. This is especially true of some of the early music of the St. Louis Jesuits and others. Sometimes, for instance, Bob Dufford uses rests and sixteenth notes where eighth notes would do. Everyone sings “Be Not Afraid” the way it should have been written for the congregation, not as it is notated.
Seven Steps Forward
...and a Plea

BY PAUL F. FORD

Why sing? is a secondary question. Why U.S. Catholics didn’t, don’t, won’t, can’t, and could be taught to sing are also secondary issues. “Why worship at all?” is the question that must be answered first.

Right-brain answers to that primary question can be found in Poulenc’s “The Dialogues of the Carmelites” or in the more recent story of the Franciscan who stepped forward from the ranks of prisoners at Auschwitz and volunteered to take the place of the young husband and father in the hunger bunker. What happened next is well known and yet still amazing: From the place where captors and captives had expected the hellish howls of men whose parched and

Christians sing because they have something to sing about, something to sing for, and someone to sing with.

famished bodies had begun to consume their own protein came the sound of hymns and songs. Father Maximilian Kolbe had gotten his fellow condemned prisoners to sing until day by day, one by one, the song diminished. Finally Maximilian’s solitary voice was stilled by an injection of carbolic acid.

Left-brain reasons for worship can be found in much of the original and subsequent documentation of the liturgical renewal. Here is a passage that may represent them all:

Christ Jesus, High Priest of the new and eternal covenant, taking human nature, introduced into this earthly exile the hymn that is sung throughout all ages in the halls of heaven. He joins the entire human community to himself, associating it with his own singing of this canticle of divine praise.

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For he continues his priestly work through the agency of his Church, which is unceasingly engaged in praising the Lord and interceding for the salvation of the whole world. The Church does this not only by celebrating the eucharist, but also in other ways, especially by praying the divine office.

Christians sing because they have something to sing about (the goodness of God), something to sing for (the salvation of the world), and someone to sing with (the Son of God). Without an experience of God, without a sense of what God is up to in the universe, and without a fellow singer and animator, we are and should be mute. As Thomas Merton reminds us, Christ sings and dances with us even in the fiery furnace (or the hunger bunker).

For a contrasting view, we can step into the hooves of the tempter C. S. Lewis made famous. It is a special treat to hear John Cleese read the senior devil’s
response to the reluctant announcement of junior tempter Wormwood that his patient has fallen in love with a Christian woman from a healthy home (Letter 22). Just before the manuscript breaks off because his rage turns him into a centipede, Screwtape fulminates against the woman and her family:

Could you [Wormwood] not see that the very house she lives in is one that he ought never to have entered? The whole place reeks of that deadly odour. The very gardener, though he has been there only five years, is beginning to acquire it. Even guests, after a weekend visit, carry some of the smell away with them... It bears a sickening resemblance to the description one human writer made of Heaven: “the regions where there is only life and therefore all that is not music is silence.”

Music and silence—how I detest them both! How thankful we should be that ever since our Father entered Hell... all has been occupied by Noise... We will make the whole universe a noise in the end. We have already made great strides in this direction as regards the Earth. The melodies and silences of Heaven will be shouted down in the end...

I would make it a rule that I cannot invite anyone to change whom I have not previously affirmed, prayed for, and forgiven.

So why worship? Because we have been given Life even in this life. Why sing? Because we need to respond to Life and life and to make our living spaces and work places redolent of and resonant with Heaven.

The primary reason for singing is derived from Scripture: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your heart to God” (Colossians 3:16, RSV). This verse indicates that the movement of the word of Life is first down into the heart, where it makes a home for itself. Then from out of the heart pour two kinds of speech: the sharing of wisdom with others and the singing of gratitude to God.

The song and music chosen for liturgy have a “ministerial function,” because “sacred song closely bound to the text... forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy...” It will be the more holy the more closely it is joined to the liturgical rite, whether by adding delight to prayer, fostering oneness of spirit, or investing the rites with greater solemnity.” In light of what Colossians says, liturgical music enhances the movement of the word into the heart, draws the hearts of all participants into unity, and educes from these hearts wisdom and prayer.

Seven Steps Forward

Day’s diagnosis of why Catholics can’t sing—because they missed their musical apprenticeship—and his prescription to parishes to “go back, as it were, return to the primitive state they never really knew” and “lower their expectations” make sense as far as they go. Yes, make less but better use of amplification and better and more flexible use of artificial lighting, but instead of going back, we must go forward along the lines suggested in these seven steps.

1. We must remember that choosing music is an important responsibility. This is why Music in Catholic Worship says:

The power of a liturgical celebration to share faith will frequently depend upon its unity—a unity drawn from the liturgical feast or season or from the readings appointed in the lectionary as well as artistic unity flowing from the skillful and sensitive selection of options, music, and related arts. The sacred scriptures ought to be the source and inspiration of sound planning... the other elements ought to be so arranged as to constitute a setting for and response to the message of the Word.

2. We should use fewer metrical hymns (especially closing hymns) and, when using them, respect their integrity. We should exhibit a greater preference for psalm and canticle singing and avail ourselves of a variety of forms of psalmody. The psalm responses and alleluia psalms of the Simple Gradual, in particular, restore the much-needed litanic form to our worship. And the Gradual’s twelve simple melodic patterns for the psalm responses and the eight patterns for the alleluia psalms exhibit the kind of homely music that Day asks for and Owen Alstott (for one) has already achieved.

3. Furthermore, the texts and melodies of the Simple Gradual must be translated into our linguistic and cultural vernaculars, thereby both preserving the tradition where possible and building on it. The Simple Gradual is the most unexploited musical resource of the liturgical renewal. It could be argued that chant is too culturally specific; I argue that the simple chants of the new Gradual represent one transcultural point of departure for the second phase of the liturgical renewal we are just at the beginning of. (As Anscar Chupungco reminds us, the first phase of renewal is the recovery of the Roman Rite, and the second phase will be its reinculturation.)

4. We must encourage (in ascending order of preference) the sung dialogues between presider (if possible) and assembly, those between cantor and assembly, and the acclamations that all sing together as the most important parts to be sung at every (yes!) Mass.

5. Shared silences must also be part of our liturgy planning and liturgical catechesis. We must respect the silences of the renewed liturgy (in the liturgy of the word and after communion) and restore the ancient silences at the collect and (for the most part) the preparation of gifts.

6. We need to resolve our conflicts according to the principles found in the whole of Matthew 18, and not just in the three-step correction process (go to the person yourself, take a friend or two, shun the offend-
er). The context for correction is affirmation—every little one is worth the attention of the shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine behind in search of the stray—and the prayer of inexhaustible forgiveness. In fact, I would make it a rule that I cannot invite anyone to change whom I have not previously affirmed, prayed for, and forgiven.

7. Day isn’t the only one who has not done his homework; all of us need to take down again Documents on the Liturgy 1963–1979, Annibale Bugnini’s Reform of the Liturgy, 1948–1975, and the music statements of the U.S. bishops and work our way more carefully through the history of the musical ideas and reforms of the Second Vatican Council. Ongoing formation of self and others is crucial because the real reform of the liturgy is still in its earliest stages.

... And a Plea

I am troubled by the lack of humility, charity, and justice, not just in Thomas Day’s tone, but in the voices and words of so many partisans in the “sacred music”/“pastoral music” fight. Too many folks are imputing bad motives to the other side. They fail to see that the way they are fighting marks them as schismatic and not as Catholic according to the following rather magisterial definition: “Being Catholic means being united with others, to help one another in the case of need, to learn by that which is good in others and to share generously one’s own good, it means trying to become acquainted with one another and accepting each other’s differences.” A certain German priest-theologian said that in 1965. His last name was Ratzinger. May we all try to be more Catholic in this sense?!1

Nearly a decade ago, a group of U.S. bishops on an ad limina visit to Rome presented to Pope John Paul II a list of topics from which he could choose one about which he might “say a few words.” He chose to talk about the celebration of Sunday eucharist, and he said to his brother bishops:

I am convinced that we can render a great pastoral service to our people by emphasizing their liturgical dignity, and by directing their thoughts to the purposes of worship. When our people realize that they are called to be “a royal priesthood” and that we are called to adore and thank the Father in union with Jesus Christ, an immense power is unleashed in their Christian lives. When they realize that they actually have a sacrifice of praise and expiation to offer with Jesus Christ, when they realize that all their prayers of petition are united to an infinite act of the praying Christ, then there is fresh hope and new encouragement for the Christian people.

And a new reason for singing.

Notes

1. Thomas Day refers only cursorily to the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy and ignores (or at least volunteers no knowledge of) the General Instruction of the Roman Missal and its U.S. Appendix; the Introduction to the Lectionary for Mass (even in its original form, not to mention the extraordinary second typical edition); Musikam Sacram: Music in Catholic Worship: Liturgical Music Today, the Simple Gradual, the Ordo Cantus Missae; and Passio Queritur, all of which contain much that would challenge as well as corroborate him. He should also sit down to a thorough study of Documents on the Liturgy 1963–1979: Conciliar, Papal, and Curial Texts (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1982); Annibale Bugnini’s Reform of the Liturgy, 1948–1975 (The Liturgical Press, 1990); The Liturgy Documents (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications); and Frederick R. McManus, ed., Thirty Years of Liturgical Renewal: Statements of the Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1987).


4. The quotations are a pastiche from SC #112 (DOL #112).

5. “The Roman Catholic Church, back in the 1960s, tried to launch the musical equivalent of the Great Leap Forward. One week there was silence at Mass; the next week the congregation was supposed to sing four hymns which took Protestants four centuries to develop. Congregations in the United States never struggled through a stage of musical apprenticeship or even infancy. With very little preparation, they went immediately into the ‘advanced class.’” Thomas Day, Why Catholics Can’t Sing: The Culture of Catholicism and the Triumph of Bad Taste (New York: Crossroad, 1990) 119.

6. “Most parishes should go back, as it were, return to the primitive state they never really knew, and try to go through a stage of development they missed. They need to lower their expectations. This could begin with two important steps: reducing the artificial lighting and reducing the amplification. With lighting and amplification lowered, a greater use of unaccompanied chantlike singing would make sense. The most homely church music ever written, the most folklike of all music for congregation is any kind of chanted dialogue (preferably unaccompanied) involving priest, cantor, and people.” Day, 119–20.


8. Does anyone know what the non-European and non-North American churches are doing with this resource?


Culture according to Day: The Triumph of Opinion over Research

BY EDWARD FOLEY

The subtitle of Why Catholics Can’t Sing includes the phrase The Triumph of Bad Taste. While the latter might serve as an apt if unconscious assessment of the work, Why Catholics Can’t Sing is more than an exercise in bad taste. Rather, it is the triumph of personal opinion over research, the substitution of selective ruminations for systematic argument, and the displacement of reasonable method through emotional venting.

It is difficult to construct a cogent argument with the author who, in essence, presents us with an emotional sketch of his own alienation from the reformed liturgy and its music. Day’s feelings, like those of every other human being, are valid and important. One of the major difficulties with his book, however, is that the author seems incapable of separating his feelings and experiences from those of others. Thus he projects his personal sentiments as universally valid. The result is a glib collage of anecdotes and banter masquerading as serious exposé.

One of the arenas where this is most apparent is the author’s treatment of culture. There are innumerable problems with Day’s treatment of this topic. The remainder of this article will highlight only three of them. The intent here is not simply to critique Why Catholics Can’t Sing, which has already undergone widespread scrutiny. Rather, the aim is to employ some of the book’s flaws as a springboard for 1)

**In assessing the quality of congregational song it is especially important to engage in field work.**

Discussing the cultural variables that influenced sung participation by Roman Catholics in the past, 2) discovering the cultural variables that influence sung participation by American Roman Catholics today, and 3) constructing a credible response to the question why Roman Catholics do or don’t sing.

**Always Culturally Conditioned**

The Roman liturgy and its musical heritage are culturally conditioned. Day is fond of alluding to the history of the Roman Rite and its music; he employs such references to support a variety of perspectives. The absence of credible historical method renders most of these allusions illusory.
The historical method is one of the oldest methods employed in liturgical studies. Though the pioneers in this field were not always self-conscious about attending to cultural history, scholars such as Jungmann implicitly acknowledged the impossibility of narrating the history of worship without admitting to the cultural context in which it arose and the subsequent cultural forces that shaped it. More recently cultural anthropologists such as Clifford Geertz have argued that every ritual is a “cultural performance,” in which the “world as lived and the world as imagined, fused under the agency of a single set of symbolic forms, turn out to be the same world.” In view of such insights, contemporary liturgical scholars are, with increased frequency, explicitly acknowledging the cultural contexts that gave rise to our worship traditions.

The Roman liturgy is not a culturally neutral phenomenon. It emerged from a specific cultural context, subsequently to be adopted and adapted in other times and places. Without trying to ignore the complex processes that gave rise to the Roman liturgy, there is little doubt that it bears, for example, the imprint of imperial Rome as well as that of the Carolingian Renaissance. To the extent that the Roman Rite reflects those cultures that gave it birth, so does it reflect the world view of those cultures. This awareness challenges those who study the history of worship or its music to recognize that, in its origins and its continued enactment, the Roman Rite and its music—like Gregorian chant—are not culturally neutral nor always culturally accessible. Unfortunately Day misses this point, giving the impression that the Roman Rite is some kind of supracultural phenomenon.

If we want to understand why Roman Catholics may not sing, it is imperative that we reckon with the Roman Rite itself as a cultural vehicle that has embodied the message “don’t sing.” This Rite developed in an imperial milieu where specialists took over all major roles in the ritual. The people, pushed out of the center of the worship, were well instructed by the enacted liturgy to be seen and not heard. If we want to encourage sung congregational participation—not simply at the periphery but at the heart of worship—then we must allow the transformation of this rite, so that it is capable of embracing the song of the people.

U.S. Culture Is Pluriform

Culture is often compared to the air humans breathe or the water in which fish swim. It is such a basic reality that it is usually taken for granted, surrounding us and shaping us without our assent or awareness. To continue the water analogy, Thomas Day seems to be swimming in a very small pond. What is more, he seems to confuse his cultural pond with every national lake and stream. The result is a skewed, artificial, and homogeneous view of U.S. culture.

While the results of the 1990 census are not complete, the 1980 census notes the presence of over 380 different ethnic groups in the United States. These ethnic groups distinguished themselves from the fifteen main ethnic identifications found on the census form. The Roman Catholic Church is not immune to this diversity. By the year 2000 it is estimated that over half of the Roman Catholics in this country will be Hispanic. On the West coast, the large influx of immigrants from the Pacific rim, including significant numbers of Roman Catholics, is one further instance of the broad diversification of our church in the twentieth century United States. Such information makes it difficult to believe Day’s assertion that “Irish Catholicism and the values of the Irish are considered the norm.”

Day’s comments about the Irish influence on American worship are interesting. They are as well documented, however, as his assertions that a significant
past four decades. The instinct of many church musicians is to judge all liturgical music according to the standards of Western music. This ethnocentric approach is heartily challenged by the precepts of ethnomusicology, which does not allow for such bias. As Helen Myers cautions, “Ethnomusicologists are great egalitarians. They avoid value-judgments that would rank the music of society A over that of society B. They prefer to report a society’s own ratings of its musicians than to impose judgments from outside.”

Acceptance of the principles of ethnomusicology challenges the conservatory approach to the evaluation of ritual music. The canons of eighteenth and nineteenth century European music, or the church’s canonization of Gregorian chant, cannot be imposed arbitrarily on the ritual music of the U.S. in the twentieth century. Rather, it is essential that the cultural canons emanating from the same culture that produced the music be invoked. This need will become clearer as increasingly we confront music that does not have roots in Western culture. The liturgical music of the Vietnamese, Koreans, and Chinese, for example, need to be evaluated musically, liturgically, and pastorally. Western standards are virtually incapable of serving any of the judgments. It is only by understanding the music itself, the culture in which it functions, and its cultural interface with the ritual that we can begin to offer suggestions and directions for the development and critique of such music.

Day suggests the return to what he calls the virtue (read “standard”) of mediocrity. He identifies this standard with the “honest and plain stuff... [which] for approximately five hundred years... has been the secret of success for the music in most protestant churches.” The hymns of Luther are not, to my way of thinking, mediocre. Rather, they meet the volk criteria of Germanic Lutheran worship. The principles of ethnomusicology that disallow simplistic value judgments across cultures and, more narrowly, across various styles of music within a given culture suggest that the standard of “mediocrity” is unacceptable.

**No Transcultural Principles**

There is no set of transcultural musical principles for judging musical quality. Day gives the clear impression that Gregorian chant is the church’s best music. He asserts that this music is accessible to everyone, even to “the bums, the drunks [and] the bag ladies” of our society. The unspoken conclusion from such remarks is not only that we should continue singing Gregorian chant, but that it becomes the standard by which all other church music should be judged.

Such a classical, Western bias is no longer tenable in view of the strides made in ethnomusicology over the

**Invoking Study and Methods**

The serious student of liturgy and its music must reckon with the influences of culture on the development and enactment of both. The various disciplines that have introduced the study of culture into mainstream scholarship, however, have similarly provided methods and principles for such study. Invoking the
study without employing the methods is not only futile, it is deceptive.

Though every student of liturgy and liturgical music brings certain biases to that study, the willingness to submit to the restraints of some method helps to insure that one's biases will not vitiate the result of one's study. For those interested in studying Roman Catholic worship and its music in the U.S. today this seems particularly important, given the widespread propensity for "bashing" U.S. culture.26 There are many aspects of U.S. culture that are in need of critique, and some aspects of that culture have had a negative effect on our worship and need to be checked.26 One must take care, however, not to move to the extreme position of suggesting that U.S. culture is incapable of serving as a revelation of the good news or positively influencing the celebration of that good news in ritual and song. To do so would be to deny this culture's potential for prolonging in time and space the incarnation of the Word of God.27

Notes

1. One of the best reviews to date has been that of Rembert Weakland, “Off Key & Off the Mark,” Commonweal (25 January 1991) 65-7.
2. One of the more preposterous is Day's historical recollection of what he considers our problematic congregations, leading him to the conclusion that the "magnificent Romanesque and Gothic cathedrals, the overpowering grandeur of the Baroque basiliicas, chant, Renaissance, Renaissance polyphony, the Masses of Haydn and Mozart (with orchestra), and all the rest were part of a desperate campaign to get 'the people' to shut up, to treat the church building as a sacred space." Thomas Day, Why Catholics Can't Sing: The Culture of Catholicism and the Triumph of Bad Taste (New York: Crossroad, 1990) 88.

As an introductory corrective, I recommend David Macaulay's Imaginary but historically accurate Cathedral: The Story of Its Construction (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973). As Macaulay correctly notes, Gothic cathedrals (like those of other eras) were a response of the people, not a theological corrective imposed on them by some higher force.

3. The emergence of liturgy as an identifiable theological discipline was due, in large part, to the great historical works of early pioneers such as Bishop, Duchesne, and Jungmann.


5. This term was first introduced by M. Singer; see his "The Cultural Pattern of Indian Civilization," Far Eastern Quarterly 15 (1955) 23-6.


7. See, for example, Anscar Chupungco's brief historical narrative of the Roman Liturgy from the viewpoint of cultural adaptation in The Cultural Adaptation of the Liturgy (New York: Paulist Press, 1982) 3-41. Chupungco's cautions for the interpretation of historical data (pp. 3-6) are especially important. For a more developed example of this approach, see Francis Dvornik's treatment of the development of the Slavonic Rite in his Byzantine Missals among the Slavs (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1970).

8. See, e.g., Day, p. 128.

9. For a general introduction to this phenomenon, see my From Age to Age (Chicago: Liturgical Training Publications, presently at the press).


11. This statistic comes from the Educational and Social Stratification Branch of the Population Division of the Bureau of Census.

12. That is, White, Black, American Indian, Hispanic, Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Vietnamese, Asian Indian, Hawaiian, Guamanian, Samoan, Eskimo, and Aleut.

13. Joseph Fitzpatrick, One Church Many Cultures (Kansas City: Sheed & Ward, 1987) 125. This generic term for people who speak Spanish is itself misleading, for it does not point to the wide cultural diversity among the various Spanish-speaking groups in this country, including Cubans, Dominicans, Mexicans, Nicaraguans, Panamanians, Puerto Ricans, Salvadorans, and so on. For an introduction to the Hispanic populations in the United States, see A. J. Jaife, Ruth M. Cullen, and Thomas D. Boswell, The Changing Demography of Spanish Americans (New York: Academic Press, 1980).

14. "America" and "U.S." are not synonymous, as Day would have us believe. The former encompasses North, Central, and South America, with over twenty countries.


18. See, for example, Day pp. 22, 87, 105, etc. He implies that the compositions of Palestrina, Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven run a close second.

19. Ibid., p. 106.

20. For an introduction to this field and its challenge for liturgical musicians see my "Ethnomusicology Can't Solve All Our Problems, But..." in Pastoral Music 14:6 (August-September 1990) 37-41.


22. Music in Catholic Worship outlines these judgments. Though they have been central to the discussion of the evaluation of worship music for U.S. Catholics over the past two decades, Day never grapples with these judgments.


25. See, for example, Day's unsubstantiated contention (p. 124) that "Rock and its derivatives dominate contemporary culture."


27. Chupungco, p. 58.
Clericalism and the Catholic Look

BY PATRICK W. COLLINS

For many liturgists and musicians, Thomas Day’s book is an annoying, indeed, an angering critique of the liturgical/musical renewal in the Roman Catholic Church in the United States. His principal targets for criticism are the clergy, church musicians, and “contemporary” church music. As simplistic or even erroneous as some of his objections may be, I believe that he expresses more truth than some of us children (orphans?) of Vatican II may be ready to admit in our annoyance with his tune’s strident tone and the tedious repetition of his few themes. Many of his funny yet painful anecdotes of postconciliar liturgy ring all too true to our experience:

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liturgical horror stories that diminish the sense of God’s presence in the celebration of word and sacrament.

Missing the Mystery

Day notes that ongoing worship renewal calls for retrieving the expression and experience of Mystery, namely, acknowledging and sensing that in liturgy it is God in Christ who acts through the Spirit in and through the ritual actions of the celebrating assembly. Day’s concern reminds me of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger’s report prior to the 1985 extraordinary synod of bishops: “One shudders at the lackluster face of the post-conciliar liturgy as it has become, or one is simply bored with its hankering after banality and its lack of artistic standards…”

Day places much of the blame for losing the sense of Mystery on the up-front leadership styles that clergy and musicians have assumed in the renewed liturgy. He describes today’s worship experience as an entertainment by “Father Hank and Friends,” and he suggests that instead of engaging the entire assembly in expressing and experiencing the Mystery of Christ in the church, the reformed rituals reflect a narcissistic ego renewal for the priestly and musical leaders, who seem plagued by a need to be “Mr./Ms Nice Guy/Girl.”

Priests and musicians, he says, are playing off a regrettable narcissistic tendency to put “me” in the center of the liturgical landscape. They have lost the true sense of ritual; in surrendering the objectivity of ritual, the “presider” and “song leader” have over-personalized the liturgical experience into self-centered subjectivism. What has been lost in the process, Day says, is “the sense of ritual as communal action.”

In addition, the overblown verbalization of liturgical ministers, aggressively amplified by sound systems, changes the liturgy from a “poem” into a “syllogism,” reducing the art of ritual into an experience of reading a prose recipe. Day writes:

De-ritualization means taking a poem and forcing it into a syllogism. A poem will flow easily to song. A syllogism, on the other hand, repels song. Nobody wants to sing a syllogism.2

As ritual artists, U.S. priests have at least three strikes against them.
Throughout our quarter-century of postconciliar liturgical renewal, what seems to have been forgotten—or perhaps never fully known—is that ritual, by nature, is a species of the genus drama. Liturgy is an art to be enacted by an entire assembly, not structured texts to be read like recipes either by the leaders up front or the folks out there. Ritual’s aesthetic form is meant to engage the human imagination in such a way that believers are better enabled to experience the freely given, God-given grace of the presence of the Mystery of Christ sacramentally enacted.

Of course, the art of ritual cannot create grace. Yet when celebrated aesthetically rather than didactically, liturgy can more efficaciously create conditions of possibility for grace to be experienced through its sacramental expressions. When conceived, created, composed, and choreographed aesthetically, the liturgy can be lifted off the pages of ritual texts to become an energized action of a celebrating assembly. The missing Mystery can be retrieved as believers express and experience Presence in and through the art of a performing, believing assembly. However, unless priests understand the aesthetic nature of ritual and grow into the art of leading aesthetically, liturgical renewal may have reached the impasse that Day describes.

Clericalism and the “Catholic Look”

Thomas Day is terribly tough on the clergy, especially when he describes the transition from “the priest” to “the star” at center stage. But if ritual is a kind of dramatic action, aren’t those who lead it indeed playing a part, taking on aesthetic role? Not stars, to be sure, but they are certainly artists of ritual—and there lies the core of the priest problem in our rituals.

As ritual artists, U.S. priests have at least three strikes against them. First, they are citizens of the United States, and as such they are normally neither educated in nor adequately exposed to the arts. The deficiency is at least doubled because they are males in a highly competitive, indeed, violent society. Tony Bridge paints the painful truth: “Our respect for the arts is superficial, for while we pay lip-service to their nobility, in practice we down-grade them; to the level of inessentials; . . . optional extras for the leisureed and the cultured . . . “.

Second, men trained in Roman Catholic seminaries have had their American anti-aesthetic or a-aesthetic attitudes intensified by a heady intellectual education and personal-spiritual formation, a preparation for priesthood largely lacking in imagination. In short, American male clerics are formed to be high on reason and law and low on emotion and intuition. With some gratefully notable exceptions, many neither grasp nor are they grasped by aesthetic cognition that yields insight into truth with a fullness of feeling, John Henry Newman’s insight has yet to be heeded, that faith is not born in notions and concepts, but in the languages of art, namely, images and symbols. Before faith can be credible to reason, he added, it must first be credible to the imagination, yet an appropriate education of the imagination is just what is largely missing in seminary formation.

The third strike against priests as ritual artists is that they are required to be both male and celibate. Although celibacy may—indeed, should—give priests the freedom to develop significant intimate relationships with men and women, the celibate state for many, by choice and/or training, is an existence without intimacy or interpersonal love, and with a consequent pathetic withering of human feeling. Since a life rich in human feeling and imagination is developed to a great degree through experiences of interpersonal intimacy, experiences that lead to the bonding of deep friendships and, for most people, the bonds of marriage, some clerics grow cold and sterile in their human isolation. Those clerics forced to flee friendship and intimacy miss that vibrant inner life needed to prepare priests for passionate ritual presiding.

But the priest problem in liturgy is more than a problem with aesthetics, for the clergy are part of a larger problem that is revealed in what I call the “Catholic look.” If you sit “on the throne” (as Day describes the priest’s position in the assembly), you have a unique, bird’s-eye view of visages that might make you think that the limitations of liturgical renewal are principally the congregation’s problem, not the priest’s.

From this exalted vantage, many people look dulled and dazed of eye; their body language reflects that of children corralled into obedient duty-behavior. The passive resistance to participation is palpable in many of them. Many people simply stare without passion into space. The “Catholic look” says: “I challenge you to make me want to be here!” One would not readily comment, “See how these Christians love one another,” but one might well remark, “These Roman Catholics look afraid of or disinterested in one another.” The intended experiences of awe and hospitality do not seem in great evidence; in fact, feeling and care seem to be missing along with the sense of Mystery.

What could have conditioned such an inner attitude and exterior expression during our liturgies? What cumulative forces over generations have sculpted, indeed, chiseled those faces? The problem is multifaceted, but one aspect of the difficulty is the relationship between what one experiences in worship and the ways in which the clergy live, and move, and have their being with their communities both within and apart from ritual.

It may well be that the “Catholic look” has been brought about in no small measure by centuries of cultural control of Catholic life by certain types of male celibate clerics, whose patriarchal bearing and impasive facial expressions in liturgy have conditioned passive observation rather than active participation, not
people may have drained some of the warm blood from Roman Catholic assemblies, just as the negative dimensions of clerical culture may have caused some priests to present passive visages as they lead our assemblies in worship.

This rather severe description of the “Catholic look” reflects what I have too often observed during Roman Catholic liturgies, and it contrasts with what I have experienced at worship services in other Christian communities. I have been aware of a quite different feel and look in recent Anglican, Lutheran, and Presbyterian liturgies—not that they don’t have their own brands of community dysfunction and clericalism.

In those assemblies, almost everyone picked up the book to sing; music mattered. The congregation counted; most actually gave voice to the texts and tunes. There was a reverent friendliness in the assembly space, a sense of free expression, and an atmosphere of hospitality between members of the congregation and the leaders of worship. There seemed to be a sense that the liturgy belonged to all, not just to the priest and the ministers up front. Most looked like they loved doing what they were doing and usually got into it with apparent understanding and obvious gusto. In other words, they looked and sounded like the embodiment of “full, active, conscious participation” in worship.

Some observers may comment that those congregations have had more experience with sung participation than ours; they are used to it. Give our people time to catch up. Undoubtedly, the lack of a tradition of congregational singing is part of our problem, but another part is surely that impersonal, feelingless manner of presiding that sets the tone, not for communal action, but really for activity performed by those up front. This is not to suggest that such clergy lack faith or prayerfulness; rather, it is to say that such inferiority may not be sufficiently embodied to energize communal celebration. And such a failure at embodiment, the principle of sacramentality, links to the possible problems inherent in required celibacy.

The Pyramid Re-Emerges

The inherited problem of clericalism is just one piece of a much larger problem in Roman Catholicism today: an older, authoritarian ecclesiology and leadership style are resurfacing that discourage and even prevent people from feeling like their worship really belongs to them. In the past decade, the conciliar collegial sense of the church as a circle of the baptized, each with their own unique roles and ministries, seems to be shifting on official levels back toward the church as a pyramid, with clerics at the top and the others praying, paying, and obeying at the bottom, under the weight of those enthroned above. The “Catholic look” belies the vision in the conciliar documents that the baptized, priestly people of God share responsibility for the church’s life. It does not reflect community ownership of what goes on in the assembly or in the rest of church life.
Today a good number of "new" clerics seem committed to putting back into place the armor that keeps the assembly cowed by the clergy. The growing number of neoclerical, clericalized priests who have appeared in the past few years appear to fear sharing "their power" with the laity, in particular with women religious. These newly clericalized priests don't seem to know how to act when they're not in control; they appear to be more functionaries than persons, throwbacks to the weakest preconciliar models of clerical ministry.

Conservative seminary formation and some hierarchical leaders emphasize to these men older messages about the "specialness" of their priestly powers, their difference from others, and their position of authority. They warn that this superior priestly identity will be downgraded and eroded if merely baptized persons are allowed to share the various ministries not currently restricted to ordained priests. Such a concern for being "special" or "different" is precisely what characterizes the psychological problem called narcissism, which psychologists tell us not infrequently plagues celibate clerical lives.

Even as the numbers of neoclerics increase, more and more Catholic people are realizing in their daily lives what Eugene Kennedy says: "Healthy religious development demands increasing autonomy, a reshaping and reintegration of one's religious understandings and commitments, so that they are no longer held with the innocent dependent confidence of a child but with the scarred independence of hard-bought wisdom."7

Priests: Part of the Solution

If priests are part of our present problem, they are also a major part of its solution. To move our congregations beyond the "Catholic look," we need liturgical leadership that is learning to eschew clericalism: priesthood, yes; clericalism, no! A stereotype will bring out the contrast. Clerics are aloof and apart; they are authoritarian, pompous, and, at times, impudent and even insolent in their relationships with others. The joy and pain of loving and being loved are too often missing from their lives, and consequently love's flip side, power, can become their overwhelming obsession, their way of identifying themselves as persons of esteem. Embodiments of clerical power presiding over liturgies and controlling pastoral relationships contribute to the "Catholic look."

Eugene Kennedy senses and calls for the collapse of such a clerical leadership style in order to energize our worshiping assemblies to become the people of God in communal prayer. He writes:

One familiar and long-revered form of the religious life is now collapsing not because of lack of faith but because its male-dominated structures no longer fit or provide healthy channels for the religious energies of modern women. So, too, the male-bonded culture of clerical life, which is always to be distinguished from the essence of priesthood, is close to ruin, not because of a lack of commitment to ministry, but because its cultural forms are vestiges of the great days of hierarchical preference and privilege, the pre-Copernican inheritance that was spent long ago.8

Priests who can contribute to changing the appearance of sad faces gathered in faith on the Lord's Day will be persons passionately and prayerfully alive both within a community of faith and a community of deep friendships. They will be persons whose authority is rooted in their own developing lives in grace, not persons afraid of losing external control over the faith community. Such persons need not be only males; they need not be only celibates. Kennedy describes such people this way:

A sympathy for the human condition, a readiness to forgive and encourage sinners, a sacramental feeling for the significant junctures of growth, significant relationships, and loss in people's lives: these constitute the elements of spiritual awareness that possesses intrinsic and easily recognizable religious authority. Such attributes define the sacramental sense of the world that must inform and innervate the sacramental ministry of bishops and clergy.9

Where clerical control is embodied in liturgical leadership and the kind of priestly leaders that Kennedy describes are unavailable, Catholics can't sing because they are given little to sing about. The Mystery is missing and the art of ritual is absent when control becomes the major message. On the other hand, the presence of warmly loving, feelingly alive, and profoundly prayerful priests in the assembly of God's people can cumulatively empower a shift in the culture of Catholicism toward a triumph of good taste in liturgy . . . and in the rest of life.

Notes

1. The Ratzinger Report, 121.
3. See ibid. 133.
5. When I move through the assembly for the sprinkling rite, for instance, and attempt a friendly-faced interaction with individuals (not, I hope, a Mr. Nice Guy, please-love-me look), I am most often met with stolid and sometimes hostile glances, if anyone risks looking into my eyes at all.
6. Some clerics may have chosen the celibate life style not only as a revered way of serving people in faith, but consciously or unconsciously, also as a way to bracket from their lives issues of intimacy and sexuality, indeed the dimension of human love itself. In its most negative embodiments, clericalism can allow men to avoid becoming involved with anyone beyond playing the role or performing the functions of a priest. This has a devastating impact on liturgies.
8. Ibid. 184–5.
9. Ibid. 169.
The chief difficulty for anyone wanting to make an assault on our municipal theatre, which he cannot help doing if he has spent an entire season having to go there and write about it, and has taken his job seriously at least for as long as he has been writing—his chief difficulty is that there can be no question of revealing a mystery. He cannot just point a stumpy finger at the theatre’s ongoings and say, “You may have thought this amounted to something, but let me tell you, it’s a sheer scandal; what you see before you proves your absolute bankruptcy; it’s your own stupidity, your mental laziness and your degeneracy that are being publicly exposed.” No, the poor man can’t say that, for it’s no surprise to you; you’ve known it all along . . .

Sir Thomas Beecham said, “There are no good books about music.”

Stop me if you’ve heard this one. What’s the difference between a liturgist and a terrorist? You can negotiate with the terrorist.

Thomas Day’s Why Catholics Can’t Sing is a contribution to what has been up to now a fairly moribund debate on the value of the music being sung in Catholic churches. It is lively and gossipy in a Joan Rivers or Andy Rooney kind of way and tries to make the point that whatever troubles now perturb the liturgy are dangerous artifacts manufactured by us liturgical types and, in particular, the ones who play the guitar. Now, if you don’t believe that these “troubles” are real, if you don’t believe that liturgical music in the United States has some kind of sickness, don’t bother reading Day and don’t bother reading this; neither will make any sense. But why bother with the disclaimer? Anyone interested enough to pick up this magazine knows better.

Thomas Day’s contribution is to deal with this pandemic of sense frustration passionately and entertainingly. He (for the most part) names names, something that magazines like this one (for whatever reason) haven’t done well. If Day doesn’t get the lesson quite right, he has at least contributed a heretofore missing honesty and directness to the dialogue.

Day is roughly correct insofar as most of the problems that he identifies are, in fact, problems. The overuse of amplification, the domination of much of our core repertoire by a cheap and sentimental romanticism, presiders who affect an excessively personal style in ritual situations, liturgies that try to appease constituencies rather than proclaim the Good News: all of these are corrosive acid eating away at what makes us “us.”

Probably the most important criticism that Day makes concerns the chatty intemperament material inserted by presiders who apparently have a great need to be liked. Universally unskilled in turning the ritual into a talk show, they make of the assembly a kind of captive colony. In such a situation, the liturgy no longer belongs to everyone; it is not properly held in common, but is rather an extension of the ordained’s personality. The assembly’s role becomes to “eat” what such a presider “dishes up.” Day is quite elegant in his assault on this sort of abuse, although his analysis lacks ritual and political sophistication.

Kudos are also in order for at least taking the time to notice that there are differences between Marty Haugen and the St. Louis Jesuits, between Gregory Norbert and Rory Cooney. Day has obviously taken the time to actually study the music and texts that he is talking about and can speak with some degree of sophistication concerning different artists. This sets him apart from, say, Ed McKenna of Worship and (sigh) most of the reviewers for Pastoral Music.

I disagree violently with some of Mr. Day’s analysis and am suspicious of some of his motives, but none of this ought to detract from his significant achievement. He’s written a pamphlet, the kind of thing that Thomas Paine might have written if he had been Catholic and woke up on the wrong side of the bed. Pamphleteering is an honorable trade. Sometimes this one masquerades as scholarly review, and here is where Day begins to sink in deep water. But it is always entertaining and honestly felt, and the author’s point of view is clear.

There are the expected polemics against missalettes (“trash music” [p. 86]), Glory and Praise (“not really intended for the congregation” [p. 70]), feminists (“the bitter half” [p. 151]), as well as bonus sermons on the shortcomings of the Notre Dame Study of Catholic Parish Life (“an example of research skewed by sincerity” [p. 83]) and “Mod Masses [that] . . . look like mini rock concerts” (p. 125).

Day is particularly suspicious of music that smacks of the Bible: “We should be on the alert about the expression ‘our biblical roots’ in reference to church music. Often these are code words for music in the reformed-folk style which, so the experts tell us, begins the long road back to the ideals of biblical music,
after centuries of useless decorating by musicians” (p. 98). As far as I can tell, Day accepts unchallenged the assertion that the repertoire of Glory and Praise represents a more or less authentic rendering of biblical theology, which tells us something about his familiarity with that subject.

In contrast to his visceral mistrust of biblical values, Day has nothing but praise for the values of the Baroque and Renaissance periods, Gregorian chant, unaccompanied pseudo-Anglican plainchant, and sturdy Protestant hymnody.

To its credit, Why Catholics Can't Sing takes on the big guys: Joseph Gelineau (with a sarcastic “Nobody did anything right until the arrival of... Joseph Gelineau” [p. 94]); Josef Jungmann (the originator of "the corruption theory of liturgical history" [p. 92]); and Karl Rahner (who "can be excused for missing all the nuances in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy because [he was] completely enthralled by the idea of the International Bauhaus Style governing all aspects of life" [pp. 93–94]). Rembert Weakland is an especial bête noir. He is "Gropius all over again: Start from scratch" (p. 93). He "seems to demand a lobectomy" (p. 95), and his message is "undeniably Bauhaus contempt for decoration" (p. 96). He is even guilty of "overheated rhetoric" (p. 97). An instance of the pot calling the kettle black if there ever was one!

And finally, in an appalling display of ghoulish kitsch, Day goes completely over the top when he drags two fine gentlemen, now tragically dead, through a libellous slop of unfounded gossip with odorous speculation reminiscent of a cheap tabloid. Their sins included being liturgical theologians, but "in the end the modernized rites offered them no consolation. Did the new extreme emphasis on the self-celebrating assembly help to dry up their ability to pray privately, especially in times of anguish?" (p. 102). The book's subtitle includes the phrase "The Triumph of Bad Taste." The kids in my neighborhood were right—it does take one to know one.

Gushing, Thomas Day finally displays the origins of his agenda in remarks on the AGO (I've always loved that altogether appropriate acronym): "The skilled, historically aware, musician... is the sort of person who knows the precise techniques and principles which would make congregational singing much more vigorous, but he or she does not always feel welcome... Many of the church's dedicated musicians seek refuge and sympathetic fellowship in the American Guild of Organists (AGO), a stately, nondenominational association which represents thousands of organists who think of themselves as dedicated professionals" (pp. 98–9). I get it. Thomas Day wants to make the church safe for organists. Again, Yes, organists and monsignors and churches with real sanctuaries. Churches with pews and kneelers. Hard ones. Why am I not surprised?

Ritual Music and "PC"

No one can understand the appeal of what Mr. Day has written without some reference to what's happening "out there" in the real world. Following the Reagan counterrevolution, a cottage industry has lately sprung up deploring the phenomenon of the "politically correct," or PC. This derogatory term connotes a rigidly liberal thought control in which certain words are forbidden (e.g., "disabled" has become "differently abled") and certain concepts about women, gays, and minorities (PC: "people of color") are simply never discussed, still less challenged, out of fear of offending someone.

What is really aggravating about this critique of those of us on the left is its uncomfortable accuracy. A lot of us have been guilty of proclaiming a political orthodoxy as The Truth, and we've all been embarrassed at attempts to canonize some lately-learned party line. Day's book is largely an attack on Ritual music. Unfortunately, in debunking what needs to be debunked, he seeks to define his tradition (i.e., the tradition of Fine Music as defined by people like Day) and even his musical instrument as being normative. He does all this in the name of democracy in his sixth chapter, titled "The People."

The Rhetoric of Loss, The Survival of Rock

Day describes modern liturgical music in terms of loss, and well he might! But Day assumes that this is the first time this has happened. He emphasizes this assertion again and again: that the Vatican Council and the liturgical music that has come out of it are a completely new break with all of tradition. In this he confuses tradition with "what I grew up with." In fact, this back-and-forth motion between the centralization desired by Rome and the freedom coveted by us out here in the provinces is the recurring theme in church history. Arnold Hauser's The Social History of Art describes plenty of situations in which the church (and state) attempted to recover the "loss" of culture and the inevitable political consequences of that attempt. For example, Hauser analyzes Charlemagne's attempt to recover the grandeur of the Roman Empire as really a program to train the "staff for this administrative machine." And he describes the beginnings of the Baroque era in sixteenth century Italy as a propaganda effort of the Roman Catholic Church, a drive to create works of art "to persuade, to overwhelm, but [to] do so in choice and elevated language." Hauser writes:

In spite of the desire to influence as wide a public as possible, the aristocratic spirit of the Church finds expression everywhere. The curia would like to create a "folk-art" for the propagation of the Catholic faith, but to limit the popular element to simplicity of ideas and forms; it wishes to avoid plebeian directness of expression. The sacred persons portrayed are to speak to the faithful as insistently as possible but under no circumstances to climb down to them. Works of art are to make propaganda, to persuade, to overwhelm, but must do so in choice and elevated language.

In each of these cultural watersheds (Charlemagne's eighth century struggle to reclaim the church's literary heritage in order to rescue an empire; the sixteenth century journey from medieval simplicity to Baroque splendor; and the present liturgical transition about which Mr. Day is so dubious) there have been cultural winners and losers. It is quite clear that, despite the rhetoric about the losses of "the people," so far Mr. Day considers himself and his guild to be the principal cultural losers in the present battle.

History teaches us that when you're a loser in the continuing struggle that constitutes our peculiar cultural Darwinism, you've got to demonize somebody. Mr. Day's demon is the grim specter of "lurid," "nasty," "violent,"
This musical form has shown the capability of renewing itself, which is more than can be said of, say, the symphony, which survives today on the largesse of the upper class and the government dole. In the 1960s, while the Philadelphia recording industry was trying to domesticate the music begun by black blues artists (such as John Lee Hooker, Howlin’ Wolf, and Robert Johnson), defined commercially by Elvis Presley, by manufacturing “safe” pop stars (Fabian, Bobby Darin, and the like), at that moment the Beatles and Bob Dylan were born. When the music begun by Lennon and McCartney threatened to drown itself in wretched excess and self-parody, Bruce Springsteen emerged. And at this same time last year, when I was teaching the RCIA in Canberra, everyone there was keenly anticipating concerts by the Pogues and Tracy Chapman, artists who are redefining folk music. The questions that they and others are now formulating are inevitably becoming part of the dialectic that characterizes the dance between ecclesial liturgy and popular culture.

On the day that the students of Czechoslovakia led the revolution against the forces of repression (hardly an exercise in romantic escapism), they were singing the music that Mr. Day despises. And when the East Germans tore their historic breach in the Wall that separated them from their fellow citizens—the Wall that was supposed to outlast us all—amidst that holy rubble, be assured, they were not singing reworked Anglican plainchant. In that night they were singing what has become the de facto international folk music of freedom from Tiananmen Square to Salt Lake City. They are playing and singing it now, as you read this, with their guitars and amplifiers and drums and synthesizers. Where it is censored by the authorities, they are passing it about surreptitiously on cassettes. Where it is being turned into a mere engine for soulless profit, they are challenging it in garage bands and dimly lit clubs in towns of which we haven’t yet heard the name.

Music that renews itself is a sign of health and vigor, even as is ritual that renews itself. It isn’t always pretty, and there are lots of regrettable side trips. But the alternative is a ritual and a music that ossify and crumble.

Language Makes Reality

Novelist Rita Mae Brown points out that in 1066 the native language of English speakers split into two disparate streams, a “high language” characterized by French-Latin roots and a “low language” having its origin in Anglo-Saxon. Most of the words that deal with the enjoyment of life are French-Latin; most of those that deal with the unglamorous toil of producing that life are Anglo-Saxon. For example, “cow,” “oxen,” “pig,” and “cattle,” words associated with the grunt work of rural life, are all Anglo-Saxon; “beef,” “pork,” and most of the words for the food on your table are French-Latin.

From the time of this great dividing to the present day, the more formal an education one has had, the more likely one has been to use the French-Latin “high culture” vocabulary. Some of the differences are illustrated in the accompanying chart. Consider the differences in these two vocabularies in light of the axiom that language forms thought. Each ruling culture has used its words to forge a reality that is amenable to its purposes. Of course one of the ruling culture’s most common purposes (one that is rarely acknowledged in the Official Version) is survival and self-perpetuation.

The power of text to define reality is respected, even feared, in the world of politics. Scarcely has an administration official finished a campaign speech before the president’s “spin doctors” are out in force, trying to put the official interpretation on what goes out over the wire. Many of us are still able to recall the mangling of the language during the Vietnam War, when "terminate
with extreme prejudice" first became the euphemism for "kill" and when the identification of "free fire zones" meant defining any living human being in them as "Viet Cong." And government constraints on the press during the more recent Panama "incursion" and Gulf War (both by providing "photo opportunities" that would portray the administration's point of view in a favorable light and by forbidding access to places and individuals that might show a different reality) suggest that our leaders know it is not only words but also images that must be controlled.

Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky dissect how government and industry work together to frame social questions to their advantage, summarizing: "If, however, the powerful are able to fix the premises of discourse, to decide what the general populace is allowed to see, hear, and think about, and to 'manage' public opinion ... [then] the standard view of how the system works is at serious odds with reality." The mandarins of high culture have been complaining about this sort of cultural pollution ever since Peter told Paul to stop letting those embarrassing Gentiles into the church. But for every musical expression that serves the values of the "high culture," there is an expression by the "low culture" to challenge it. For every maudlin celebration of respectable doctrine, there is a modest song being crafted that questions that doctrine. For every "God Bless America" by Irving Berlin, there is a "This Land Is Your Land" by Woody Guthrie. What drives the guardians of the "high culture" nuts is that sometimes the little guys win.

Music Makes Reality, Too

Not only text but music, too, creates a picture of the universe, a picture with deep social and political ramifications. I remember well an interview with Aaron Copland broadcast on public television on the occasion of the composer's seventy-fifth birthday. A retrospective concert was arranged, and all
Why Catholics Can’t Sing pays lip service to a democracy. Day proposes a liturgical music canon that (he claims) has something for all “the people,” but which is, in fact, almost monarchical in its content and weirdly hierarchical in its practical expression. It is true (as Day notes again and again, as though it were some original insight) that the present-day repertoire in most parishes is also unconscionably narrow, but replacing the new polio with the old cancer is no remedy at all. The suggested remedies in Why Catholics Can’t Sing (i.e., a return to a mélange of Renaissance harmony and Protestant hymnody in big Masses, was like stepping into a meat freezer—or a lobby by Mies van der Rohe... there was something cold about the whole experience... “The people”... lost no time in filling in the blank spaces... The folk phonem...)

I suspect that Day so attacks the aspiration of ritual clarity because he has a vested interest in the assembly’s bewilderment. It is important that there be a certain mysterious aura concerning what is going on “up there”—behind the altar, in the loft, behind the ambo. As long as people are dazzled by ritual sleight-of-hand, no one will ask hard questions about whose values are being reinforced or whose world is being legitimated.

The arbiters of the “high culture” (in this case, largely dedicated pious Catholic church musicians who spent years developing their craft and then ended up employed by Protestant churches” [p. 147]) have a vested interest in maintaining a certain wooly-headedness about the liturgy. If things are sufficiently obscure, only they will be able to read the secret writing; only they will be able to make the machine run. They will finally be affirmed as necessary (something that is by no means clear to them at the present moment) and receive the reassurance for which they are evidently longing.

We see another example of this mistrust of clarity in the FC conventional wisdom concerning homilies: that they are not educational; they should not communicate information. Of course, what we are left with when we dispense with exegesis is eisegesis; the canonization of the preacher’s feelings. The fact that this makes of the assembly a client class, consumers of the homilist’s emotions rather than sharers in the proclamation of biblical wisdom, is deemed to be unavoidable collateral damage. Thus Mr. Day’s distaste for “clarity” in the liturgy brings about the very emotionalism he so opposes.

This emphasis on mystification is not grounded in ritual but in magic; ritual’s “evil twin.” It is the attempted manipulation of a higher plane of existence by a lower plane for its own benefit. That is why the “choice and elevated language” referred to above is funda-
mental to Mr. Day’s ideal ritual universe. It creates an atmosphere of mystery, it seems to come “from outside”; it lathers over everything with a readily reproducible experience of the numinous. Like the Wizard of Oz speaking to Dorothy and her friends, Mr. Day wishes for an authoritative voice with which to boom, “Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain!” But, of course, the damage is done now; we have seen the controls behind the mysterious veil, and what has been learned cannot be unlearned.  

Economics as Ritual Destiny

Back in Latin class, we used to ask the question, “Cui bono?” “Who benefits?” Why are the present decisions about liturgical music made the way they are? Mr. Day believes that liturgists and musicians (guitar-playing musicians, not organists) have hijacked the Roman Rite in a bid for personal power. I wonder, if this is so, why all of us (Mr. Day apparently included) regularly feel so powerless?

Pastoral musicians are like everyone else in that many of their decisions are driven by economics, a fact that Mr. Day simply ignores (apart from a brief and general grumbling about how little his AGO colleagues are paid). Many people who play the organ or guitar for churches exist on the lower rungs of the American economy. Their salary, if they have one, is a fraction of what it takes to own a home, raise a family, and live in any kind of reasonable fashion. Moreover, there is very little job security, no real due process in any kind of dispute, no union or prospect of bargaining collectively. Many musicians serve parishes at the pleasure of an indefinite net of pastors, committees, and councils. Often there is no contract, or there is a working agreement that is one step removed from serdom. These pastoral musicians are effectively powerless. In fact, as Day notes later, most people now working in liturgical music work part-time or are volunteers. But Mr. Day never explores what that means.

The music that these semiprofessionals choose for their Sunday Masses is sharply defined by their economic status. Those with the disposable time to donate to the church are overwhelmingly white and middle- or upper-class. Many are partners in a double-income relationship. After all, how many full-time Catholic liturgical professionals are there? Mr. Day reckons that in all of New York City there are about twenty.

The economic realities of who we are largely explain, but do not excuse, a musical repertoire that reflects middle-to upper-class concerns, a repertoire that is thoroughly and overwhelmingly White (I mean the way that “Close to You” by The Carpenters is White or the way that Lawrence Welk’s music is White—really, really White).

In such a situation, even when music with a strong biblical message of justice is programmed, its message is often subverted by the culture. But if the pastoral musician in charge of selecting repertoire dares to challenge these values, what happens? Like workers in a company town or sharecroppers on a Southern plantation, we know there are consequences for those who make waves. Moreover, church musicians recognize what is expected: to please the consumer with a minimum of boat rocking. And so we continue to produce good feelings enfolded in a pseudo-scriptural “high culture” language. We soften or ignore the uncomfortable edges of ancient questions. In doing so, we fail to tell the truth.

It is the collection of music produced by these circumstances that Day challenges. He is quite right to do so: it is awful. But it is hardly the result of liturgical overlords ramming a personal agenda down the throats of an unsuspecting populace, as inferred in Why Catholics Can’t Sing. It is rather the end product of our economic and political helplessness.

A Proposal: Ritual Music as Journalism

Ironically it is Tom Wolfe who proposes most eloquently that artists go back to realism, back to a solid grounding in what is actually happening here in this world, not on some ethereal plane. The reader might plausibly get the impression that this is hardly the medicine Thomas Day had in mind. In support of his proposal, Wolfe claims that journalism has “seized the high ground of literature itself.” Anyone who has read Susan J. Douglas, Joan Didion, and Hunter S. Thompson knows there is some truth to this claim.

Phil Ochs, a great composer of political “folk” music from the ‘60s and ‘70s, once recorded an album titled All the News That’s Fit to Sing, in which he offered ballads about current events: the assassination of John Kennedy, the inequities of the death penalty, the accidental sinking of a nuclear submarine. More and more, as the official church deteriorates, I believe something analogous must become the task of pastoral musicians—to sing the news, to refer quite openly to events in and out of the church.

This is not an altogether new concept. (What is?) We may surmise, for ex-
ample, that when Luther thundered his "On earth is not God's equal" at Rome, the papacy knew exactly whom he intended to reprimand. But it is not necessary to go all the way back to the sixteenth century to look at precedent. Most of us remember the song "They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love" by Peter Scholtes. If you do, you'll recall these words:

We are one in the spirit, we are one in the Lord...
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored.
And they'll know we are Christians by our love..."\(^{19}\)

I use this example because it is one cited disapprovingly by Day, who complains that it "canonizes every member of a sinless congregation" (p. 61). But a closer analysis reveals that there is something quite remarkable going on there. Pick up the original FEL hymnal and the early NRL music, and you'll find that music very much like this was sung week in, week out, at the typical Sunday gathering in the first few years after the Council. Overlook for a moment a certain lack of musical and textual sophistication and only consider what the focus of the piece is, what the music is trying to accomplish.

The music is straight ahead, without any hint of self-consciousness. As there is no real melody to speak of, the notes themselves don't make any sense at all unless they are sung by a group. (Mr. Day would applaud.) The entire focus of the text is on the assembly and on what the mission of the assembly is outside of Sunday Mass. (Presumably Mr. Day would disapprove.) But what is sociologically interesting (and what is ignored in Why Catholics Can't Sing) are the clear internal references to external political events. For example, the "unity" that will "one day be restored" is a transparent citation of the exciting and unprecedented dialogue that was then going on between Roman Catholicism and other Christian denominations and non-Christian faiths.

In a later verse, there is the lyric, "We will walk with each other, we will walk side by side," and again, "We'll guard each man's dignity and save each man's pride." Don't dwell on the sexist references that are now a clear prefeminist anachronism, and overlook the fact that the lines are not exactly models of poetic understatement. The clear concern here is the civil rights struggle then taking place in the Southern United States, which was in fact led and for the most part staffed by churches. The involvement of the Roman Catholic Church and in particular of the clergy who marched "hand in hand" was intensely controversial. (Anyone recall Fr. James Groppi?)

In other words, the focus, purpose, and effect of the song was to take a side with respect to a fight going on in the "real" world, the one outside the assembly, a struggle between social classes. It is precisely this stance that the "reformed folk music" of Mr. Day's philippic failed to take. And, again, when the exegesis of external struggle is censored from this music, what remains is isegesis. It is the emotionalism and me-centeredness at the core of the present repertoire, its lack of an anchor in this world and its continued reliance on weak appeals to another that is the reason why this repertoire has failed us—not, as Mr. Day suggests, its lack of "churchy" feelings.

We are beginning to see some of these references to external events again in the popular liturgical music that so sorrows Mr. Day. In Donna Peña's "Digo Si, Señor," there is a lyric, "Like a politician, inevitably, I say 'yes' my Lord." I greatly admire this line. It is wise, knowing, witty, and works on several levels. It compares our "yes" to God—not exactly a free and unfettered choice by any means—to a modern politician so completely in the pocket of special interests that there is no question of how s/he will vote. It is perfectly in line with a religious tradition that still tells stories about a widow who wears down a corrupt judge, a tradition that still asks of Jesus the exasperated question, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You alone have the words of eternal life."

Of course, the line doesn't scan well. It is, perhaps, a little self-conscious. It uses the language of the newspapers rather than the "high culture's" vocabulary. There are lots of reasons why it shouldn't work. But it does.

Are We That Angry?

The percentage of people who are sufficiently disillusioned by the political system that they fail to vote is approximately the same as the percentage of individuals who grew up in the Catholic tradition but who don't go to church. This may give some clue to the roots of the difficulties described in Why Catholics Can't Sing.

Thomas Day says that the reason Catholics don't sing in church is that they're singing the wrong music—the right music, presumably, being that which would be dispensed, measured, and approved by the Mr. Days of this world. But is it possible that those people who don't sing, so championed by Mr. Day, are well and truly angry at what is going on in the Roman Catholic Church? Might not their passive-aggressive behavior be sacramental: an outward sign of their collective inward grace? I'm talking about the fact that one can hardly pick up a newspaper these days without reading about some new instance of pastoral pedophilia. I'm talking about the lately ubiquitous attempts by Rome or its local procurator to silence some theologian; literally or figuratively to throw some marginal group out of its-church building (talk to one of the members of your local Diocesan chapter): to try and squash some local community whose critique is that they took all that Vatican II stuff seriously. Is it not possible that women in this Church might be feeling persecuted because someone really is persecuting them? Might not all that social research that Fr. Grenley has done about why church attendance has plummeted since Humanae Vitae have some slight measure of empirical truth to it?

If all that is so, then it is our Church and not merely our music that must change.

If you are looking for a useful analysis of why our present liturgy isn't working (and Day is right to this extent: it's not), then I suggest you pick up Brueggemann's Israel's Praise. If you want gossip and fly-by-the-seat-of-the-pants anecdotal commentary, save your $19.95 (you work for the church; you can't afford Day's book anyway) and turn on Oprah. It's free, and when it's over, it's not sitting there on your bookshelf.

So stop me if you've heard this one. What's the difference between Thomas Day and a used car salesman? The used car salesman knows when he's lying.

Notes

2. Day—or Day's editors—place this comment in quotation marks, as if Gelineau had
actually spoken it. Draw your own conclusions about the ethics.

3. Day recently publicly apologized and withdrew these remarks. Still, one wonders how many people will see the apology and how many people will read the book.

4. This is a genuine problem for parish liturgists and musicians, whose lack of opportunity for training makes them especially vulnerable to the "wisdom of the week" syndrome.

5. Bernard Huibers (another guy who gets his comeuppance—pp. 164–5) acknowledges this loss in The Performing Audience (Cincinnati: NALR, 1972) 69:

An obvious but important fact: when the vernacular replaces Latin in the liturgy, the entire Latin repertory disappears. This means, in the first place, the end of Gregorian, despite more or less defensible efforts to salvage bits of it by reworking them into new vernacular songs. The repertoire as a whole, as it has grown and functioned, will be lost.

This applies, also, to all those other compositions, to Guillaume de Chabot, the Notre Dame school, to all the polyphony from Dufay through Palestrina, to Monteverdi, the 17th century French composers. Allow me to continue the list, to indicate the full measure of this loss: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Liszt, Brahms, Casper, Caplet, Andriessen, Raddings, Poucinc, Litaize, Jenny, Heiller, Schroeder, van Nuffel, de Vogt, Kodaly, and Stravinsky. And others!

6. Again, Huibers asks some disturbing, if obvious, questions (ibid., pp. 51–2):

What might Western Europe have become, minus centralizing movements like the Carolingian renaissance, which sacrificed Gallican chant and threatened the liturgies of Milan and Benevento for the sake of political unification? Or, without the papal efforts, through the monks of Cluny, which replaced the Mozarabic chansong in Spain with Roman music? Or, without the exclusion of perhaps 2,000 original mass Sequences by the Council of Trent? Or, without the Counter Reformation, which put an end to the movement (pre-dating the Reformation) for a vernacular liturgy?

How might liturgical music itself have developed without these and many other drastic interventions, all of them motivated by distinctly extra-musical purposes?


For the first time since Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius a ruler [Charlemagne] not only takes a real interest in learning, art, and literature, but carries out a cultural program of his own. In setting up literary academies, however, the Emperor had in mind the renewal of intellectual culture only indirectly; his real aim was the training of staff for his administrative machine. In these academies Roman literature was, therefore, considered primarily as a collection of models of good Latin style and was studied mainly with a view to acquiring fluency in the official language.

8. Ibid. 2:184.

9. Much of the material in this section is adapted from a lecture delivered October 24, 1990, by Rita Mae Brown at The Smithsonian Institution (The William Benton Broadcast Project of the University of Chicago in association with The Smithsonian Institution).

10. "Let's Say It Right," a memoir from the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, provided the following list, as quoted by James Simon Kuen, Standard Operating Procedure (New York: Avon Books, 1971) 361-3:

Old Language Preferred Language
VC Tax Collectors VC Extortionists
South Vietnam The Republic of Vietnam

search and destroy
North Vietnam search and clear

body count enemy deaths [never to be used]


13. Ibid., p. 114.

14. Environment and Art in Catholic Worship uses the term "noble simplicity."

15. Of course, this ambivalence about "clarity" and the people's need and even ability to understand "Great Art" is hardly original with Mr. Day: Friedrich Nietzsche, Aldous Huxley, E. M. Forster, and Virginia Woolf all denigrated the idea of mass education in our own century. Plato and Machiavelli muttered about it a long time before them. And, of course, our own church has a well-known predilection for looking askance at the mass dissemination of subversive (read "new") ideas. Can you say, "Galileo"? I knew you could.

16. In 1989, at the first of the T. S. Eliot Memorial Lectures at the University of Kent, John Carey eloquently described how the intellectual elite have historically looked down on popular culture, how the great Modernist writers of the early twentieth century reacted against mass education, mass media, and mass culture by devising literary forms that were accessible only to intellectuals. They were contemptuous of newspapers and their human interest stories, of the "mentally unquenched, mechanical, soulless" mass, and of extending literary and art to the mob. He said:

As part of the reaction against mass values the intellectuals brought into being the theory of the avant-garde, according to which the mass is, in art and literature, always wrong. What is truly meritorious in art is seen as the prefiguration of a minority, the intellectuals, and the significance of this minority is reckoned to be directly proportionate to its ability to outrage and puzzle the masses. Though it usually purports to be progressive, the avant-garde is in fact always reactionary. That is, it seeks to take literature and culture away from the masses, and so to counteract the progressive intentions of democratic educational reform [John Carey, "Revoluted by the Masses," The (London) Times Literary Supplement (January 12-13, 1990) 45].

Day too rails against the liturgical avant-garde ("The Experts [Who] Will Transform the Mob," he calls them), apparently innocent of the irony that he himself is its chief proponent.

17. I was recently part of a workshop given in a well-to-do resort community on the Jersey shore. All of the people who attended this workshop had the leisure time and financial wherewithal to spend a week of their lives away from work and family. In other words, there weren't many single mothers or blue collar workers there weren't any minorities as far as I could tell. This in a workshop for a diocese whose see city is overwhelmingly Black!

We sang John Foley's "The Cry of the Poor," in my opinion, one of the best pieces of music written in its genre. We were singing that famous antiphon—"The Lord hears the cry of the poor; blessed be the Lord" (John Foley, "The Cry of the Poor," © 1978 John B. Foley and North American Liturgy Resources in Glory and Praise [Phoenix: NALR, 1976])—and my attention was drawn to something vaguely strange in the singing. I looked at the faces of the assembly: What was wrong with this picture? Then it dawned on me ... This assembly thinks it is the poor! Distorted by the lens of American narcissism and therapy worship so rightly excoriated by Mr. Day, the deep and threatening message of the thirty-fourth psalm had been appropriated to mean something like one of those greeting cards with the pretty color pictures.


Planning a pilgrimage for your choir? Let us show you the way.

FATIMA, PORTUGAL
(Left) Parish Members from Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

LOURDES, FRANCE
(Right) Members of the Charismatic Movement of Rhode Island gather at Lourdes.

ROME, ITALY
Mr. Ron Procopio, Director, and members of St. Brendan's Choir of Providence, Rhode Island are greeted by Pope John Paul II during their choir's concert tour in April 1996. After the choir's tour the Director wrote: "We were extremely pleased with all aspects of our trip. Joyful Pilgrims handled 150 people with courtesy, care and professionalism. Our concerts and Masses were well organized and, of course, our audience with His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, was an experience we will never forget. The choir is anxious to hear about our future travel plans."

HOLY LAND
(Left) St. Francis Xavier Parish Group, pose in front of a mosque in Jerusalem.

MEDUGORJE, YUGOSLAVIA
(Right) Members of the Charismatic Movement at the base of the cross atop Mount Krizevac.

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Reviews

Missal

The Gregorian Missal for Sundays

Notated in Gregorian Chant by the Monks of Solesmes, France. 1990. 717 pages. 1,325 chant selections. Available in the U.S.A. through Paraclete Press. $17.95.

The monks of Solesmes have published a book for all those committed to including Gregorian chant in their repertoire. The Gregorian Missal follows the Graduale Romanum and redistributes the chants in accordance with the renewed liturgical cycle and lectionary. It contains the Latin text, with English translations conveniently placed beneath the Latin, not only for the music, but also for the prayers for all Sundays and solemnities. The translations of the prayers are from the official ICEL texts; the English translation of the notated Latin texts is more literal (and unofficial) to facilitate comprehension of the sung Latin. The monks remind us that this unapproved translation is in no way intended for use in the liturgy.

All chant melodies are presented in the traditional square Gregorian notation with added rhythmic signs.

The Gregorian Missal is intended for use at Sunday celebrations for English-speaking congregations who wish to follow the clear directives of the Second Vatican Council in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (CSL):

The musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art. The main reason for this preeminence is that, as sacred song closely bound to the text, it forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy. (CSL #112)

The Church acknowledges Gregorian chant as distinctive of the Roman liturgy; therefore, other things being equal, it should be given pride of place in liturgical services. (CSL #116)

The book is designed for the faithful to participate in Masses sung in Gregorian chant; it is useful both for choirs and for the people in general.

It is the hope of NPM that this book will become one of the standard repertoire books in every parish in the United States. Virgil C. Funk

Congregational

Christ Our Passover


This 111 page book contains 28 pages of historical background and ideas for celebrating the liturgies from Passion Sunday through Easter Sunday. The rest is music by a number of composers for the specific events. There are references to both the Roman Catholic and the Anglican liturgical books and rites—both according to British usage.

The brief, interesting historical article by Paul Collins traces the development of the Holy Week liturgies. Keith Kimber's comments on liturgical preparation seem quite obvious, but perhaps he intends to address beginners as his primary audience. Gordon Sleight examines the services in some detail, providing many helpful ideas, but some seem ludicrous to me. He strongly suggests, for instance, that Holy Thursday's liturgy be celebrated in the context of an agape meal for which the presider sets the mood, stopping conversation at the end of each course to move on to the next part of the liturgy. "Everything possible," he writes, "should be done to make the church hall feel like 'the upper room.'" Is this liturgical ritual or historical re-enactment? Liturgy does not, it seems to me, depend on docudrama. Susan Sayers provides ideas for liturgy with children. Many of them would be very appropriate in the context of religious education, but many of the suggestions for inclusion in the liturgies seem an affront: "Construct a huge cross from junk—empty cartons, egg boxes, plastic bottles, inner rolls from carpets, metal coat hangers, etc." She goes on to suggest that this should be brought into the church at the proclamation of the cross—an idea that I find insulting to the dignity of that moment.

The music by various composers is serviceable, but mostly bland, to my taste. Perhaps that reaction is due to cultural differences between our two countries; I have not experienced their worship, so it is difficult to tell. A couple of the pieces by Colin Mawby and the Iona Community are maudlin, full of the Victorian chromaticism of John Stainer. It is very interesting to note that, while many psalm settings are provided, cantors or psalmists are not mentioned. The psalm verses are all set for choir in metered settings or in the style of Anglican chant. The latter is a venerable English tradition, but the practice never caught on in U.S. Catholic churches. I do prefer the clarity of articulation that a solo voice provides in most cases. No reprint boxes have been provided for the congregational parts, nor is there copyright information about reprinting these parts. I think that it's much easier for the congregation to sing its part when printed music is available, but without the boxes or the reprint information, having this music available is made more difficult.

Michael Connolly

Choral

Sing His Praise

Eleven Anthems for Parish Choirs. Various composers. Kevin Mayhew. 1989. $7.95

Anthem collections are a mixed blessing. They offer the opportunity to get acquainted with several pieces and composers, but is it worth buying the whole book to get the pieces you want? Several of these eleven items are worth looking at. "We Can Do No Greater Things," by Barry Ferguson, uses words quoted from Mother Teresa of Calcutta. The music is simple and singable, and the fresh text inspires us to do small things with great love. Donald Hunt's
Recitative

Believers from every country were confronted with the challenges of implementing the liturgical and musical reforms prompted by Vatican II, and various countries have developed very interesting solutions to the problems associated with that implementation. For most of us, however, it is not practical to travel extensively to learn about the creative solutions to musical problems that others have come up with, what we experience of their work usually arrives at our doors in print.

Americans, for instance, are now aware of much of the work of composers associated with the St. Thomas More Centre in London. Music by Paul Inwood, Bernadette Farrell, Chris Walker, and others is now sung in many U.S. parishes.

50. These brief reviews will examine music from three other British sources. One senses that, whether the publisher is identified as Roman Catholic or Anglican, there is much musical interchange between the two denominations.

Over the Top: Twenty Descants to Well-Known Hymn Tunes. Christopher Gower. Kevin Mayhew. 1989. $4.95. This collection provides a desant and sometimes slightly altered harmonization for the last verse of twenty hymns. The descants are nicely written, but they are probably of limited usefulness in the U.S. Only six of them are what I would consider well known in this country. There is also the problem of using this collection with hymnals that contain altered versions of the standard hymn texts, and writing in the text changes by hand may become a real problem.

Join the Chorus: Nine Responsorial Songs for Choir or Cantor and Congregation. Various composers. Kevin Mayhew. 1990. $8.98. This is a very uneven collection by six different composers. Some pieces, such as “A New Commandment” by Malcolm Archer, are strong; others seem quite dull. Michael Vasey’s text for “A Song of Anselm” has the misfortune to begin with the words “Jesus, as a mother.” The intent is laudable, but given American English usage, the piece is dead in the first four words. The cover claims that the pieces are for choir or cantor, but there is little given specifically to cantors, and some of the choir parts will not adapt easily for solo singing. (It seems that the notice about cantors was more the editor’s idea than the composers’.) Congregational refrains are provided in a reprinting format, and single use permission is given.

Six Easy Three-Part Anthems. Anthony Greening, ed. RSCM. 1978. $4.50. This is a very valuable collection of Renaissance anthems that can be sung by small choirs. The composers are excellent: Morley, Taverner, Monteverdi, Gibbons, and Petri. Four of the six pieces are typical of the period—polyphonic and imitative. Reductions are provided, which is useful for rehearsal and even performance. Not all choirs can sing this music unaccompanied, and besides, that was not necessarily the performance practice of the period, except in the Sistine Chapel. The other two pieces have accompaniments for organ. I wish, however, that the editor had provided more information about this music. Were the pieces originally SAB? (One clearly was not.) What was the original pitch? Are the accompaniments by the editor or by the composer, intended originally for strings? Despite these minor issues, I highly recommend this collection for small choirs who can sing music of medium difficulty and who want to explore this rich repertoire.

American Album: Seven Short Anthems from the USA. Various composers. RSCM. 1990. $4.50. It is interesting that we learn about these pieces by American composers through an English publisher. The four composers represented are all active in the U.S. Episcopal music scene. William Withers is represented by four short intros; they are chordal and easy, though sopranos with high notes are required. The language of these is modern, which is not the case with Gerald Near’s beautiful setting of “King of Glory, King of Peace,” with a text by George Herbert (1593–1633). I wish I hadn’t found phrases like “thou didst” a barrier, but I am not as comfortable with that style as are my Episcopalian friends. However, this text of praise is elegant and gracious. The musical setting is very melodic, with much in unison. The organ provides assistance, so the vocal parts are easy. A second composition on the same text is provided by Herbert Tinney. This one is very chordal and simple. Robert J. Powell’s “Gracious Spirit, Holy Ghost,” on a text by Bishop Christopher Wordsworth (1807–85), has a strong, memorable tune that leaps a seventh in the first bar. The vocal parts are comfortable and easily learned.

Trinity Canticles. Martin How. RSCM. 1987. ES134. $2.80. These settings of the Magnificat and Nunc dimittis are intended for use in Anglican celebrations of the liturgy of the hours, but there is no reason why they cannot be successful in Roman Catholic liturgies as well. The music is elegantly simple.
The choral parts are mostly unison and two-part with a supporting organ accompaniment. The congregation is given a part of its own, which could be learned with regular use. The Nunc dimittis has the congregation optionally singing in canon with the choir. The effect would be lovely, but not quick to achieve: an assembly would have to live with these settings for a while. I do wish there were a congregational reprint box provided with the octavo, but congregational participation aside, these would make beautiful anthems.

Five Psalms. Colin Mawby. R5CM. 1988. These psalms are set for congregation, choir or cantor, and organ. The form of the settings is their most unusual feature: the antiphons repeat frequently, after each second line rather than each fourth line, as we are accustomed to. The antiphons are too high for my taste—four of the five have a D as the climactic note, and one uses an E flat. The verses are set metrically throughout, and this gives a rhythmic intensity that I find lacking in chant. These settings would be very useful for the liturgy of the hours or as processional psalms.

Christus Rex: Canticles for Morning and Evening Prayer, Volume IV. Josef Weinberger. Josef Weinberger Ltd. 1981. $3.70. These pieces were written for the new (in 1981) Alternative Service Book. The composer states that they are aimed at more ambitious churches and cathedrals with strong musical traditions. They can be performed by choir alone or, as the composer says, with a congregation that "likes a challenge." The style is brilliant and flashy. To be performed effectively, however, the music requires a fine choir, organist, and organ.

Michael Connolly

Books

Issues in the Christian Initiation of Children: Catechesis and Liturgy


Parishes and dioceses are reporting an interesting trend: more and more unbaptized and uncatechized children of school age are being presented, or are presenting themselves, for initiation. There is a section in the RCIA devoted to the initiation of children of catechetical age, yet few resources have been available to offer commentary and share experiences on this subject. This volume from LTP helps to fill that gap.

The book is made up of fourteen chapters, each by a different author. Beginning with a description of the catechumenate for children of catechetical age and the text of the rite, the book proceeds to address the issue from the perspectives of history, doctrine, catechesis, penance, conversion, liturgy, and the role of companions on the initiation journey. The breadth of topics is equalled by the stature of the authors: Linda Gaupin, Aidan Kavanagh, Bob Duggan, Mary Collins, Dick Moudry, John Westerhoff, and editors Frank Sokol and Kathy Brown, among others. Together, the chapters run the gamut from the theological rationale for a children's catechumenate to implications for future development.

The book makes clear that we are living in a time of questioning and transition with regard to the Christian initiation of children. In a group of three nine-year-old children these days, one may have been baptized in infancy, received penance and first eucharist at age seven, and is expecting to be confirmed in high school; another may be unbaptized, presently in a catechumenate, expecting to celebrate baptism, confirmation, and first eucharist together this year at the Easter Vigil; and the third may have been baptized in infancy but without any subsequent formation in the faith, expecting now to complete initiation in penance, confirmation, and first eucharist at the Vigil. Ironically, the first child, following the "customary" practice, will be required to wait the longest for confirmation. Such a situation doesn't make sense to many who minister in parishes, and it makes less and less sense to parishioners who witness such inconsistent sacramental practice.

As we work through this time of transition and become more accustomed to the presence of unbaptized and uncatechized children preparing for initiation, the insight and guidance in this book will serve the church well. It moves the discussion beyond the question, "Should we baptize children?" (Of course we should, we always have!) It helps us see that the pertinent question is really, "How might we best walk the journey of Christian initiation with the children who are already knocking at our doors?"

The Christian Initiation of Children: Hope for the Future


This recent book enunciates what many parents and pastoral ministers have long felt but dared not say: Our current approach to religious education does not work, and a return to the Baltimore Catechism is not the answer. Instead, the authors make the radical (and quite traditional) suggestion that the liturgy is the primary means of Christian formation. In much the same way that Music in Catholic Worship spoke of the relation between faith and the quality of liturgy (cf. #8), this book makes the case that lively celebrations of liturgy week in and week out have a

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The book’s premise is that our current system tries to educate and inform children before any real conversion and initiation have taken place. This results in communities of religiously literate but often unbelieving people. The vision that the authors propose delays formal study and instruction (“religious education”) until the junior high years, “when the developmental readiness for a more logical and systematic exploration of experience begins . . . But in the experientially rich formative years from infancy through early childhood, the emphasis is centered on ritual catechesis” (p. 63). Sunday worship, with separate age-appropriate liturgies of the word with children, becomes the focus of faith formation during the early childhood years, with materials provided to parents to reflect back on the Sunday liturgical experience at home during the week.

This is a visionary book; it is not crammed with “how-tos.” It forces the reader to admit honestly the inherent inadequacy of our current efforts to “teach children the faith,” while drawing from the rites and other church documents a new shape for Christian formation that takes the ongoing process of initiation seriously. Pastoral musicians and liturgists play an essential role in this vision—reason enough to put this book at the top of your reading list.

When Should We Confirm?


Confirmed as Children, Affirmed as Teens

James Wilde, ed. Liturgy Training Publications. 1990. 98 pages. $5.95.

Theologically connected but practically separated by years from baptism and first communion, confirmation has become a sort of graduation ceremony, often held out as a motive for keeping kids in religious education as long as possible. Correspondingly, it has also become the point of departure from church participation for many adolescents. A consensus seems to be emerging on the part of liturgists and many catechists that the initiation of children would be better served by reuniting baptism, confirmation, and first eucharist at whatever age a person is presented for initiation (as has been the continual practice of the Orthodox Churches), or at least by restoring the traditional order of confirmation before first eucharist (which was the norm in the Roman Church until the early part of this century). Such is the premise of these two books.

In spite of its title, When Should We Confirm? argues that the question of the age for confirmation is shortsighted. The point is made that church documents consistently speak about eucharist, not confirmation, as the culmination of Christian initiation, calling into question the less-than-century-old practice of celebrating first eucharist before confirmation. Furthermore, the same documents do not mandate any additional requirements for a candidate for confirmation than for a candidate for first eucharist. Four of the chapters relate the experiences of three dioceses and one parish that have moved toward restoring the traditional order of confirmation before first eucharist; while the fifth suggests that a decree like Pius X’s earlier this century, which lowered the age for first eucharist, may be needed for confirmation.

The second book takes up where the first left off and asks: What might be done to ritualize the passage of teenage Catholics into adulthood, once confirmation is detached from its current place in adolescence? A couple of models from campus and youth ministry are offered, but the greater part of the book is concerned with analyzing the life situation and particular spiritual and social needs of teens. Only after examining these issues will a parish community be able honestly to provide catechesis and ritual patterns for affirming the faith of teens and marking their passage into adulthood in the church. Together, these two books are a stimulating tool for such discussion among parish staffs, parents, and adolescents.

The Spiritual Life of Children


If the previous books kindle interest in the faith formation of children, then this book by Harvard psychiatrist Robert Coles will make excellent supple-
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People's Edition (94306) Book $1.95.
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NPM Chapter Directory, 1991

This is a list of currently active NPM Chapters in Europe, The Bahamas, Canada, and the United States. These sixty-nine Chapters mark an increase of four over the list we published at this time last year. Is there a Chapter in your diocese? Perhaps it’s time to start one. For information on beginning a local Chapter please contact the National Association of Pastoral Musicians, NPM Chapter Coordinator, 225 Sheridan Street, NW, Washington, DC 20011-1492.

Rick Gibala
National Chapter Coordinator

Permanent Chapters are designated in this list by a (P); temporary Chapters are designated with a (T); Chapters that are still in existence but have become inactive are marked with an (l). When a Chapter is first formed, it is considered “temporary” until it can meet the requirements for “permanent” status. Some Chapters are so large that they are divided into branches (BR). Unless otherwise noted, all the persons on this list use the title “NPM Chapter Director.”

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Roundelay 2

BY BENET WELLUMS

It's not the fact that Thomas Day lays blame that has gotten him in hot water; it's that he hasn't spread the blame widely enough or gone deeply enough into Irish Catholicism's historic roots. Consider: he lays primary responsibility for the state of American Catholic church music at the feet of the Irish Ascendancy and a limited number of composers who created out of whole cloth (or at least out of melodramatic, nostalgic, "real Irish" songs) the reformed-folk, ego-centered, voice-of-God hymns that now, he claims, clog our churches. (Oh, he throws some blame at liturgical scholars, overblown and overmiked cantors, and others, but he makes clear where to put the real blame.)

It's not the fault of the poor Irish emigrants, of course, that they learned not to sing at Mass. As Day has it, their Anglican overlords silenced them, but that's where he stops. Did singing in Irish churches end with English domination, or are there deeper causes? After all, who gave the bloody Brits the right to rule that most distressful of nations in the first place? It was Pope Alexander III, who recognized Henry II in 1177 as Lord of Ireland. (Henry, you may remember from the stage and the movies, is the central villain in "Becket" and "Murder in the Cathedral," husband to Eleanor of Aquitaine—see "The Lion in Winter"—and father of Richard Coeur de Lion and his younger brother John—confr Kevin Costner's "Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves" for further details on them).

But it wasn't really the pope's fault, and besides, he had his own problems.

Dr. Benet Wellums is the pen name for several worthy NPM members whose contributions to this column are otherwise anonymous.

You see, Alexander III spent much of his papacy fighting to get to Rome, which was under the control of Frederick I Barbarossa (1122-90), Holy Roman Emperor (from 1155). Frederick tried to control his Italian holdings through a series of antipopes who reigned in Rome, while Pope Alexander ran the rest of the church from Sens, France. Alexander was playing European politics to get his see city back, but the English and the French weren't playing the way he wanted. Henry of England killed the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the French were busy with the Albigensian heresy.

So maybe the problems of the Irish Church should be laid at the feet of Barbarossa. Well... let's not stop there.

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Frederick inherited a mess of an empire when he was crowned at Aachen in 1152. So maybe we have to blame Charlemagne and Pope Leo III, because they established the empire on Christmas Day in the year 800, when Leo crowned Charlemagne in Rome as emperor.

Still, they were just picking up the pieces after Byzantium let its western holdings fall into decay in the eighth century, while the emperors in Constantinople were busy fighting the iconoclasts at home and the growing Muslim threat that had begun to sweep out of the Arabian desert. So should we blame Emperor Leo III the Isaurian and Emperor Constantine V Copronymos, iconoclastic Byzantine emperors? And add in the caliphs of the Umayyad dynasty in Damascus (661-750), who declared eternal war against those who were not in the “region of Islam”? Nah. They never got to Ireland, or even anywhere near it.

So who gets the ultimate blame for the fact that the Irish don’t sing in church? My vote goes to Gaius Musonius Rufus (c. 30–108), who taught Epictetus of Hierapolis (5–c.120). You see, Musonius taught Epictetus late Stoic ethics. According to Stoicism, all passion and affections—all feelings—are regarded as irrational and contrary to nature. The ideal state is nonfeeling or atheia (apathy). And that’s what Epictetus taught Marcus Aurelius and early Christian theologians. His Stoic outlook had a strong influence on Christian thought through the eighteenth century.

And where did it have its greatest influence? You got it. We don’t know how it got there, but you can bet that Epictetus’s brand of Stoic ethics came early to Christian Ireland. It may have been taken up by one of Patrick’s early disciples who had studied in southern Gaul and brought it back to the monasteries of his homeland, where it spread like wildfire. The monks took to it with the full bloom of atheia, deliberately not getting excited about spreading this new ethic. They probably delivered their teachings in a monotone, so that they would use no inflection to excite their listeners, and they may well have banned anything from church that might cause an increase in emotion, forcing the Irish to take their feelings of joy and sorrow elsewhere—to warfare and the pubs, for instance. Or, as Chesterton noted of the “great Gaels of Ireland,” “all their wars are merry, / And all their songs are sad.”

So blame it on Epictetus, whose full name, scholars think, was Epictetus O’Paphroditus.
I Don’t Think He Likes Us Very Much

BY DANIEL CONNORS

It was a fairly typical Mass in my parish. The pastor invited us to applaud for the people who had paid for the Mass intention. We also applauded for the young lectors and the children who read the prayer of the faithful. We sang a hymn to Our Lady of Knock, and the leader of song divided us into left side and right side for singing it. As we warbled away, she said into the microphone, “I think the right side is singing louder than the left side—come on left side!” We ended the Mass by singing “Happy Birthday” to the very embarrassed elderly organist, just before he led us in a rousing rendition of “God Bless America.”

I come from Thomas Day’s world. I sit in the parishes he describes. I suffer through the liturgies he hates so much. Although my work brings me closer to church involvement than most other lay people, I am basically the person in the pew that layman Day claims to be defending and speaking for. That is why I turned to his book with so much hope.

Suddenly I realized how petty we sounded, how arrogantly sure of ourselves, how full of righteous self-importance.

But my hopes began to fade after I went to an open meeting on our parish’s worship life. After the meeting I was chatting with a laywoman who strives to bring the RCIA to life despite the open hostility of the pastor. I grumbled about the truly awful liturgies of the parish. “Oh, I know,” she said. “And have you noticed how the lectors also serve as eucharistic ministers? Mixing ministries like that just isn’t allowed!”

Her comment jolted me. She was right about the ministries, of course. But suddenly I realized how petty we sounded, how arrogantly sure of ourselves, how full of righteous self-importance. It didn’t matter that the parish reacted enthusiastically to the “Fr. Tom” show.

Mr. Daniel Connors is the former managing editor of Pastoral Music magazine and the current editor of Today’s Parish.
and couldn’t care less if the lector also gave communion. It didn’t matter that fewer than twenty people (all “insiders”) showed up at this open meeting to say what they thought of their parish worship life, and that the rest of the parish seemed to have found more important things to do. Who needed them? We were the insiders. We knew best.

For all his attacks on liturgists, Thomas Day is an insider too. He claims to speak for lay people, and he valiantly defends us against the arrogance of “the new liturgists,” but he is a trained musician, and Why Catholics Can’t Sing demonstrates his position in the musical elite. In spite of his kind words about us, I don’t think he likes us very much, and occasionally he has trouble hiding his sneer. He speaks of us as people who are boorish enough to wrap our houses in plastic and put fake wood paneling on our walls, but who can still recognize beauty at Mass. (Thanks for the compliment, Tom.) And he seems to enjoy a private joke with a parish organist who has enticed people to sing Anglican plainsong: “Some in the congregation,” says Day, “were under the false impression that they were singing an ancient chant of the church.” Imagine that! I can hear them yukking it up over that one at the next AGO or NPM meeting.

In fact, for a book about ordinary Catholics not singing, it is amazing to see how absent we are from its pages. When Day does get around to us it’s usually only to attack others’ opinions of us. In this book we are not the diverse volunteers carrying out so many ministries and services in so many parishes. We are not the people searching for meaning or friendship or intimacy in our lives. We are not the most educated generation of Catholics in history. We are not the apostles to the marketplace trying to make ends meet and raise our families with some values, or trying to wrestle with what our Christian faith should mean as we go about our life and business. We are not the many people suffering through long hours on low-paying and usually uninteresting jobs (just like musicians). We are not the many people who put up with petty dictators and petty rules because we need to bring a paycheck home for the family (just like musicians). No, here we are usually the innocent, musically unsophisticated, and patient herds that has to be led and defended by the musical elite; we seem to be pew potatoes whose lives contain no problem that an occasional Mozart Mass wouldn’t help.

Some of you might substitute the latest hip psalm setting for Mozart, but the attitude is still the same. In his approach to the laity, Thomas Day is very much like some of the liturgists and musicians he criticizes. Some of you gush over this book and others of you attack it with an anger that borders on hysteria. But it all sounds like an insiders’ fight to me. It seems so important to you, but does anybody else really care? When I read Day, his supporters, and his critics, I am listening to people talking shop. And the shop talk in liturgy today is becoming increasingly humorless, pompous, self-important, strident, authoritarian, and inflexible—as if liturgists and their art, rather than the Spirit, reveal Christ.

The talk is also becoming very, very narrow, and that narrowness comes through on every page of this book. Day is right that ritual prayer is in serious trouble today, but his solution is the same old tired song: Fix Sunday Mass. Poor Sunday Mass, once again trying to carry the entire burden of our ritual prayer life. Sunday Mass needs help, but when will we learn how connected everything in life and in parish life really is? So many of us seem to mistake “source and summit” with “be all and end all.” We keep telling people (and the people I know are truly getting sick of hearing it) that they are called to full, conscious, active participation, as if just constantly quoting the document would be enough to make it so. But how do we develop the tools to make that participation real?

We need leaders. We need leaders who will help us build traditions of family and small group ritual prayer that can feed into the prayer of the larger assembly. We need artists who will help us rekindle a sense of festival, celebration, lamentation, song, sacrifice, dying and rising, and the sacred in our daily lives. We need friends who will help us build some sense of honest warmth and intimacy in our family and parish life so that we can give up the futile search for them in liturgy. We need ministers who will help us build parish life so that Sunday liturgy doesn’t have to carry everything. We need you to walk with us, to learn from our lives, and to recognize, support, and respect our ministry to the world, the ministry that your ministries are meant to serve. We need liturgical leaders who will help us slowly develop these tools so that the Sunday celebration of the Paschal Mystery can have context and reality in our lives and thus have a chance to be the transforming encounter with God that it is meant to be.

Of course, there are many good people working in each of these areas, and they are our hope. But too often there are others who write and act as if they can remain above and beyond such mundane concerns.

Day says that this is “not a book about music but about a people struggling with their destiny,” but in this book the vision of that destiny encompasses nothing but Sunday Mass. And as long as our focus stays that way, as long as our liturgical leaders act as if liturgy is unconnected to the rest of our lives, then the only hope that insiders like Day provide for those of us sitting through the “Fr. Tom” show is that we’ll sit through a different show. There will be a different name on the program, a different style, and a different arrangement of the stage furniture, but from where we sit, things will still feel very much the same.
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2\r Quinte
2 Superoctav
2 Waldflöte
IV Mixtur
III Scharf
16 Contre Trompette
8 Trompette Harmonique
8 Trompette
8 French Horn
8 Krümmerhorn
4 Clarion
Tremulant

SWELL
16 Bourdon Doux
16 Violone Celeste II
8 Geigen Diapason
8 Flöte Harmonique
8 Flöte Bouchée
8 Voix Celeste II
8 Voix Celeste (flat)
4 Principal Conique
4 Flöte à Fuseau
4 Salicet Celeste II
2\r Nasard
2 Flöte à Bec
1\r Tierce
1 Sifflet
IV Fourniture
16 Bourdarde
16 Basson
16 Voix Humana
8 Trompette Harmonique
8 Trompette
8 Hausbois
8 Voix Humana
4 Clarion
Tremulant

CHOIR
16 Quintadena
8 Holzgedackt
8 Erzähler
8 Erzähler Celeste
4 Spitzprinzipal
4 Koppelflöte
4 Erzähler Celeste II
2\r Nasat
2 Oktav
2 Blockflöte
1\r Tierze
1\r Quielflöte
III Cymbale
16 Dulzian
8 Trompette Harmonique
8 Kleine Trompette
8 Cor Anglais
4 Schalmei
Tremulant

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32 Contre Basse
32 Contre Bourdon
32 Contra Violine
16 Diapason
16 Bourdon
16 Lieblichgedackt
16 Violine
8 Octave
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