2008 Regional Conventions:
In the Midst of Change
Christ, Be Our Light
By Bernadette Farrell

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Dear Members,

Change is one of the great tests of ministry. Pastoral musicians, clergy, and other ministers know well how changing situations present challenges and opportunities, as when a valued choir member moves to another city, a key staff member leaves for a new ministry, or a new pastor is appointed to the parish.

We have seen a great deal of change in the Church in recent years—in liturgical practices, patterns of ministry, parish clustering, generational shifts, rise and expansion of ethnic and cultural communities, and many others. In the midst of change, we continue to draw strength from Christ our hope.

Planners for all three 2008 NPM Regional Conventions began their work by reflecting on the many changes we face. The theme chosen for each convention reflected their faith-filled responses in the midst of change:

• East Brunswick, New Jersey: “Jesus Christ the Same: Yesterday, Today, and Forever” (Hb 13:8)
• Cleveland, Ohio: “Do Not Let Your Hearts Be Troubled or Afraid” (Jn 14:1)
• Los Angeles, California: “One Body, One Spirit in Christ” (Eucharistic Prayer III)

This issue of Pastoral Music presents five of the plenum addresses that were delivered at this summer’s conventions. If you are unaware of the dramatic shifts that have been taking place in the American Catholic population, in Catholic institutions, and in the shape of ministry, be sure to read Sister Mary Bendyna’s eye-opening article (page forty-three). Monsignor Kevin Irwin and Father Anthony Ruff consider the pending liturgical changes and emphasize foundational theological principles (Irwin, page fifty-one) and the spiritual aspect of our response (Ruff, page thirty-four). Sister Carol Perry offers a biblical perspective on change that is at once both reassuring and challenging (page twenty-nine). Finally, Sister Cynthia Serjak uses the language of music to identify the charge that is set before pastoral musicians in the midst of change (page sixty-one).

None of the authors provides us with easy answers or practical tips on how to manage change in the Church or in the world around us. Instead, they invite us to take a long hard look at ourselves, our faith, and the gifts that will enable us to respond to ever new situations and challenges.

Convention Changes

An important change is taking place at NPM. The Board of Directors has decided to hold a national convention every year instead of alternating between national and regional conventions. There are many reasons for this very significant change, which was embraced enthusiastically by the Board and by the NPM Council.

NPM members have generally expressed a preference for national conventions. In recent years the national convention has drawn approximately fifty percent more participants than any three regional conventions combined. From the standpoint of continuing education, a national convention includes a far more varied set of workshops and events, allowing planners to target a wide variety of skill levels and interests. An annual convention will provide the leaders of NPM’s numerous committees and sections an opportunity for more regular gatherings. Finally, this change will help to provide for better financial planning and more effective stewardship of NPM resources.

The next two NPM national conventions will be held in Chicago, Illinois (July 6–10, 2009), and Detroit, Michigan (July 12–16, 2010).

NPM Annual Fund

By now you should have received a letter asking you to make a gift to the 2008 NPM Annual Fund. Your support makes a difference! Please help us to continue fostering vibrant and authentic sung worship and to provide formation and resources to musicians, clergy, and other leaders of worship.

This year the association has served the continuing education of our members at three regional conventions, at nine institutes and seminars, and in our many publications. We also sponsored very successful programs this year for young people and Spanish-speaking musicians. Help us to build on these opportunities for ministry formation for all who lead God’s people in “singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs” (Col 3:16).

If you have not already done so, please make your gift today.

J. Michael McMahon
President
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Cover: (top left) Asian Pacific Evening Prayer at the Los Angeles Regional Convention; (top right) concert by the choir, brass and percussion ensemble, and organists from Newark’s Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart at Princeton University Chapel during the East Brunswick Convention; (bottom) a plenum session at the Cleveland Convention. Pages 28: (top) Pueri Cantores choir at the Los Angeles Convention; (center right) ValLimar Jansen; (bottom) participants at the “In Spirit and Truth” gospel event in Cleveland. Photos in this issue courtesy of Joan Simons; David Ketsu; Mike Nelson, The Tidings of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles; Steven Janko; Terri Pastura; Peter Maher; and Gordon E. Truitt.
Mission Statement

The National Association of Pastoral Musicians fosters the art of musical liturgy. The members of NPM serve the Catholic Church in the United States as musicians, clergy, liturgists, and other leaders of prayer.

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2008 NPM Awards

Jubilate Deo Award

Clarence Rufus Joseph Rivers

Priest, liturgist, composer who led us to *Soulfull Worship* in spirit and in truth

Dr. J. Michael McMahon (center) displays the Jubilate Deo Award presented posthumously to Rev. Clarence Rufus Joseph Rivers. Father Rivers's sister Maxine Rivers (left) and his niece Sasha Rivers (right) accepted the award.

Pastoral Musicians of the Year

Steven C. Warner

For placing God's song on our lips and for outstanding leadership in pastoral music ministry

Anthony J. DiCello

For outstanding leadership in pastoral music ministry

Mary Prete

For outstanding leadership in pastoral music ministry
Joseph A. Gelineau, sj
1920–2008

Pioneer composer and liturgist Father Joseph Gelineau died in a hospital in Sallanches in the French Alps at the age of eighty-seven on August 8, 2008. Born on October 31, 1920, in Champ-sur-Layon, in the heart of the vine-growing area of Côteaux du Layon (the Gelineau family had owned a vineyard for more than 400 years), Joseph was a frail boy who suffered in his adolescence from tuberculosis. To strengthen his lungs, he took up playing the horn. Deemed unfit for French military service during World War II, he entered the Jesuit novitiate and studied at the Jesuit major seminary at Fourvière in Lyon, spending his tertian year of formation in Florence, Italy. A wise provincial allowed him to take courses in composition and organ at the École César-Franck in Paris (where one of his fellow students was Jacques Berthier, of Taizé music fame). He obtained a doctorate in theology and was ordained a priest in 1951.

While the young Joseph was studying in Lyon, Father (later Canon) Aimé-Georges Martimort, the distinguished French liturgist who was one of the two co-authors of Sacrosanctum Concilium, encouraged him to explore ways for people to sing the psalms in the vernacular; and it was as a result of his first initiatives in this area that he was invited to work on the text of the Psalter of the French Bible de Jérusalem, which had already been released in 1950. In collaboration with three other scholars, Gelineau developed a revised version of that Psalter which respected the rhythms of the Hebrew original. The revision appeared in French in 1955 and in English as the world-renowned Grail Psalter in 1963.

In conjunction with this work, Gelineau had already begun writing the psalm settings which would make him a household name all over the Catholic world. His most celebrated work is undoubtedly Psalm 22 (23) with its antiphon “Le Seigneur est mon berger” (“My shepherd is the Lord”). This was in fact the first psalm that he wrote, in 1949, and in some ways (as he himself would openly acknowledge) is not typical of the settings that followed, though the “pulsed tone” technique is already in evidence, as is a precise metronomic relationship between the antiphon and the psalm tone.

The year 1953 saw the publication in French of his 24 Psalms and a Canticle, rapidly made available in English. This was quickly followed by two other collections of psalms and canticles. The English versions include some of Gelineau’s own antiphons together with settings composed by others, following the French pattern where a number of prominent liturgical composers had been involved by Gelineau in providing settings of the antiphons.

It is not widely known that Gelineau tried out many of his early psalm settings on the community at Taizé in the late 1940s and early 1950s; the start of a long relationship that was to bear an unexpected and astonishing fruit through Gelineau’s introduction of Jacques Berthier to the community in 1955. Two decades later, after he had become Gelineau’s parish organist in Paris, Berthier was asked to write music that the community felt it needed to enable the prayer of young people from many different countries who first started coming to Taizé in large numbers in the mid-1970s. After the death of Jacques Berthier, Gelineau himself wrote some Taizé chants in a similar style, but his musical forms were often somewhat more complicated and were not always received as well as Berthier’s music had been.

As a composer, Gelineau did not confine himself to psalms. He wrote many antiphons for the French Church, collections of hymns and other music for the liturgy of the hours, and a score of Mass settings. He wrote some commissioned settings of English texts, but these did not reach the English-language mainstream.

But Joseph Gelineau was not just a composer; he was also a liturgical scholar. His 1962 publication, Chant et musique dans le culte chrétien, translated by Clifford Howell and published in English as Voices and Instruments in Christian Worship (1964), proved to be influential in the way people would think about music in the liturgy. With impressive scholarship, Gelineau opened up the history of music in the rite in a way that had not happened before and treated liturgico-musical genres and forms in great detail. The book paved the way for the re-introduction of the responsorial psalm form into the Mass after an absence of some 1,500 years.

At the same time, Gelineau was contributing a vast array of articles in journals such as Église qui chante (which he helped to found), La Maison-Dieu, and many others. In 1962, he attended the first meeting of an international group of liturgist-musicians which would bear fruit in the foundation in 1966 of Universa Laus, the influential international study group for liturgical music. He was also the author of Universa Laus Document I (1980), Music in Christian Celebration. While the Second Vatican Council was in progress, he had been a member of the working group of the Consilium that dealt with the revision of the Order of Mass, with special responsibility for the Eucharistic Prayer. It was Gelineau who was responsible for the re-introduction into the Eucharistic Prayer of the acclamation after the words of institution (his aim of adding further acclamations has yet to be realized, except in the case of Eucharistic
Prayers for Masses with Children). In the field of liturgical studies, Gelineau edited a huge Italian tome entitled *Nelle vostre assemblées* (“About Your Assemblies”) in 1970, translated into French as *Dans vos assemblées* (“In your assemblies”) in 1971. In 1995, he completed a massive revision and updating of the French version, published in two volumes. On a smaller scale, in 1976 he published *Demain la liturgie*, which appeared in English as *The Liturgy Today and Tomorrow* (1978). It contained important reflections on parish liturgical practice, and for the first time dared to mention such controversial topics as whether churches were too large to form real communities and whether we needed other models for worship than the clergy as rulers/providers and the laity as nothing more than consumers. The standard English-language liturgical students’ textbook *The Study of Liturgy* (first edition 1978) included Gelineau’s chapter on music and singing in the liturgy.

Two small books by Gelineau—*Libres propos sur les assemblées liturgiques* (1999), translated by the present author as *Reflections on Renewal*, and *Les chants de la messe dans leur enracinement rituel* (2001), translated by Bernadette Gasslein—were combined by Pastoral Press (OCP) as *Liturgical Assembly, Liturgical Song* (2002). The first text is, in effect, Joseph Gelineau’s last will and testament, as he reflects in a free and wide-ranging manner on different aspects of the life of liturgical assemblies, while the second one analyzes the different sung parts of the Mass and discusses various possibilities for bringing them to life.

This brief résumé of Gelineau’s output does not include many other works, ranging from small books of prayer and spirituality to a treatise on psalmody in general, (unpublished) cantillated Bible stories for children, and a complete music setting of the divine office for the French Cistercians (in its final stages at the time of his death).

Joseph Gelineau was an experienced and beloved teacher; he lectured in liturgy at the Institut Catholique in Paris for twenty-five years. During much of this time, he was also the pastor of the parish of Saint-Ignace in Paris. Possessed of an incisive mind, he was not backward in making his opinions known. A notable feature of *Universa Laus* meetings in the 1970s and ‘80s was the fact that Gelineau could think on his feet three times as fast as anyone else. This could make him seem somewhat terrifying, but he was always very encouraging to any young people who were seriously trying to do or say something in the field of the liturgy and its music.

To be present at Mass when Joseph Gelineau was presiding was to witness someone imbued by prayer. He seemed to have achieved a marvelous balance between the contemplative and active dimensions of worship, conveying a spirit of prayerfulness and at the same time communicating wonderfully with the assembly. His homilies were always very deep and yet very human. He knew how to use his voice—people who heard it will long remember the particular character of Père Joseph’s singing voice—but also how to use silence.

When Gelineau retired from the *Institut* and the Eglise Saint-Ignace, it was not to sit around and do nothing. The French bishops had recently recognized that, in parts of rural France, the shortage of priests had led local communities to elect their own “priests” for Eucharist. It was clear that serious formation in lay ministry was urgently required, and Gelineau volunteered to become the pastor of a large cluster of rural parishes based around Écuelles, close to Moret-sur-Loing, to the southeast of Paris. Here he tried to create a model for the future; in fact, he forged a new way of being church, glimpses of which can be found in *Reflections on Renewal*, mentioned above, and in the present author’s interviews with him published, in part, in *Voices from the Council* (The Pastoral Press, 2004).

In 1989, Gelineau was invited to be a guest speaker at the NPM National Convention in Long Beach, California. His brilliant presentation (unfortunately not recorded) was followed by the première of his setting of Psalm 106 (107)—a large setting with a small orchestra accompanying it. Also present at the same convention, by chance, was another great French liturgist-composer: Lucien Deiss. In 1996, Gelineau returned to an NPM convention—this one in Stamford, Connecticut—to receive the *Jubilate Deo* Award (he was the first recipient of this most prestigious award).

For many years Gelineau had spent his summers in the French Alpine village of Vallorcine, near Mont Blanc, close to the Swiss and Italian borders, through the kindness of the flautist Geneviève Noufflard, who allowed him free use of her house. When the time came for him to give up his parish work in Écuelles, Geneviève offered Gelineau a permanent (but tiny) self-contained bedroom-sitting room in the house. With the agreement of his Jesuit superiors, Joseph Gelineau spent his final years in a small room lined with books and music and containing a desk, a small spinet, and a simple bed, with a French horn prominently mounted on one wall. As long as his health permitted, he presided at Eucharist for the local community, whose former priest had long since died.

Père Joseph fractured a femur in late July. Because of circulatory problems, his surgery had to be delayed for ten days. The operation was not a great success, and in its aftermath a renal blockage developed which the doctors were unable to treat. His funeral was celebrated on August 12 in Vallorcine, and he is buried in the Jesuit cemetery in Grenoble. With his passing, we mourn the loss of a great man and the end of an era in the liturgical reform. Père Gelineau, we pray that you may “arise, come to your God, [and] sing him your songs of rejoicing.”

*Paul Inwood*
Annual Fund 2007

Thank you to all of the individuals, dioceses, parishes, corporations, and others who so generously supported the 2007 NPM Annual Fund. Your gifts help to make possible the programs and services that NPM provides for musicians, clergy, liturgists, and other leaders of prayer. Please help us continue this important work through your gift to the 2008 NPM Annual Fund. If there are any errors or omissions in this list, please accept our apology, and send a correction by e-mail to lowell@npm.org or by phone at (240) 247-3000.

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2008 Regional Conventions

Final Count

More than 2,300 people participated in this year’s three regional conventions as registrants, musicians, and volunteers. The largest attendance (more than 850 people) was at the Central Regional Convention in Cleveland, Ohio. Participation in the Eastern Regional Convention in East Brunswick, New Jersey, was nearly as high. The Western Regional Convention in Los Angeles, though smaller than the other two, still drew more than 500 people, and an additional 190 people registered for the pre-convention Hispanic Ministry Day in Los Angeles.

Evaluation of the three conventions was consistently strong. If a convention receives an overall rating of 4.0 or higher (with 5 as the highest rating), that means it has been very well received by the participants. The East Brunswick Convention received a rating of 4.2; the Cleveland Convention was rated 4.3; and Los Angeles received a 4.2.

Some reflections by the convention participants may be found in the Commentary section that begins on page eighty-three.

No More Regionals?

This year’s three regional conventions were the last such events for NPM. Beginning next year, there will be one national convention each year. There are several reasons for this change:

- Response to members’ requests: Many of our members have asked that we make this change because they prefer the size and variety of a national convention to the smaller size and fewer offerings of a regional event.
- As our participants have noticed, we are able to offer a richer program at one national convention than we can offer at three regional conventions.
- In these days of a tightening economy and rising prices, offering one annual event is a better use of NPM resources.
- The annual event will offer a regular opportunity for the association’s various standing committees and boards to meet—something that was harder to do when there were regional conventions.
Well Received

In general, this summer’s NPM Institutes were well received. Many participants at Cantor Express found practical coaching and vocal help to be the most important parts of the program, but others felt that contextualization of such practical help within an understanding of the cantor’s and psalmist’s ministry was also important. In general, the program gave participants more confidence in their ministry.

Curiously enough, a highlight of the Guitar and Ensemble Institute for one participant was serving as cantor for the psalm at the beginning of the week! Other comments from those at this year’s session focused on skill development, a deeper understanding of the ministry, and the spiritual nature of the week. “It was like a retreat” appeared on many of the evaluations.

Participants in the Institute for Music with Children were enthusiastic in their evaluation, noting that the three-day program was “well-prepared and organized.” The major benefits of this institute, they said, were divided (like the program itself) between liturgy and the music classroom. Some participants highlighted improved understanding of the liturgy and the role music plays in it plus a deepening of skills to implement that understanding, especially choral conducting skills. Others said that they learned “concepts to use in making my teaching more effective and learning music more fun and inspiring for students.” One person noted wistfully: “I have so much to learn!”

At the Choir Director Institute, participants found common ground with other directors, and they were especially pleased with the practical work in small groups.

The powerful presentations at this year’s Pastoral Liturgy Institute examined rituals and ritual moments with repeated reference to all the official documents from Sacrosanctum Concilium to the latest edition of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal. There were excellent suggestions made for music for the various rites and ritual moments, and participants noted the “incredible bibliography” they received, with resources from the basics, for those new to liturgical ministry, to advanced reading. A repeated mantra from Paul Covino asked: “What is the norm?” This question, he insisted, should guide ritual practice rather than the comment “this is how we do it.” And all of the study took place in an atmosphere rich with different avenues of prayer (from the liturgy of the hours, to Taizé-style prayer, to a powerful service of remembrance).

Members Update

2008 Scholarships

Thanks to generous members, friends, and corporate partners, NPM was able to offer $34,000 in scholarships for 2008. More than $17,000 of that total came from funds donated by participants in last year’s national convention. In addition to the five NPM scholarships offered this year, NPM donates $500 toward the $1,000 Rensselaer Challenge Grant, which is administered by the Rensselaer Program of Church Music and Liturgy at Saint Joseph’s College, Rensselaer, Indiana.

This year’s scholarships include the Dosogne/Rendler-Georgetown Chorale Scholarship ($1,000), drawn from endowments established to honor Rene Dosogne, a highly respected church musician in the Chicago area in the second half of the twentieth century and a faculty member at DePaul University School of Music, and Dr. Elaine Rendler-McQueeney, pastoral musician, music educator, and choral conductor of the Georgetown Chorale. We also awarded the Funk Family Memorial Scholarship, created to honor Rev. Virgil C. Funk, NPM founder and president emeritus, and deceased members of his family.

Other scholarship funds come from NPM’s educational partners. They include the MuSonics Scholarship, the Paluch Family Foundation/WLP Scholarship, the OCP Scholarship, the GIA Pastoral Musician Scholarship, the University of Notre Dame Folk Choir Scholarship, the Dan Schutte Scholarship, the Father Lawrence Heiman, c.p.p.s., Scholarship, and the Steven C. Warner Scholarship.

This year’s scholarship recipients in-
clude people who have been involved in pastoral music ministry since childhood and students just beginning formal study. Some have returned to formal study after an extended hiatus, and others are pursuing additional degrees. Several are recipients of previous NPM scholarships, and you could track their educational history by reviewing past issues of Pastoral Music. Their accomplishments are remarkable, and their dedication promises a solid future for pastoral music ministry. All have expressed their gratitude for your continued support.

Anita Louise Lowe, osb, is the recipient of this year’s NPM Nancy Bannister Scholarship ($4,500). Her experience as a pastoral musician began in the seventh grade, when she was asked by her teacher to accompany class liturgies and provide music for Mass. She continued the same ministries in college. After joining the Sisters of St. Benedict, she served as cantor, choir member, accompanist, and liturgy planner for the community’s liturgy. Anita has also been a member of Stillpoint, a group of Benedictine sisters who compose, record, and perform original compositions of spiritual music and provide music ministry (concerts and missions) for parishes and church groups. In preparation for her ministry as monastery liturgist at the beginning of this year, Sister Anita began work on a master’s degree in liturgical studies at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana. She will use her scholarship award to continue those studies.

Jennifer Seighman, who received this year’s NPM Members’ Scholarship ($3,500), is a third year doctoral student in sacred music at The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. Ms. Seighman has extensive experience as a conductor, organist, vocalist, and music educator. While earning her bachelor of music education degree magna cum laude at Westminster Choir College, she received the Junior Organ Scholarship, the Music Generativity Award in Music Education and served as a conducting intern with the Westminster Conservatory Chorale. After teaching choral music in the New Jersey public school system for five years, Jennifer pursued the master of music degree in choral conducting at the University of Oklahoma. She received the 2007 Oregon Catholic Press Scholarship and the 2006 GIA Pastoral Musician Scholarship (both through NPM) as well as the Magi Carrigan Foundation Scholarship from The Catholic University of America. Ms. Seighman currently serves as organist and choirmaster at Holy Cross Roman Catholic Church in Garrett Park, Maryland.

Rendell Anthony James, a native of Sunset, Louisiana, will use the NPM Perrot Scholarship ($2,000) to continue working toward the doctor of music arts degree and studying choral conducting at the University of North Texas. Rendell earned his bachelor’s in music education (summa cum laude) from Loyola University New Orleans and his master’s degree in choral conducting at Louisiana State University. Rendell served as liturgical music director at St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church in Grand Coteau, Louisiana, and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church in Lafayette. He has taught at Northside High School in Lafayette and at the Middle School of the Academy of the Sacred Heart in New Orleans. He has also been an accompanist and cantor at St. Ann Catholic Church and Shrine in Metairie, St. Joseph Catholic Church in Cecilia, and Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church in Mire, Louisiana. Currently, Rendell serves as director of music at Ridglea Christian Church in Fort Worth, Texas, and accompanist at St. John the Apostle Catholic Church in North Richland Hills.

William H. Atwood is the director of music and coordinator of liturgical ministries at All Saints Roman Catholic Church in Manassas, Virginia, where he conducts a large and diverse parish music program. Prior to his position at All Saints, Mr. Atwood was the director of sacred music for the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Somerville, New Jersey, and organist and festival choir accompanist for the Diocese of Metuchen. A native of Connecticut, Bill received the bachelor of music degree magna cum laude in 2001 from the Hartt School of Music at the University of Hartford, and he is a 2003 graduate of Westminster Choir College in Princeton, where he earned the master of music degree with distinction. He will use the 2008 NPM Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo Scholarship ($2,000) in the doctor of musical arts degree program in sacred music at The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. Mr. Atwood is currently a Magi Scholar at Catholic University.

Michael Ruzicki, recipient of this year’s NPM Koinonia Scholarship ($2,000), grew up in St. Mary of Ostrabrama, a Polish-American parish in South River, New Jersey, and was active in the parish music and liturgy program throughout high school. While studying religion, art, and drama at The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, Michael was very involved in the Office of Campus Ministry and developed a music ministry retreat program that brought college students to parishes with large elderly populations. It was at Catholic University and through his work as a student leader of music ministry and liturgy that he decided to answer the call to work in the Church as a full-time lay minister. Michael began his work on the pastoral staff at Resurrection of our Lord Parish in Laurel, Maryland, in 2003, and he is currently serving there as pastoral associate for liturgy and music. Michael is the director of the NPM Chapter in the Archdiocese of Baltimore. He will use his NPM scholarship to work on a master’s degree in pastoral studies at Washington Theological Union.

Amanda P. Plazek will use the NPM Board of Directors Scholarship ($2,000) to continue her bachelor’s studies, concentrating on organ performance and sacred music, at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Amanda’s
interest in pastoral music and the organ began as a child, when she turned pages for her mother, Cynthia, who was then the organist and director of music at St. Athanasius Church in Pittsburgh (Cynthia currently ministers at St. Ferdinand Catholic Church in Cranberry Township). When she was ten, Amanda began organ studies with her mother, and she started to play weekly Masses for the parish school. When she was fourteen, she became the organist at Forest Avenue Presbyterian Church in Bellevue, where she now serves as the director of music. Amanda also serves as an organist at St. John Neumann Catholic Church in Franklin Park and assists with campus ministry at Duquesne.

Michael Galdo, a native of Fairfax, Virginia, is currently a choir director at St. Luke Catholic Church, organist and pianist at Marymount University, and a private piano teacher. Previously, he taught music at St. Luke School, where he directed two choirs and a handbell choir. Michael is using the 2008 MuSonics Scholarship ($3,000) to begin work on a master’s degree in sacred music at The Catholic University of America. Michael earned a bachelor of arts degree in music and religious studies from the University of Virginia in 2003.

Diane Kulseth is a flutist who credits David Haas’s Music Ministry Alive! summer program with deepening her involvement in pastoral music ministry and with helping her to grow in appreciation for Catholic liturgy. She will use this year’s Paluch Family Foundation/WLP Scholarship ($2,500) to continue her studies in vocal/instrumental and liturgical music at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota. A longtime flute student, Diane also began studying voice after serving in church choirs and as a cantor at Mary, Mother of the Church Parish in Burnsville, Minnesota, and in college. She is a member of the Liturgical Choir at the University of St. Thomas and serves on the campus ministry staff.

James Trares, recipient of this year’s OCP Scholarship ($2,500) is currently a student at Aquinas College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he is pursuing a bachelor of music in liturgical music with a minor in theology. He is active with the music department and campus ministry at school as well as with several other campus programs and with the Grand Rapids NPM Chapter. A native of Shalersville, Ohio, James is an active member of St. Joseph Church in Mantua, Ohio, where he serves as accompanist and singer. After graduation, he plans to put his degree to use as a pastoral musician and, possibly, continue his education.

Therese M. Lenz received her bachelor’s degree in music performance from Chicago’s Roosevelt University. She is a part-time associate music director at St. Barnabas Parish in Chicago (where she lived and went to school as a child) and a part-time student at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana, where she will use the GIA Pastoral Musicians Scholarship ($2,000) to continue working on a master’s degree in theology (liturgical studies). Terri also ministers musically as needed at other Chicago parishes, including Old St. Patrick and St. Walter Parish. Her ministry began in high school, when she served on weekends as one of the parish organists and cantors, and she has since served as music director in several parishes in the Chicago area and as a private piano and voice instructor.

Jenny Lewis, recipient of the 2008 University of Notre Dame Folk Choir Scholarship ($1,250), is working on her bachelor’s degree in music (ethnomusicology) with a minor in liturgical music ministry. Primarily a vocalist, she has also studied piano. Jenny was involved from childhood in music ministry at her home parish, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, in Salem, Virginia. She was a member of the parish youth leadership team and the adult choir, and she served as a substitute pianist and choir director through her
high school years. She volunteered as music coordinator for her dorm’s Masses when she arrived at Notre Dame, and she now serves as a member of the Notre Dame Celebration Choir, which sings for special liturgical events.

Thomas DeLessio will use this year’s Funk Family Memorial Scholarship ($1,000) to complete his graduate degree in theology and ministry at LaSalle University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Thom has been a full-time pastoral musician for more than twenty years; he currently serves as the director of music for the Diocese of Metuchen and the Cathedral of St. Francis. He completed his undergraduate degree in music education at Westminster Choir College in 1989, and he began a graduate program at LaSalle in 1996. After two years of concentrated study, he took a sabbatical from the program, but he returned in 2005 and now hopes to complete his studies this year.

John Peter Meyers is the assistant organist, choir master, and cantor trainer at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Shadyside, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Beginning his senior year at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, with the help of the 2008 Dosogne/Rendler-Georgetown Chorale Scholarship ($1,000), John is an organ and sacred music major in the Mary Pappert School of Music. John has been a professional church musician since he was fifteen, and he has served as cantor and assistant organist at Ss. Peter and Paul Church in Hamburg, New York, and organist and soloist at St. Barbara Church in Lackawanna. John holds the NPM/AGO Service Playing Certificate and has received both the GIA Pastoral Musicians Scholarship and the University of Notre Dame Folk Choir Scholarship in previous years. He was also the 2006 and 2007 recipient of the Msgr. Henry Kawalec Organ Scholarship awarded by the Church Musicians Guild of Buffalo. After graduation, John hopes to pursue a career in sacred music and to continue his studies in a related field.

Jordan James de Souza was born in Toronto, Canada, in 1988, and he has led a busy musical life from a young age. An alum of St. Michael’s Choir School, he is currently pursuing his bachelor’s degree in music at McGill University. In 2007 he completed the requirements for the degree of associate with the Royal Canadian College of Organists, winning the Willan Scholarship and Rollinson Prize for highest marks. In addition to holding the posts of organ scholar and conducting scholar at the Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul, Jordan is the assistant conductor of Opera McGill. He will use the Dan Schutte Scholarship ($1,000) to continue his studies.

Ron Vanasdlen is a native of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, where he grew up in St. Patrick Parish. As a junior in high school, Ron took up his first church music position as assistant organist in his home parish. He spent fourteen years in the U.S. Navy as a print journalist/editor, radio personality, TV broadcaster, and public affairs officer. During those years, he played, sang, and directed music groups for Mass, and he served as a substitute for chapel musicians for Protestant services as well. While on active duty he received a bachelor of science degree in workforce education from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. After a military size reduction and early retirement, Ron moved to the Seattle area to pursue further music studies and to work at Olympic College as the accompanist for the Chamber Choir and vocal studios. He studied organ at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, as well as voice and opera at Olympic College. In addition to parish music ministry, Ron worked as a vocal performer with the Bremerton (Washington) Symphony Chorale, the Seattle Symphony Chorus, and the Grand Rapids Symphony Chorus. Ron is presently the director of music and worship at the 1,500-family St. Cyprian Catholic Church in Riverview, Michigan; he was recognized in September 2007 during National Religious Music Week with an Award of Distinction. Ron will use the Father Lawrence Heiman, c.pp.s., Scholarship ($1,000) to continue his studies at St. Joseph’s College in Rensselaer, Indiana.

Bryan Schamus is using the 2008 Steven C. Warner Scholarship ($750.00) to begin graduate studies at Santa Clara University in Santa Clara, California. In his undergraduate years, he was a participant in and leader of music ministry for the Catholic Campus Ministry at Virginia Tech University in Blacksburg, Virginia. Bryan was the music director when the ministry responded to the tragic shootings on campus in April 2007. He has also served as a cantor and a member of the adult choir at his home parish, Christ the Redeemer Church in Sterling, Virginia.

Program Scholarships

Thanks to the generosity of NPM’s members and friends, we were able to award $4,260 in program scholarships this year. These scholarships are provided to assist pastoral musicians with limited financial resources in taking advantage of opportunities for continuing formation at NPM conventions and institutes. We are especially thankful this year for a donation of $2,000 to this fund by We Believe, a group that has worked for several years to promote and defend the liturgical and ecclesial renewal following the Second Vatican Council.

2009 Academic Scholarships

The continuing generosity of our members, friends, and partners will make it possible for NPM to offer academic scholarships once again in 2009. Funding for many of those scholarships comes from money collected during the convention Eucharist at this year’s three regional conventions. Other funds come from endowments and from our education partners. Their generous dedication to professional and ministerial formation offers great hope for the future of pastoral
music ministry.

Please check the December issue of Pastoral Music and the NPM website (www.npm.org) for detailed information about next year’s scholarships.

Keep in Mind

Father Philip M. Lambert, op, a Dominican friar of St. Martin de Porres (Southern U.S.A.) Province and an NPM member, died in New Orleans at the age of seventy-five on July 17. Philip entered the Dominican novitiate in Winona, Minnesota, in 1952 and was ordained to the presbyterate in Dubuque, Iowa, in 1959. He spent many years in campus ministry, serving at Wichita State University, the University of Houston, St. Thomas More Parish of Tulane University, New Orleans, and, just before his retirement, at Incarnate Word University in San Antonio, Texas. He also served as a parochial vicar in New Orleans and Miami and as a hospital chaplain at Barnes-Jewish Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri. His funeral was celebrated in New Orleans on July 21.

Joshua Shearer died at home in Robertsville, Ohio, on August 4 at the age of nineteen, six days after becoming an NPM member as part of the parish group for St. Gabriel/St. Francis Xavier in Malvern, Ohio. (He was a member of St. Francis Parish.) Though Joshua had had heart problems since birth, he died unexpectedly in his sleep. He partnered with his father, Tim, in the family farming business and in Shearer Meats. Sadly, Joshua’s father, Tim, died unexpectedly on August 25, three weeks after his youngest son. Joshua’s funeral was celebrated at St. Francis Xavier Church on August 8.

Father Kevin Donovan, sj, a British Jesuit and liturgical scholar who succeeded Father Joseph Gelineau in 1977 on the Praesidium of Universa Laus, an international study group for liturgical music, died suddenly at the age of seventy-seven on August 21 in Great Britain. Born in 1931 in France, Kevin Jean-Marie Donovan entered the Society of Jesus at Manresa College in Roe- hampton, Surrey. After several years of teaching and after completing his theological studies, he was ordained to the presbyterate in 1965. Father Donovan moved to Paris to study liturgy and catechetics at the Jesuit College. On his return to Britain in 1969, he was appointed professor of liturgy at Heythrop College. He taught briefly in Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia), but returned to the United Kingdom in 1979 to resume his professorship at Heythrop—a post he held until his death. He also served as parish priest at St. Ignatius Parish, Stamford Hill, and on the parish staff of Sacred Heart Parish, Wimbledon. His funeral liturgy was celebrated at Sacred

“Ours is a singing faith
All thanks to God be sung
By people here both far and near
In every land and tongue”

Jane Parker Huber

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Heart on September 2.
We pray: Lord, your wisdom governs
the length of our days. We mourn the loss
of those whose life has passed quickly and
those who served you for many years. We
entrust them all to your mercy. Welcome
them into your heavenly dwelling and
grant them the happiness of everlasting
youth.

**Meetings and Reports**

**Music Ministry Alive!**
**Turns Ten**

The tenth edition of Music Ministry Alive! (MMA), an annual liturgical music institute for high school and college age youth, took place July 22–27 at the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, Minnesota. Under the direction of its founder, David Haas, this year’s institute included 169 youth participants, 57 adult leaders, and a team and faculty of 60: the largest MMA community in its ten-year history. The participants represented more than 33 states and Canada. Over the course of these ten years, MMA has helped to form nearly 1,000 youth participants, many of whom are now serving as parish music, liturgy, and youth ministers; as published composers of liturgical music; and as pastoral leaders in their communities.

The theme for this year’s event was “I Will Not Sing Alone.” Youth participants took part in daily master classes in the area of their musical interest (vocal/cantor, keyboard, guitar, composer, woodwinds, brass, and percussion), and, with the adult participants, they attended workshops and sessions in liturgy planning, leadership, Scripture, conducting, composition, improvisation, peer ministry, cantor formation, liturgical dance, social justice awareness, and ministry development. Daily prayer culminated in the closing Eucharist with Monsignor Ray East as presider and homilist. The youth participants also presented a final concert, the “MMA Festival Sing,” for parents, family, and friends.

A special part of this year’s celebration included MMA’s first gathering of its alumni/alumnae. Forty former participants met to reconnect and to form a supportive group called “The Friends of MMA.”

Presentations of recognition went to the National Association of Pastoral Musicians, GIA Publications, World Library Publications, and OCP for their support and for providing resources over the years. Additional awards were presented to The Sisters of St. Joseph (St. Paul Province); Sister Andrea Lee, mm, president of the College of St. Catherine; composer and pastoral musician Donna Peña; and to several team members who have been part of MMA every year since its founding. Special lifetime achievement awards were presented to Betty Saganich of Acton, Massachusetts; Robert and Joan Haas of Red Wing, Minnesota; Madge Phang of Largo, Florida; Father George DeCosta of Hilo, Hawaii; Greg Weinand of Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Tish Blain (a former MMA team member) of Dedham, Massachusetts.

The annual William Phang Memorial MMA Scholarship was awarded to five...
youth participants who will be pursuing college studies in the areas of music, liturgy, and ministry. This year’s winners were Douglas Starkebaum of Minneapolis, Minnesota; Tyler Jensen of Culver City, California; Becky Doucette of Cambridge, Massachusetts; Brian Abdo of Laurel, Maryland; and Kevin Keith of Midland, Michigan.

Next year’s institute will take place from July 28 to August 2, 2009, at what will then be the University of St. Catherine. For more information about MMA, its mission and goals, and information about next year’s program and the “Friends of MMA,” visit the MMA website: www.musicministryalive.com.

National Catholic Youth Choir’s Ninth Season

The National Catholic Youth Choir (NCYC) recently completed its ninth season. This year, forty-seven high school choristers from across the U.S.A. spent seventeen days at Saint John’s Abbey and University in central Minnesota and on tour through Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa. The rigorous daily schedule included several hours of rehearsal and classes in religion and liturgy, plus sports and recreation. The choir prayed and worshiped together and with the monastic community daily, ending each day with sung compline.

During its 2008 tour, the choir sang at liturgies and concerts in Waverly, Winona, and Coon Rapids, Minnesota; in Green Bay, Racine, and Janesville, Wisconsin; and in Dyersville, Iowa. They also sang for the Franciscan sisters in Rochester, Minnesota, and the Benedictine sisters in St. Joseph, Minnesota. In past years the choir has sung throughout Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska, and Georgia.

The National Catholic Youth Choir is sponsored by the School of Theology and Seminary and meets on the grounds of Saint John’s Abbey and University in Collegeville. The conductor of the choir is Dr. Axel Theimer; Father Anthony Ruff, osb, a monk of Saint John’s Abbey, is the choir’s founding director. Begun under the motto “Spreading the Catholic Faith through Great Music,” as a response to the call of Pope John Paul II for a “new evangelization,” the choir sings music of various Christian traditions, ranging from medieval Gregorian chant to twentieth century music. The primary focus of the choir is liturgical, and the choir seeks to implement the directive of the Second Vatican Council that the “treasury of sacred music” be preserved and fostered in the modern liturgy.

Catholic youth going into the tenth through twelfth grades in fall 2009 may apply to participate in the next National Catholic Youth Choir, which will take place at Saint John’s Abbey and University June 23–July 9, 2009. The Choir is scheduled to sing at the 2009 NPM National Convention in Chicago. Information is available at www.CatholicYouthChoir.org or from Father Anthony Ruff at (320) 363-3233 or awruff@csbsju.edu.

Universa Laus 2008

Some sixty people from eleven European countries gathered in August in a retreat center at Drongen, in the suburbs of the Belgian city of Ghent, to work on the topic “Music in (Christian) Funeral Rites.” Last year’s meeting in Slovakia (on “The Body of Christ—Adoration
October 2008  • Pastoral Music

and Communion: Distinct Rites, Distinct Music”) had been the first to take place in Eastern Europe, and a number of participants from Lithuania, Slovakia, and Russia were among the attendees this time.

Major papers given were by Father Paul de Clerck of the Institut Catholique in Paris, Professor Martin Hoondert from the University of Tilburg, and Professor Daniele Sabaino from the University of Pavia; these were followed by discussion in linguistic groups and (later in the week) in multilingual interest groups. Under the title “Death: A Passover,” de Clerck looked briefly at the history of Christian funeral rites and made some observations on biblical language; he then treated in greater depth anthropological questions centering on death, cultural evolutions, a theology of funeral rites, and some pastoral questions. In discussion, it emerged that the Byzantine funeral rites have always been generally much more joyful than those in the West.

Hoondert’s paper was entitled “Funeral Rites and the Transformation of Religiosity—Exploring Ritual and Music in a Complex Context.” He examined cultural evolutions in some depth, putting the ritual books into relationship with inductive versus deductive liturgy, the question of cremation, the musical form of the funeral rites, and a number of case studies to illustrate how these have interacted in parish practice. Topics for future work arising from the following discussions included the use of contemporary cultural elements in the Vigil for the Deceased, use of the cantor, ritual competence of the priest, and the need for research on “active listening.”

Sabaino’s paper—“Singing the Adieu”—gave a detailed exposé of the history of funeral rites, particularly from the point of view of the texts that have been used over the past two thousand years and the theology that underpins them, and this history was illustrated by a number of music examples from the current Italian repertoire. It is quite clear that up to Vatican II funeral rites in the West were largely concerned with expiating sinfulness before God, and the concept of the deceased person participating in Christ’s resurrection was absent; the post-Vatican II texts have a different thrust. A common thread linking the discussions on all three papers was the need to be able to lament and then to move on from lamentation in a progression toward paschal joy. It is very difficult to achieve this with the rites as presently constituted.

In addition to the work of the meeting, there were presentations on the history and current state of liturgical music in Flemish- and French-speaking Belgium, times of prayer, a festive Eucharist and meal, a visit to the cathedral in Ghent, and an annual general meeting during which a new international Praesidium was elected for the next three years. Next year’s meeting takes place in Gazzada, Italy, near Varese, August 20–24. Anyone interested should contact the Universa Laus U.S. correspondent, Sister Judith Kubicki, at kubicki@fordham.edu. (Report provided by Paul Inwood.)

Largest Catholic Gatherings

One of the largest gatherings of Catholics in the United States took place in early August in Carthage, Missouri, on the grounds of the Congregation of the Mother Co-Redemptrix, a Vietnamese order of priests and brothers. This year’s celebration of “Marian Days,” an annual Vietnamese-Catholic pilgrimage feast, was shadowed by the death of seventeen pilgrims from the Houston area, who died enroute when their bus overturned. Begun in 1975, the Marian Days celebration was, for many years, the largest annual gathering of Catholics in the United States. It has now been displaced by the annual (and largely Hispanic/Latino) gathering of Catholics at the Guadalupe Chapel at Maryville in Des Plaines, Illinois, outside Chicago, which draws about 130,000 people.

Quinceañera Ritual Published

The approved bilingual Bendición al Cumplir Quince Años/Order for the Blessing on the Fifteenth Birthday, the quinceañera ritual, was published on September 19. Communities can celebrate this ritual within and outside of Mass. The Mexican-American Cultural Center in San Antonio, Texas, developed the original text of the rite in 1999. The publishing office of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) acquired the rights to the text and has collaborated with the Secretariat of Divine Worship in completing the final text, which was approved by Rome in 2007.

Jesuit Father Allan Deck, executive director of the Secretariat of Cultural Diversity, emphasized the importance of developing a ritual that “helps Latino Catholics celebrate their cultural heritage and build new bridges to other Catholics in their communities.” Father Deck cited a joint survey by the Pew Hispanic Project and the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life in April 2007 that reported that approximately one-third of all Catholics in the United States are now Latinos and projected that the Latino share will increase. Father Deck said the quinceañera ritual will be one of “many resources Latinos can use to preserve both Catholic and cultural identity.”

Monsignor Anthony Sherman, executive director of the USCCB Secretariat of Divine Worship, said the quinceañera ritual can help young Catholics “learn more about the importance of upholding one’s baptismal commitment in a spirit of thanksgiving.” The ritual is traditionally a rite of passage for teenage girls, but the participation of clergy, sponsors, and others in a community celebration “allows others to get involved and make the same thankful commitment themselves,” said Msgr. Sherman. The ritual allows baptismal godparents or other couples serving as sponsors the option of presenting religious articles to the quinceañera.

The quinceañera ritual book can be ordered online at http://www.usccb-publishing.org.
## 2008 Regional Convention Recordings

Bring the Convention Home!

Audio CDs: $12 each; $10 each for 2–5; $8 each for 6–10; $6 each for 11 or more.

DVDs: $25 each.

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- Christ Our Sure Foundation in the Face of Change
- The Liturgical Changes We Face
- Changing Face of the Church in the U.S.
- The Changing Face of Ministry in the Church

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- A Collaborative Heart to Minister in a Time of Change
- Spirituality for Change
- Naming the Changes We Face
- Negotiating the Changes We Face

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August 5–8, 2008  
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The first NPM convention took place in Scranton, Pennsylvania, at the end of March 1978. The idea for such a gathering was sparked, founding NPM President Father Virgil Funk recalls, by a phone call from Father Tom Banick, a priest from the Diocese of Scranton. He introduced himself and said that he had been following the progress of the association, which he thought was doing great work. Then, Father Funk says, he asked: “Have you ever thought of holding a convention? Some sort of gathering to bring the musicians together?” Father Banick continued: “Let’s do it in Scranton.”

After a second national convention (Chicago, 1979), the NPM staff decided to go regional. Beginning April 9, 1980, and running through October 12, the first eleven regional conventions took place in three-day units. (Twelve were scheduled, but one had to be canceled — the only time in our history that we have canceled a convention.) This was the beginning of a two-year cycle: national conventions in odd-numbered years and regional conventions in even-numbered years.

After 1980, NPM reduced the number of regional conventions to six in each cycle, then to three in 1990, four from 1992 to 2000, and then to three regional conventions every other year.

With this year’s set of three regional conventions, that cycle has brought an NPM regional convention to fifty-one different cities for a total of seventy regional gatherings. Here are lists of the cities we’ve visited and of the dates and themes of our seventy regional conventions.

**Regional Convention States**

We have met in twenty-eight states of the contiguous United States, one federal district, and one foreign country. Our favorite state in which to hold a regional convention has been California (eight conventions); Pennsylvania and Texas are tied for second place (five conventions each).

- Bahamas (1992)
- Colorado (1996)
- District of Columbia (1990)
- Indiana (1980, 1986)
- Iowa (1980)
- Massachusetts (1988)
- Minnesota (1980)
- Missouri (1984, 2000)
- Montana (1998)
- Nebraska (1992, 2002)
- Nevada (2000)
- New Mexico (1992)
- North Dakota (1986, 1994)
- Oregon (1988)
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Virginia (1986)
Washington (1980)

Regional Convention Cities

Our regional meetings have taken place in fifty-one cities in these twenty-eight years. We went back most frequently to Philadelphia (four conventions); we also liked Cleveland and Providence (three conventions each).

Albuquerque, New Mexico 1992
Anaheim, California 2002
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 1980
Bismarck, North Dakota 1986, 1994
Boston, Massachusetts 1988
Buffalo, New York 1988
Cherry Hill, New Jersey 1998
Chicago, Illinois 1990, 2004
Cleveland, Ohio 1984, 1996, 2008
Collegeville, Minnesota 1980
Dallas, Texas 1998
Denver, Colorado 1996
Dubuque, Iowa 1980
East Brunswick, New Jersey 2008
Fort Worth, Texas 1982, 1988
Green Bay, Wisconsin 1982
Helena, Montana 1998
Houston, Texas 1984
Indianapolis, Indiana 1986
Jacksonville, Florida 1988
Kansas City, Missouri 1984, 2000
Las Vegas, Nevada 2000
Los Angeles, California 2008
Miami, Florida 1980
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 1996
Nassau, Bahamas 1992
New Brunswick, New Jersey 1984
New Orleans, Louisiana 1986
Olympia, Washington 1980
Omaha, Nebraska 1992, 2002
Orange, California 1984
Orlando, Florida 1982, 2000
Parsippany, New Jersey 2000
Peoria, Illinois 1988

Sister Jane Marie Perrot, sc, first NPM convention coordinator

Former NPM convention coordinators include Lisa Dahlslein (now Elizabeth Gelfeld, left), Nancy Duncan, Patricia Weiglein, Jean Williams, Tom Wilson (center), and Lisa Tarker (right).
Phoenix, Arizona 1990, 2004
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 1982
Portland, Oregon 1988
Providence, Rhode Island 1980, 1982, 1984
Rensselaer, Indiana 1980
Richmond, Virginia 1986
Sacramento, California 1986, 2006
San Antonio, Texas 1980
San Francisco, California 1980
San Jose, California 1994
Santa Cruz, California 1982
Toledo, Ohio 1994
Washington, DC 1990

Mr. Peter LaManna, Ms. Rosemary Hudecheck

Region IV: “Faith and Fiesta,” April 14–17, Deauville Hotel, Miami, Florida; Rev. James Fetscher

Region I: “The Musician—The Parish: Relationship in a New Key,” April 23–25, Marriott Inn, Providence, Rhode Island; Rev. Ronald Brassard

Region X: “Many Songs, One Señor,” May 22–24, Convention Center, San Antonio, Texas; Ms. Nancy Schaefer

Region IX: “Celebrating with All Our Resources,” June 3–5, Loras College, Dubuque, Iowa; Rev. Everett Frese, Rev. Daniel Knipper

Region XII: “The Musician, the Church,” June 12–14, St. Martin’s College, Olympia, Washington; Dr. Michael Connolly

Region VIII: “Liturgy: The Assembly in Song,” June 23–25, St. John’s College, Collegeville, Minnesota; Dr. Kim Kasling

Region VII: “The Spiritual Renewal of the Pastoral Musician,” August 5–7, St. Joseph College, Rensselaer, Indiana; Rev. Lawrence Heiman, C.P.P.S.


Region XI: “Music in Catholic Worship,” October 10–12, Jack Tar Hotel, San Francisco, California; Rev. Donald Osuna

1980

Region III*: “Spiritual Growth through Musical Excellence,” April 9–11, Marywood College, Scranton, Pennsylvania;

Region IV: “Full, Conscious, and Active Participation: More Than Singing,” June 7–9, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas; Ms. Arlene Deluca

* The first sets of regional conventions followed the regional divisions established by the National (now the United States) Conference of Catholic Bishops. Beginning in 1982, NPM used its own divisions to name and locate the regional conventions.
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Region I: “Sundays and Seasons: Plan, Celebrate,” June 22–25, Marriott Inn, Providence, Rhode Island; Rev. Ronald Brassard

Region III: “The Clergy-Musician Dynamic: Getting It All Together,” June 30–July 2, Rollins College, Orlando, Florida; Mr. Paul Skevington

Region II: “Reflections on a Vision: Assembly,” July 20–23, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Mr. Richard Gibala

Region V: “The Melody of Things Seen and Unseen,” August 10–13, St. Norbert College, Green Bay, Wisconsin; Mr. Rodney Weed

Region VI: “From Venture to Vision,” August 24–26, UCLA Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, California; Sister Barbara Ann Long, or

1984
Region IV: “The Demands of the Rite,” June 19–21, Adams’ Mark Hotel, Houston, Texas; Mr. Tim Dyksinski

Region I: “The Challenge of Competence,” June 25–28, Marriott Inn, Providence, Rhode Island; Ms. Patricia Romeo

Region II: “A Measure in Common Time,” July 10–12, Bond Court Hotel, Cleveland, Ohio; Brother Terrance Nufer, c.p.p.s., Ms. Sally Riede


Region V: “Plowing Deeper,” July 20–23, Radisson Plaza Hotel, Indianapolis, Indiana; Ms. Joan Stucker, Mr. Larry Hurt

Region VI: “Musicians: Servants of the Liturgy,” August 4–7, Mary College, Bismarck, North Dakota; Mr. Tom Porter

1988
Region I: “Sunday Liturgy Can Be Better,” June 14–17, Worthington Hotel, Fort Worth, Texas; Ms. Sharon Castleberry

Region II: “Links to the Liturgy,” June 20–23, Sheraton at St. John’s, Jacksonville, Florida; Mr. Jim Hughes

Region III: “Our Times, Our Challenges,” June 28–July 1, University of Portland, Portland, Oregon; Mr. Michael Prendergast

Region IV: “Mirrors on the Church,” July 6–9, Westin Hotel, Boston, Massachusetts; Ms. Patricia Romeo

Region V: “Transformed through Excellence,” July 18–21, Hyatt Regency, Buffalo, New York; Mr. David Nease

Region VI: “Come, Be the Song We Sing,” July 25–28, Hotel Pere Marquette, Peoria, Illinois; Rev. Patrick Collins

1990
Region I: “The Ministry of Music in America,” June 6–9, Hyatt Regency, Phoenix, Arizona; Mr. Joseph Berringer


Region III: “Blessed Are Those . . . Who Gather the Children,” August 1–4, Ramada Renaissance, Washington, DC; Mr. Richard Gibala

1992
Region II: “Blessed Are Those . . . Who Gather the Children,” July 8–11, Holiday Inn Central, Omaha, Nebraska; Ms. Veronica Fareri

Region III: “Cantando la Fe del Pueblo/Singing the Faith of the People,” July 22–25, Convention Center, Doubletree Hotel, Albuquerque, New Mexico; Ms. Mary Frances Reza

Region IV: “The Cross and the Sword,” September 27–October 1, Paradise Island Resort, Nassau, Bahamas; Mr. Eric Willmott

1994
Region III: “Five Loaves and Two Fish: Pastoral Music in Rural Dioceses,” June 15–17, University of Mary, Bismarck, North Dakota; Mr. Tom Porter

Region IV: “Taste and See the Goodness of the Lord,” July 6–9, Red Lion, San Jose, California; Ms. Ann Grycz

Region II: “Gifts at the Service of One Another,” July 18–21, Radisson Hotel, Toledo, Ohio; Ms. Jean McLaughlin


1996
Region III: “Doors to the Sacred,” June 25–28, Hilton Hotel, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Ms. Veronica Fareri
1998
Region II: “And They Were All Together in One Place,” June 30–July 3, Amway Grand Plaza, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Ms. Pamela Szczesny, Rev. Paul Colloton, or
Region IV: “Patterns on the Mountain,” July 14–17, Carroll College, Helena, Montana; Sister Mary Jo Quinn, scl.
Region III: “Called by Gift . . . The Musician’s Ministry,” July 29–August 1, Dallas Grand Hotel, Dallas, Texas; Mr. Stephen Williams
Region I: “Were Not Our Hearts Burning within Us?” August 11–14, Hilton Hotel, Holiday Inn, Cherry Hill, New Jersey; Ms. Ann Harrison Evans

2000
Region II: “Pray Always,” June 27–30, Four Points Sheraton, Orlando, Florida; Mr. William Brislin
Region III: “The Body of Christ Sings: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow,” July 11–14, Marriott Downtown, Kansas City, Missouri; Mr. Steven Obarski
Region I: “Rejoice in Hope, Be Patient under Trial,” July 17–20, Hilton Hotel, Sheraton Tara, Parsippany, New Jersey; Ms. Mary Jo Mathias
Region IV: “Risk the Vision/Vision the Risk,” August 1–4, Luxor Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada; Rev. Robert Stoeckig

2002
Region III: “Behold, I Make All Things New” (Rev 21:5), June 25–28, Hyatt Regency Alicante, Anaheim, California; Dr. Patricia McCollam
Region II: “Proclaiming Your Glory AS WE SING Holy,Holy, Holy!” July 9–12, Doubletree Hotel, Omaha, Nebraska; Rev. Ronald Noecker
Region I: “Voices of Hope,” July 30–August 2, Riverside Convention Center, Rochester, New York; Ms. Ginny Miller

2004
Central: “Spirit, Shape Our Song!” June 28–July 1, Hyatt Regency O’Hare Hotel, Chicago, Illinois; Mr. Alan J. Hommerding
Eastern: “Sing the Gospel to Life,” July 6–9, Loews Hotel City Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Rev. Daniel E. Mackle, Ms. Ginny Chiodo, and Ms. Eileen Groody
Western: “I Will Praise You, Lord, in the Assembly of Your People” (Ps 22:22), August 3–6, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Phoenix, Arizona; Sister Anthony Poerio, Mr. Steve Raml, and Mr. Rick Hardy

2006
Eastern: “Building Bridges,” June 27–30, Stamford Marriott, Holiday Inn Select, Stamford, Connecticut; Ms. Barbara Donalds
Central: “Sing a New World,” July 18–21, Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Ms. Pam Szczesny, Rev. Chris Rouech
Western: “What You Have Received, Give as Gift” ( Mt 10:8), August 1–4, Radisson Hotel Sacramento, Sacramento, California; Mr. Jackson Schoos, Mr. Roy Spicer

2008
Central: “Do Not Let Your Hearts Be Troubled or Afraid” (Jn 14:27b), July 8–11, Renaissance Cleveland Hotel, Cleveland, Ohio; Ms. Jean McLaughlin, Ms. Ruth Novak
Western: “One Body, One Spirit in Christ” (EP III), August 5–8, Wilshire Grand Hotel, Los Angeles, California; Ms. Sandra Dooley, Ms. Donna Morris-Barnes
2008 Regional Conventions:
In the Midst of Change
A few weeks ago, on the final Sunday after Easter, we were challenged in the liturgy by the author of 1 Peter 3:15: “Be always ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you.” And this is what we will try to do today. Why do we hope? Upon whom do we rely? To what should this hope impel us?

Germs of Contradiction

The very title of this presentation contains within itself the germs of contradiction. We claim Christ as our sure foundation in the face of change, but we no longer have the historical Jesus walking in our churches. We do have present, however, the Christ, the Anointed One, who left an unfinished task and charged both his disciples and us, their descendants, to get on with it.

That great truth of Christ’s abiding presence is rooted in the first chapter of Matthew’s Gospel, where an announcing angel tells Joseph that he is to name the child of his espoused wife “Jesus.” The author comments that this child is the very one whom the prophet Isaiah spoke of as “Emmanuel.” We usually see “Emmanuel” as a Christmas name, but in reality it is a daily name. It is the Hebrew word translated as “God with us.”

Now, page rapidly to the last lines of that same Gospel. What do we read? “Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt 28:20). And there we have it: a Jesus revealed to us as our Emmanuel both before his birth and as he leaves this earth in his risen body.

If that is the Christ promise, how does it help us live with change? Both psychologists and sociologists warn us that nothing is quite as upsetting as change. Take away the familiar, stir in the unknown, and the average human response is dis-ease. Most of us have stood at the ocean’s edge, felt the tug of the waves at our ankles, and then realized, as the water withdrew, that we were no longer standing on a firm beach. The sand beneath our feet had gone with the tide. That is the feeling so many of us have today, for we have seen more change in our lifetime than occurred in the previous century.

Still, change is nothing on which we have a monopoly. Didn’t Jesus say, in his Sermon on the Mount: “It was said to you of old . . . but I say to you . . .”? The fact of change is not new, but each change arrives as something new in our lives to be greeted by the power of the Spirit.

Reclaiming a Guide

Jesus left his followers no detailed handbook or instructions on a CD on how to manage the challenges they would face. He relied on their cooperating with the impulses of the Spirit. The great Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul (celebrated on June 29) is a reminder to reclaim as a guide through changing times the story of the early Church community found in the Acts of the Apostles. Three examples from this book might help us find ways to deal with our changing times.

Already, by chapter six of Acts, there is a problem in the Christian community. It concerns the fact that certain widows—those in the Hebrew-speaking part of the community—are being given preference in the daily distribution of bread over Greek-speaking widows. The bilingual group of believers, who speak both Hebrew and Greek, solves this by naming a new group—“deacons,” all with Greek names—to see to the material needs of the community, thus freeing the apostles for the work of spreading the Word. The Spirit pushed them to make a structural change that would facilitate the mission.

The next issue that the community faces is far more complex. In chapter ten, Peter is awakened from a pre-lunch nap with the remnants of a dream fogging his brain. He has dreamed of a sheet being lowered from the sky, filled with animals of every kind, and a voice urging him to kill and eat them, even though the animals are not kosher. In his dream, Peter...
protests that he eats nothing unclean, but the voice says: “What God has made clean you must not call profane.” At this moment, a knock sounds on the door of the house where Peter is staying in Joffa. (If we had a musical score for this story, that knock should have been preceded by an ominous drum roll.)

Change is coming to Peter in an undreamed-of-way: The delegates at the door are from Cornelius, a Roman centurion living some forty miles up the road, in Caesarea Maritima. He sent these messengers to ask Peter to come to his home and to admit him into the Christian group. This first non-Jew asking to become a Christian is a Roman enemy—and an enemy army officer as well. (God’s sense of humor is apparent here!) To his everlasting credit, and to our benefit, Peter goes to Cornelius’s house, where he finds an entire household waiting for baptism. Peter obliges, and the Spirit descends on the group.

But there are repercussions to this action, and Peter is called on the carpet by James and the other leaders of the Jerusalem Church. His answer to their questions is classic: “If God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I should hinder God?” (Acts 12:17). That is a powerful thought: As new people and new cultures come to our doors, what is our response? Is it an affirmation of the status quo—“We’ve always done it this way”—or is it an affirmation of trust in the Spirit’s guidance into the future—“Who are we that we should hinder God”? History can either be a refuge (this is the only way we can act), or it can challenge us to be Christ in totally new situations.

We would not be here today if Peter’s circumstantial wisdom had not been transmitted to Paul, who learned the same lesson but in different circumstances. (I do hope that, in this Year of Paul, we all have the opportunity to know him a bit better.) Paul is our third example from the Book of Acts. He walked the length and breadth of his province of Asia Minor, preaching Jesus Christ crucified and risen. He then dared to cross into Europe and take that message to the heart of the great Greek cities of the Roman Empire.

I was blessed, a few weeks ago, to stand on Mars Hill in Athens where Paul had stood, in the shadow of the Acropolis. Paul is the “forever” apostle, with no fear of the new, as he looks the members of the Areopagus in the eye and announces that the “unknown god” honored in de-

No Good Old Days

There are really no good old days to bask in; there is only our present reality in which the immigrant urban churches of yesterday rattle in the winds of new arrivals, where parts of our cities are no longer Christian ghettos, where suburbs burst with the overflow of growing congregations, where a stretched clergy tries to muster the energy to meet the new, and where music ministers are not certain which choir members sing best in which language.

I wish that I could direct you to a magical yellow brick road that leads to certainty. But, no, I really don’t wish that, because the curtain at the end of that road hid a wizard of no power. The transformation of heart and mind and spirit in that story of Dorothy and her companions took place on the road to Oz. We all need a Toto to remind us that we belong to a pilgrim Church!

Our “sure foundation” is to be part of the living, moving Church that Christ set in motion. There is the paradox of our life in Christ. So what do we do—presiders, liturgists, musicians, cantors, choir members? Is there any way not to lose our minds or even our faith in the swirling mists that threaten to envelop us? I believe there is, and I think it involves three steps.

And now we have work to do.

First, accept the truism that to live is to change. Jesus Christ calls us to work in a world that is new each day.

Second, admit that change upends each of us in some way. We must be so well grounded in this Jesus—the Christ, our Emmanuel—that no change is the final threat. Each change is an opportunity for growth and stimulus to the imagination. Musing on creativity, Jeannine Ouellette quotes Alison Gopnik, an international leader in the field of children’s learning and author of The Scientist in the Crib (Harper Paperbacks, 2000): “The ability to imagine alternative possibilities and make them real—literally to change the world—is a deeply important part of our evolutionary inheritance.”

However, without a prayer life, without the constant remembrance that all liturgy is prayer and that the role of pastoral musicians, presiders, and liturgists is to help us
all pray better—without that, you might as well throw in the towel now. I hope that you don’t because we have always been a singing Church. And doesn’t the Bible promise us a musical heaven? Recommit your gifts to the singing community of Jesus our Christ: “With gratitude in your hearts, sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God” (Colossians 3:16).

Third, say to yourself at regular intervals: We are the Church. We—not I but we—God’s people assembled in all our variety, old and young, crusty and jovial, off-key and in tune—we are the Church sent by Jesus to carry his message to all nations.

To see Christ as less concerned with the twenty-first century Church than with the Church of the first century is to lack faith. I am so heartened by our beginnings in Acts, by the story of that small group in a powerful Roman world, of that group that had failed, that had fled in the moment of crisis on Holy Thursday and on Good Friday but who were able to come back together under the power of the Spirit. They made some incredible decisions because they were not afraid of the new, because they held each other accountable, and because they dared to walk into the unknown. What a debt we owe them!

And now we have work to do. The ends of the earth still beckon. The middle of the earth, where most of us live and work, has lost its Christ center and needs us. Jesus promised that his Spirit would be with us to guide us into all truth. Do we believe this? I pray we do. Now, let us get on with the work of the Kingdom!

Notes

1. The Areopagus or “Hill of Ares” in Athens was the site of a council that served as an important legal institution under the Athenian democracy. This body, called the “Council of the Areopagus,” or simply “the Areopagus,” existed long before the democracy, and its powers and composition changed many times over the centuries. Originally, it was the central governing body of Athens, but under the democracy, it was primarily a court with jurisdiction over cases of homicide and certain other serious crimes. After an Athenian had served as one of the nine archons, his conduct in office was investigated, and if he passed that investigation he became a member of the Areopagus. Tenure was for life.

With Our Eyes Fixed on Jesus

By Joseph Celano

Well, I can’t think of better texts than these for Mass at an NPM convention, can you? In the first reading (Amos 5:14–15, 21–21), the prophet speaks for God: “Away with your noisy songs! I will not listen to the melodies of your harps.” And the Gospel (Matthew 8:28–34) tells the story of Jesus and the possessed men in the territory of the Gadarenes, and how Jesus sent a herd of unclean spirits into a herd of pigs, who then charged down a hill to drown in the Lake of Galilee.

I must confess that I laughed when I first saw these readings, but the amusement quickly wore off and something like low-grade panic set in. What can “noisy songs” and “unclean spirits” possibly have to do with us today? Perhaps much.

For instance, the problem which Amos confronted in our first reading was this: From the prophet’s perspective Israel’s liturgy had become empty of its inner substance; it had become a way of worshipping with little connection to a way of living. This is what made the songs of Israel “noise” before God. But the prophet’s warning was not simply for his generation. Worshippers of every generation will always be at risk of falling into the same trap: disconnecting the cult of worship from its code of living.

And the question of the unclean spirits, on their way to a new (if brief) life in the herd of pigs, is one for which we must find an answer: “What have you to do with us, Son of God?”

In his work A New Song for the Lord: Faith in Christ and Liturgy Today (Crossroad Publishing Company, 1996), Pope Benedict XVI reflects on certain modern theological shifts which have shaped the celebration of the liturgy. His basic premise is this: Christology determines the liturgy. Or, as the Holy Father himself says: The “search for a criterion of liturgical renewal culminates in one question: ‘Who do you say the Son of Man is?’” How we answer that question— which is the central question of human history—determines what we believe and how we celebrate that belief.

If we answer that Christ is but one way among many ways to God; if we re-invent him and his teaching according to the prevailing winds of our times, then the point of the liturgy will primarily be about what Pope Benedict calls the “‘we’ of the ones celebrating”—a vehicle for the community to express itself, not Christ.

But we answer the question differently. We say that Christ is absolutely unique in history, that he is, in fact, God made human. He is not just a way but the way, God’s definitive self-revelation to humanity and the means by which God draws all people into communion with himself. Then the point of the liturgy truly becomes “Eucharist,” the great thanksgiving of a people who know that they are the recipients of an overwhelming grace. “What return can [we] make to the Lord,” the psalmist asks (Psalm 116), for such an outstanding gift and undeserved gift? We can only offer back to God what God has first offered for us: his beloved Son, who, most especially in the Eucharist, joins our lives to his.

We are living, as the ancient Chinese curse says, in “interesting times.” From my view as a parish priest, it seems that the inherent tension between the immanence and transcendence of God is being played out once again in the current liturgical renewal. The core of the Church’s faith—the core of our preaching and our worship—is this: Jesus brings God to humanity and humanity to God. We believe in the immanence of God, that he is ever close to us, one-with-us and one-for-us in the mystery of the Word made flesh. It is this sense of “God with us” that the Council fathers restored to the liturgy, making it accessible to the baptized. Yet we also believe in the transcendence of God, that he is wholly “other than” us and dwells beyond us in “unapproachable light” (Eucharistic Prayer IV). Many believe—and perhaps rightly so—that the sense of God’s sovereignty and transcendent majesty has been lost in the liturgy along the way.

We need to remember that this tension between the immanence and transcendence of God is not an either-or proposition; it is both-and. God is both God-ever-close-to-us and God-ever-beyond-us. To celebrate the mysteries of faith is to hold this tension in balance.

But, changing times being what they are, one of these elements tends to outweigh—or is even exchanged for—the other. We have lived through the swing to one extreme of the pendulum that is an inherent part of this tension, and we will live through its swinging again. Like many of you, I began my religious formation with the Baltimore Catechism and sang “Holy, Holy, Holy” at First Friday Mass. I ended my early formation with creative banner making and sang “My Sweet Lord” by George Harrison at Sunday Mass. I can still picture the religious

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sisters from my childhood standing at the church door handing out Kleenex to the girls who forgot their chapel veils, even as I read in current parish bulletins pastoral pleas for people to dress appropriately when they come to church. These days, I want to thank the person who remembers to genuflect before sitting down in the pew! It seems to me that the sense of God-with-us must not lead us to make the liturgy something casual; the sense of God-beyond-us must not lead us to make it something inaccessible.

If, then, the essential question we must consider during these “interesting times” is “Who do you say that I am?” the essential answer, shouted by the exiled spirits in the territory of the Gadarenes, is “You are the Son of God.” Those unclean spirits cried it to their everlasting doom, but we shout it aloud to our everlasting salvation and life.

We draw on St. Thomas Aquinas to put our times in a somewhat larger context. Like the hymnist William Harry Turton, Thomas assures us that the day will come “at length when sacraments shall cease” (“O Thou, Who at Thy First Eucharist Didst Pray,” 1881). The changing liturgy of the Church on earth will yield to the unchanging liturgy of heaven. On that day, what we find here behind the veil of sacramental signs, for which “faith is present to supply for the defect of our senses” (Aquinas, “Pange Lingua,” thirteenth century), we shall see that reality unveiled, face to face.

But until that day dawns, it is for us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and to keep our hearts fixed on the “code” of our worship—faith, hope, and love. As for the rest, faith tells me to entrust the unfolding of these “interesting times” of liturgical renewal to Christ, God-ever-close-to-us and God-ever-beyond-our-reach.
Once upon a time, in the year of our Lord 708, there was a little Benedictine monastery nestled high in Italian mountains: The Abbey of St. Discordia. St. Discordia was a small community of twenty-five monks known for its beautiful liturgy, its simple but elegant ceremonial, and its well-rendered Latin chant. The laity from the surrounding community joined readily in the liturgy, singing and praying with the monks, since at this time in the eighth century the Latin language was very similar to the vulgar Italian of the common people. The monastery had reformed and simplified its liturgy in recent decades to enable greater lay participation. Not only the villagers but also Christians from neighboring hamlets walked several miles to pray with the monks.

All was at peace in the abbey. That is, until Abbot Agitatus announced a liturgical reform.

There had been a synod of abbots in the years 662–665. Abbot Agitatus recalled, a synod calling for monasteries to open up their liturgy to the common people. The zeal of the first monks and the desert fathers had long since waned. Abbot Agitatus said that it was time to restore a more authentic liturgy (in Latin, liturgiam authenticam). Therefore, starting on the first Sunday of Advent, Abbot Agitatus announced, the recent custom of bowing at each Gloria Patri (“Glory to the Father”) was to be abrogated. In place of bowing, after each psalm of the divine office, the ancient custom of prostrating on the ground was to be restored. Although at first the lay people might find such prostration archaic, exotic, or difficult, their curiosity was to be used as an opportunity for catechesis on the meaning of the ancient tradition. Indeed, adaptation to local culture, though legitimate, should be done only with the greatest caution and with due reverence for holy tradition, the abbot proclaimed.

Reactions among the brothers were negative, to say the least. Brother Polycarp was enraged. He had been a leader in devising the current liturgy of the divine office. He had supervised the scriptorium when the current liturgical books were produced. Brother Polycarp was loud and abrasive in his complaining (or, shall we say, his carping). Everything was better in the liturgy twenty years ago, he maintained, in that golden age of creativity of the ‘70s and ‘80s (that is, the 670s and the 680s), before all the recent restoration and revision. In more recent decades, Polycarp fumed, the abbot had been chipping away, piece by piece, at the reformed liturgy that Polycarp had helped implement.

Father Victor, on the other hand, was delighted. He gloated and smirked. Finally his day of victory had come! He had never been very happy with all the progressive reforms, and in fact he had felt hurt and alienated by all the unnecessary changes made since the ‘60s of the previous century. Now, finally, the pendulum was swinging back in his direction. His side was winning, and it was payback time. Father Victor now dreamed of bringing back the severe fasts, the all-night vigils, and the flagellations of the good old days.

Brother Maximaculpatua was even
more upset than Brother Polycarp. He did not just carp and complain; he impugned the worst possible motives to the abbot. This was not about liturgy, he asserted: This was about control. The abbot was not concerned about authentic prayer; he wanted to exclude people and exert domineering power. There was a subtext to all the prostrating—a message of dualistic subjugation of the flesh and disrespect for the body. The abbot was not just changing posture; he was overturning a whole theology and spirituality.

Another monk sided with Brothers Polycarp and Maximaculpatua but went even further. This was the community member from German-speaking lands, Brother Angsthwartgang. Brother Angsthwartgang was ready to fight and resist. He said to himself: “We cannot very well prostrate until we redo the choir stalls to make more room, and I supervise the wood-working shop. This job will take a loooooong time, maybe ten years. The abbot is eighty-one, and he cannot live that much longer. The previous abbot ruled for twenty-seven long years, and most of us expect the current abbot, already old on the day of his election, to have a shorter reign. We will just wait it out until another abbot comes. Every other abbey in the region is re-introducing the prostrations, but not us! We, the Abbey of St. Discordia, will be the last holdout, the lone prophetic community.”

The abbot had a supporter of sorts in the person of the newest member, Brother Novice Amplebonus. His parents had offered Amplebonus as an oblation to the monastery only a year earlier, when he was fourteen. Brother Novice Amplebonus was pious—too pious, in fact, and quite naïve. He had a giddy optimism about everything which really grated on others, especially on the jaded and cynical older monks. That some brothers dared to disagree with the abbot! That the monks were divided about sacred liturgy! This positively shocked and scandalized him. (The novice master had thought it best not to tell Brother Novice Amplebonus yet

“It was great to see the youth so wonderfully singing and playing to God’s glory.”

A Convention Participant

Toto, We’re Not In Europe

As the reader will well appreciate, we are not in Europe in the year 708. We are in the United States in the year 2008. The topic of this article is not monasteries and prostrations in eighth century Italy. By now the reader will have guessed that the opening parable is about the changes in our liturgy since Vatican II and especially about the upcoming changes in the missal translation. Perhaps the parable of the Abbey of St. Discordia can help us get some distance from and perspective on our own situation and helps us to lighten up and smile at ourselves as we see our own quirks and foibles in the personalities of the monks.

*Liturgiam authenticam* is the 2001 Roman document calling for more authentic liturgy with more literal English translations, in order to bring the full riches of the Latin liturgy to the laity. Sometime in perhaps the next three to five years, a new *Roman Missal* will appear with new words and phrases: “And with your spirit. . . . And on earth peace to people of good will. . . . Through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault.”

And our reactions to this change? Surely they are as mixed as the reactions of the monks in the parable. The monks from our fictitious little monastery, St. Discordia, stand for all of us. Their emotions and their reactions to liturgical change are the emotions and reactions of all of us. I believe that we need to confront our strong feelings, deal with them, and—where necessary—seek healing and transformation. So then, let us get in touch with our inner Polycarp and our inner Angstthwartgang.

Brother Polycarp is that part of us which is nostalgic for earlier times, maybe back in the 1980s, when progressive liturgical reformers were still in the ascendency. This was before *Liturgiam authenticam*, before the new *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, before *Redemptionis Sacramentum*. Back in this Golden Age, not so very long ago, progressives had developed a whole language to express their theology—not “celebrant,” but “presider,” not “priest” but “presbyter,” not “missal” but “sacramentary,” not “parish,” but “community,” and so forth.

The nostalgia of a Polycarp is not always just a gentle longing; sometimes it can become frustration and even resentment. Nothing is turning out as planned. Polycarp feels betrayed. Some progressives want to blame Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI, and then they are somewhat disoriented when they find some young people going a different direction from what they expect, wanting to kneel during the Eucharistic Prayer or have more Eucharistic adoration. The Polycarp in us feels betrayed and is angry at the present situation. Sometimes one hears that a Brother Polycarp type is glad to be near retirement age so that he or she can just check out and give up.

Father Victor is that element which supports the recent Roman direction and is all too happy to take revenge on the liberals for what they have done since Vatican II. The Victors among us or within our parishes and communities have been sad for some time. They have felt excluded and dismissed since Vatican II. They are quite satisfied that Church officials are finally taking action to restore Latin and Gregorian chant and the old liturgy. Long-term bottled up anger of the past four decades has led to a desire to get even. The Victors among us are, at the same time, sad, angry, vengeful, and aggressive.

Brother Maximaculpatua is that part of us which impugns the worst possible motives to the Holy See and the bishops. Emotional fervor impairs rational thought and leads to unbalanced judgment. For example, it is claimed that Church officials do not want to implement Vatican II in a different way; they simply want to undo Vatican II. Or again, it is claimed that the new translation is not meant to convey greater riches to the laity; it is meant to exclude the laity and make the liturgy more clergy-dominated and incomprehensible. The motto here is: “Assume the worst.”

Brother Angstthwartgang is that part of us which wants to fight. Since we like the 1980s better, we will just stay there. We simply will not implement the new missal. We will use our terminology, not theirs. Our parish will never learn the new texts, even if we are the last holdout and it divides us from the rest of the Church.

Brother Novice Amplebonus is that part of us which is naïvely optimistic and fearful of controversy. As if prayer and good intentions could take away our problems. As if there has ever been a time in the Church without controversy and scandal and difference of opinion.

The whole mix of personalities is in our Church, in our parishes, and in our communities. Probably within each of us is some mix of Polycarp, Victor, Maximaculpatua, Angstthwartgang, and Amplebonus.

Back to the Parable

Before thinking about how to deal with this interesting mix of personalities, let us go back to the parable and see what happened at the Abbey of St. Discordia.

Just as Abbot Agitatus was pondering all the unrest in his little flock, the call came to hasten to the nearby convent and anoint Sister Placid, the community’s oldest nun. Sister Placid, true to her name, was a woman of peace. Over the years the abbot had often visited Placid. Although he was her spiritual director, it was in fact she who offered wise counsel to him. The abbot had always felt free to unload the burdens of his office to her, and even before he finished speaking, she seemed to understand. How often she had said: “It is just the same in our community, Father Abbot. We have all the same personalities and same personal dynamics—just different names and different issues.”

Fortified by holy anointing, Sister Placid came to life. Her eyes gleamed, and she seemed more delighted than ever by the abbot’s presence. Abbot Agitatus decided to share with her his difficulties at the abbey. But she already knew all about it. Had somebody told her? Had she had another one of her mystical visions?

“All is as it should be in the abbey, Father Abbot,” she said. “All is as it should be. The spirit is powerfully at work among the brothers. Let them pray, and pray some
more, and they will attain peace.”

“Ah, peace! What, then, shall I do, good Sister?” he asked. “Should I call off my reform so there can be peace?”

“No, Father Abbot. All is as it should be. This is a moment of great growth for your community. Sometimes there needs to be anger, and revenge, and naïve optimism, and resistance, and all the rest. All this is part of life in community on the difficult path to peace.”

“So my plan is God’s will, then, that we prostrate ourselves at the Gloria Patri?”

“No,” said Sister Placid. “Rather, it is God’s will that the liturgy keep changing and growing. A future abbot will no doubt eliminate the prostrations and reinstitute bowing.”

“Then should I not restrain myself from adding the prostrations at this point?”

“No, dear abbot. How on earth will a future abbot be able to eliminate the prostrations if you do not do your part and add them in? God does not care about our posture. God only cares about our life in community. Our liturgy moves forward and backward and sideways, just as each of us does individually in our journey to God.”

“Sister Placid, should I command Brother Polycarp, Brother Maximaculpatua, and Brother Angsthwartgang, under holy obedience, to put aside their resistance and support my reform?”

“No, Father Abbot. Just tell them to pray. Let them use the psalms of the office to express their anger, cynicism, resentment, and rebellion. God almost delights in our human problems, but even more God longs to bless and heal us. To be angry, cynical, rebellious—all this is part of the holy journey to God. The problem is that the good brothers are not even aware of the negative emotions in their heart. They do not know themselves as God knows them. Tell them to pray—the kind of silent prayer before God which brings self-awareness. With a greater awareness of their own hearts, God will show them what to do and how best to live in community.”

“And Father Victor?” asked the abbot. “He is on my side, but honestly, with all his gloating and bragging, he is unbearable. Should I impose silence upon him?”

“No, Father Abbot. Tell him to pray. When he is open to God’s love, he will become able to receive the loving acceptance of others. This will help him to grow and change. Counsel him to become aware of what is in his own heart, and God will show him what to say and do.”
“And Brother Novice Amplebonus?
He is so tender and fragile. How can I best protect and guide him?”

“Oh now,” said the old sister, “I do not think he is as fragile as all that. He just needs to grow—and that sometimes is painful. You can lead him right through Good Friday so that he can attain his Easter Sunday. I think I would tell him everything about your community—the whole history, the whole truth, the sooner the better. Novices are like lay people: They do not need protecting nearly as much as we think. Give him what he needs to be ready for the conflict in store for him the rest of his life in your monastery. It is only through the path of conflict that we find peace.”

Sister Placid Today

Now back to 2008. What would Sister Placid say to us today?

I am sure she would say that we should pray: the kind of prayer where we are still before God, listening closely to our own heart so we can be more aware of what is in our heart. How do we really feel about Liturgiam authenticam, the upcoming new missal, the readmission of the pre-Vatican II Mass?

Before God, we should strive to know what our motives really are, what the dangerous tendencies of our particular personality are. We should accept ourselves more and more, just as God accepts us. To be angry, resentful, boastful, rebellious, naïve, less than perfectly mature: That is who we are, and that is just where God loves us. When we really and truly accept ourselves in all our weakness, we are much more able to handle our weakness and deal with difficult situations. This is how we live together in the community of the Church.

Let us now imagine what Sister Placid would offer as spiritual wisdom for us and for our various temperaments.

When we play the role of Polycarp, we are angry about the present moment and nostalgic for the past. I would guess that most Polycarps today are not so much longing liturgically for the creative and crazy 1960s as they are long for the 1980s, when the liturgy and its music had begun to mature and before Church officials began all their tinkering. Fellow pastoral musicians, beware of nostalgia! Beware of living in the past! God calls us only to live in the present moment and no other moment. Beware of feeling betrayed, of pitying yourself, of becoming resentful. Difficulties in the Church are really opportunities. God gives us challenges so as to call us to respond in a new way. I confess that I was and I remain deeply skeptical about the readmission of the pre-Vatican II Mass. One comment that I found helpful is by Peter Jeffrey. He wrote in the August 2007 issue of Commonweal magazine: “Whatever one thinks of Summum pontificum [the papal document readmitting the old rite], something like it had to happen.” His point is that the readmission of the old liturgy was bound to come at some point in time. That point has turned out to be now. This sense of inevitability, of a larger plan which escapes me, I find consoling. Right now, in 2008, we are where we need to be as a Church. Even the mistakes and problems are all necessary, so that we can learn the necessary lessons and grow as individuals and communities.

I suppose that the ultraconservative Victor-type is not so well represented in the membership of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians. (Perhaps this is to our impoverishment.) But this type does seem to be increasingly present in the wider Church. Much liturgical commentary in publications and on the blogs is dominated by conservatives. They highlight every new parish adopting the old Mass and every priest celebrating the new Mass facing the traditional direction. There is energy on the right, but also an aggression which I find troubling. Factions in the Church are in opposition, with various sides fighting to win a battle.

What can we do to break down the opposition and get out of the battle mentality? I find it helpful, when I am stuck in an oppositional power struggle with a colleague or a fellow monk, to try to see the common humanity which unites us. Perhaps we could think less about all the opinions and positions and viewpoints in the Church and focus on the human emotions. What might be motivating traditionalists?

Can we be empathetic for their sadness, their sense of exclusion, their disappointment? Now those are feelings we all have at times. Perhaps we, on whatever side we find ourselves, must take the first step in showing sensitivity to others with empathy and respect for each person’s story. Perhaps this is the way to break down the factionalism. Perhaps we all can learn from each other, change our own positions, and, by sharing in a newly opened-up conversation, together find a better way.

The Maximaculpatua-type is the cynic who assumes the worst about others. But impugning the worst possible motives to others is hardly a way to have a constructive conversation. One of the principles of the Catholic Common Ground project is to put the best possible interpretation on differing positions. Principle five of that project’s guidelines says that we should “address their strongest points rather than seizing upon the most vulnerable aspects in order to discredit them. We should detect the valid insights and le-
盈利 worries that may underlie even questionable arguments.”

Let us try to see that others are not undoing Vatican II; rather, they are interpreting it in a very different way from us (if, in fact, that is the case). Let us assume the best about people who want a different style of liturgical music—for example, that the people using drums and electric guitar really do want to praise the living God or that the people using Latin chant really do want a deep experience of God’s holiness.

The Angstthwartgang-type is the fighter and resister. Sometimes, thankfully not too often, one hears that some people are already planning not to use the new missal when it comes out. I shudder at the thought of a Church divided in its liturgical language, with different parishes using different texts for the common responses. In a time of increased mobility, in our global village, this would be disastrously divisive. One critic of the new translation is Bishop Trautman. But as he has said, we make our opinions known as best we can until the Church officials decide. And then we accept their decision and implement it. Bishop Trautman has said publicly that, whatever form the final translation takes, he will ask and expect all his priests and parishes to use it. I agree with his policy. The Eucharistic sacrifice must not become a means of protest and division but rather a means to unity and peace.

The Amplebonus-type has an avoidant personality and naively thinks there should be no conflict in the Church. This can take the form of nostalgia, as if there were no conflict in earlier times. But of course there has been conflict in the Church since the beginning, and there always will be conflict. Certainly some people in the younger generation will undo and redo what we have passed on; that is pretty much what young people of every generation have always done. Of course the liturgy will keep changing; it always has. Even in the 400 years from Trent to Vatican II, when the ritual books were quite fixed and unchanging, there was constant change and development in music, architecture, painting, statuary, and vestments. For the past 450 years, and surely long before, every generation has changed and even rejected some of what it inherited in the liturgy.

I sometimes have the impression that older progressive liturgists, whom I respect greatly, are in effect saying something like this: “After my generation
undid everything of what we inherited, and changed everything in the pre-Vatican II liturgy, how dare young people now come along with the nerve to accept ninety-five percent of our work and adjust five percent of it?" The first and second generations of liturgical leaders after Vatican II deserve great affirmation for their excellent work, but sometimes there is a defensiveness about their accomplishments which is not always open-minded.

The Goal

The goal is not to eliminate change and conflict but to deal with change and conflict as constructively as possible. When we must confront another person, when we must speak out, when we must have a difficult conversation, we need to ask God for strength to do it with courage and inner peace, with a readiness to engage another person for the sake of mutual growth. It is easier to avoid conflict, but this is to stifle the Spirit and miss a spiritual opportunity which God has presented to us.

What do we need most to face the liturgical changes ahead? Of course we need theological study, liturgical scholarship, knowledge of the documents, good music, good musicianship, and financial resources. However, the point of my parable is that, above all, the issue before us is spiritual.

We need a lively awareness of God and God’s presence. We need good self-awareness. We need a strong spiritual connection to all the members of the Body of Christ. We need to be open to spiritual growth, challenge, and change. We need a pure heart. And I can hear Sister Placid saying to all of us: “We must pray.” Indeed, we must pray! May God answer our prayers, and may God bless us in all the liturgical changes we face.

Note

1. The drawings of members of the “St. Discordia Abbey” community are taken from the following books by Hubert Van Zeller, OSB: Cracks in the Cloister (1954), Further Cracks in the Fabulous Cloister (1957), Last Cracks in Legendary Cloisters (1960), and Posthumous Cracks in the Cloisters (1962). All are used with permission of Sheed & Ward, an imprint of Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., Lanham, Maryland. All rights reserved.
Cleveland

Scenes from a Convention

“This being my first convention, I found this to be very informative, educational, spiritual, and calming. There is enjoyment in meeting many pleasant people.”

A Convention Participant

Setting up the cross carved and provided by Norbert and Virginia Koehn

The gospel event “In Spirit and Truth,” with Thomas Jefferson, Jolanda Robertson, Cliff Petty, and the Keith Hampton Singers, took place at St. Ignatius of Antioch Church.
“The Cleveland people who put on this event did a wonderful job. Well organized; the program book was easy and convenient. I feel I got more out of this event than I had anticipated.”

A Convention Participant
Naming the Changes We Face

By Mary E. Bendyna, rsm

The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) is a social science research center that conducts studies and gathers statistics for and about the Catholic Church primarily, though not exclusively, in the United States. We work with parishes, dioceses, ministry associations, and Catholic organizations of all types at the local, regional, and national levels, including the National Catholic Educational Association, Catholic Charities USA, and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. In our more-than-forty-year history, we have conducted a wide range of studies about Catholics and the Catholic Church and quite a few specifically about ministry in the Church. I hope we will soon be conducting a study about music ministry.

It is important to note that the work we do at CARA we do as social scientists—as sociologists, demographers, and political scientists—not as theologians. Although our work is informed by Church teaching and we all have some background in theology and some experience in pastoral ministry, we use the tools of social science, primarily demographic and survey research. We do this to try to understand what is going on in the Church and to assist the Church and its pastoral ministers in identifying needs and assessing pastoral responses.

In most of our studies, especially those we have conducted in recent years, we have paid particular attention to emerging trends in the Church and especially to generational differences among Catholics. I will be sharing some of that with you today. But primarily, in this article, I will share some of the statistics and trends in the ecclesial and socio-cultural environments in which we find ourselves as a Church, as those who minister in the Church, and, for you in particular, as pastoral musicians and music ministers.

Daunting Statistics, Troubling Changes

Some of the statistics I will be sharing may seem rather daunting, and the changes I will report may be troubling and may even be a cause for fear. But in the midst of this we hear the words of Jesus, as the convention theme reminds us: “Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.” These words should indeed give us confidence to let go of the familiar and to embrace the challenges and the opportunities that are set before us.

There are many things I could share with you from our research, but I would like to highlight just a few that I think are especially important for those who are in parish ministry and who serve the Church as pastoral musicians.

As I was preparing for this presentation and reflecting on what I might share with you about some of the statistical realities and the trends in our Church today, I was reminded of several passages from Scripture in addition to the one around which this convention is built. One is from Jeremiah (29:11): “I know the plans I have in mind for you . . . plans for peace, not disaster, reserving a future full of hope for you . . .” Another comes from Deuteronomy (30:15–20): “See, today I set before you life and prosperity, death and disaster. If you obey the commandments of YHWH your God . . . , if you love YHWH your God and follow God’s ways, . . . YHWH your God will bless you in the land which you are entering to make your own. But if your heart strays, if you refuse to listen . . . I tell you today, you will certainly perish . . . I set before you life or death, blessing or curse. Choose life, then, so that you and your descendants may live, in the love of YHWH your God . . . .” And then there is this from the Gospel according to John (10:10): “I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full.”

The trends in the Catholic Church in the United States today show signs of life and death, of growth and diminishment, of weakness and strength, of threat and opportunity, of impending disaster and a future full of hope.

The signs of decline and diminishment in our Church in recent years are many:

- the decline in the number of priests and religious;
- the clustering, merging, and closing of parishes;
- the closing of Catholic schools and other Catholic institutions;
- bankruptcy in some dioceses and downsizing of offices and staffs in many others;
- struggling Catholic organizations at national and regional levels, including the National Catholic Educational Association, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and other Catholic organizations.
the local, regional, and national levels;
• and even the downsizing of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

We have also witnessed a gradual decline in certain beliefs and practices among Catholics, including a decline in the percentage of people who go to Mass regularly and a decline in participation in most of the sacraments.

We also experience divisions within our Church that sometimes seem even greater than our differences with those outside the Church. And we continue to experience the fallout from the sexual abuse scandal.

In the face of these realities, there are some who are angry at the Church, others who are alienated, and many who are saddened or discouraged. Some have become apathetic about the Church and are simply drifting away. Some never had a sense of identity with or a feeling of really belonging in the Church. We are, at least in some ways, what Peter Steinfels has called “a people adrift.”

Signs of Hope, Opportunities

All of these things have affected us—our Church, our parishes, our organizations and institutions, and our ministries. Yet in the midst of all this, there are also many signs of hope and many opportunities for those who minister in the Church to be “healers, life-givers, and bearers of hope” in our Church and to our world.

I would like to highlight several things about the Catholic population in the United States. First, contrary to the impression many people have, the Catholic population in the United States is still growing, albeit at a slower rate than was the case in the twentieth century. Much of this growth is a consequence of immigration, and some is simply a result of natural increase. In addition, despite all our troubles, every year tens of thousands of people in the United States choose to become Catholic, and many more who have left or drifted away from the Church return to the practice of their faith.

There are currently more than 65 million Catholics in the United States, in a total population of about 300 million, so Catholics constitute about 22 or 23 percent of the population. Over the course of the twentieth century, the Catholic population grew from not quite 11 million in 1900, to a little less than 29 million in 1950, to 59 million in 2000. That amounts to a 165 percent increase during the first half of the century and more than another 100 percent increase (107 percent) during the second half. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the rate of growth of the Catholic population seems to be leveling off, but it continues to grow.

Much has been made recently about a study from the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life that showed that about a third of people who were raised Catholic no longer consider themselves to be Catholic. As a result, about one in ten people in the United States is a so-called “former” Catholic. We at CARA have some methodological issues with that study as well as with how the results were reported. Perhaps the most important thing to note is that the Pew data actually show—and our data confirm—that Catholics have a higher retention rate than almost any other major religious tradition or denomination. While a significant number of people do leave the Church or stop practicing their faith, sometimes permanently, the vast majority of Catholics stay, and some who have left or who have drifted away do come back. I certainly do not want to minimize the significance of the loss we have experienced in our Church, but I think we need to keep it in perspective.

Similarly, despite what we hear about differences among Catholics on some issues, there is actually widespread agreement among Catholics about the doctrines of our faith and the essentials of Church teachings. Many—though certainly not all—of our disagreements are over style rather than substance.

And while there has been a decline in some practices, it is not true that most Catholics have abandoned the practice of their faith. Although they may not do so quite as frequently as they once did, most continue to go to Mass and to participate in the sacraments on a regular basis. Still, for a variety of reasons, many people have lapsed in their belief and practice. It is incumbent on all of us, and especially on those who minister in the Church, to invite and welcome them back.

Changing Composition and Distribution

While the rate of growth of the Catholic population may have slowed, its composition and distribution are changing rather dramatically. There have been significant geographical shifts in the population from the Northeast and the Midwest to the South and the West as well as from cities and urban centers to suburbs and exurbs.

In 1950, close to half (forty-six percent) of the Catholic population was in the Northeast and almost another third (thirty percent) was in the Midwest. Thus more than three-quarters of the Catholic population was in the Northeast or Midwest, while less than a quarter was in the West (twelve percent) or South (twelve percent). By 2000, only two-thirds of the Catholic population was in the Northeast (forty-three percent) or Midwest (twenty-four percent), while a third was in the West (nineteen percent) or South (fourteen percent). At the same time, within the Northeast and parts of the Midwest, there was a shift in population away from the cities—and especially from the inner cities—to the suburbs and even to the exurbs. These trends have continued and accelerated in recent years.

This shift has resulted in an uneven distribution of resources. Much of the infrastructure of the Church—the parishes, the schools, the colleges and universities, the hospitals—is concentrated in the Northeast and Midwest and especially in the cities of those regions, while the Catholic population is moving—and growing—elsewhere. So we are left with too many parishes and schools in areas with too few people to use them and to serve in them and too few institutions and services where we desperately need them now.

The racial and ethnic composition of the Catholic population is also changing, with an increasing proportion of the Church coming from Hispanic/Latino and Latina and, to a lesser extent, Asian, Pacific Islander, and African or African American backgrounds. This is increasingly the case among younger generations of Catholics.

Among adult Catholics, that is, those age eighteen and older, about fifty-seven percent of Catholics are what the U.S. Bureau of the Census would call “non-Hispanic white,” and about thirty-six percent are Hispanic or Latino/Latina. People of African, African American, or Afro-Caribbean backgrounds and those of Asian or Pacific Islander backgrounds each make up about three percent of the Catholic population, while Native Americans or American Indians make up about one percent.

There is a wide range of estimates of the percentage of Catholics who are
Hispanic and the percentage of Hispanics who are Catholic. We have looked at these questions very carefully and have examined a number of different methodologies that have been used to come up with these estimates. We have concluded that a little more than a third (thirty-six percent) of adult Catholics are Hispanic and at least two-thirds, perhaps about seventy percent (Greely et al.) of adult Hispanics are Catholic.

The proportion of Catholics who are from “non-Anglo” backgrounds is much greater among younger generations and will, therefore, increase considerably in the coming years. While this may be a challenge for the Church, it is also a blessing and an opportunity for all of us to be enriched by the cultural diversity within our Church.

**Generation after Generation**

I would like to turn to a description of generational differences among Catholics. For purposes of such analysis, CARA typically categorizes respondents to our surveys into three generations based on their year of birth. We call these the Pre-Vatican II, Vatican II, and Post-Vatican II Generations.

- The Pre-Vatican II Generation includes those born before 1943. Its members, those over age sixty-five in 2008, came of age prior to the Second Vatican Council. They were raised in a Church that changed dramatically after their formative years. Members of this generation played a crucial role in creating and sustaining many of the institutions of twentieth century Catholic life. They tend to exhibit relatively high levels of loyalty to the institutional Church. A little less than one-fifth of adult Catholics (seventeen percent) are members of the Pre-Vatican II Generation.

- Members of the Vatican II Generation were born between 1943 and 1960 and are between the ages of forty-eight and sixty-five in 2008. Members of this generation came of age during the time of the Second Vatican Council, and their formative years spanned a period of profound change in the Church (as well as in society and culture). To a large extent, this generation overlaps with the “Baby Boomers.” In general, members of this generation are more likely to emphasize concerns of individual self-actualization over institutional commitment. A little

Handbells accompany Wednesday morning prayer.

The Book of the Dead at each convention helps us to remember NPM members, mentors, and others who have gone before us “marked with the sign of faith.”
more than one-fourth of adult Catholics (twenty-seven percent) are of the Vatican II Generation.

- The Post-Vatican II Generation, born after 1960, consists of those who are age forty-seven or younger in 2008. Members of this generation, sometimes called “Generation X” have almost no lived experience of the pre-Vatican II Church. Their religious training occurred during the 1970s and 1980s, a time when religious education patterns and methods were very different from those used up to the late 1960s. Members of this generation are relatively less likely to make long-term commitments, are more pragmatic and less ideological, and are relatively more interested in issues of identity and community than those before them. More than half (fifty-six percent) of adult Catholics are of the Post-Vatican II Generation.

Thus, what we call the “Post-Vatican II Generation,” those born after 1960, now constitutes well over half of the adult Catholic population in the United States. The youngest generation of adult Catholics, those born since 1982, is being called the “Millennial Generation.” The leading edge of this generation is just hitting their mid-twenties. This generation is very diverse in its racial and ethnic composition. Among adult Catholics under age thirty, almost half are from so-called “minority” backgrounds, the vast majority Hispanic/Latino and Latina.

Post-Vatican II Generation Catholics—and especially the Millennials—have no lived experience of the Pre-Vatican II Church. They also have little, if any, recollection of the excitement generated by the Council, and they have little patience with talk about what Vatican II did or did not accomplish.

Members of this generation are far less likely to be steeped in the Catholic culture of earlier generations for whom life was centered around the parish and the school and often around a particular immigrant community. They are less likely to have attended Catholic schools, less likely to have two parents who are Catholic, and less likely to marry another Catholic. On the whole, they are less attached to the Church and less knowledgeable about their faith.

However, research about the Millennial Generation—not just among Catholics—suggests that members of this generation are very interested in spirituality and questions of faith. They are much more community-oriented and committed to service than their Baby Boom parents or their Generation X brothers and sisters. They also tend to be more optimistic in their outlook on life, more accepting of authority, and more positive in their attitude toward authority, including the Church. They are also very tolerant and accepting of differences among people, including differences in religious belief and practice, largely because many of them know people of different backgrounds and experiences.

The Millennials who are active in the Church to some degree—and many are not—want to hear positive things about their Church. They have already heard a great deal about what’s wrong with the Church; they want to know what’s right about it. They also tend to be more traditional in their religious beliefs and practices. However, they are turned off by talk about divisions between liberal and conservative or progressive and traditional. For them, many things in life and in the Church are not either/or or both/and. So, for example, they are interested both in traditional devotional practices and in promoting social justice.

We are also beginning to see evidence of a resurgence of interest in ministry in the Church in this generation, including interest in priesthood and religious life as well as in lay ministry. However, many members of this generation are not aware of opportunities for ministry and service in the Church and, unlike previous generations of pastoral ministers, do not always have the same opportunities to be mentored for or in ministry.

Institutions

Before I say more about ministry, I would like to turn briefly to a few things about Catholic institutions. First, parishes: There are currently about 18,450 parishes in the United States. That’s down by about 1,250 in the last two decades.

About 3,200 parishes are without a resident priest pastor, and about 500 of those are entrusted to parish life coordinators or parish life directors—lay people or deacons to whom the pastoral care of a parish is entrusted in the absence of a resident priest pastor. That number more than doubled in the last decade, although it seems to be declining in the past couple of years.

As you may know, many dioceses are in the process of the restructuring or reorganizing parishes. So we can expect much more closing, merging, clustering, and twinning of parishes in the next few years. We can also expect more multiple-parish pastoring and more multiple-parish ministry. According to Sister Katarina Schuth, who has studied the phenomenon of multiple-parish pastoring, forty-four percent of parishes in the United States share a pastor with at least one other parish.

We have to be careful, however, when we talk about the number of parishes. There are vast differences in the size of parishes. While the absolute number of parishes is declining, the size of parishes is getting larger. We also need to keep in mind that there are many different experiences of parish today. Sometimes there are different experiences of church within a particular parish.

There have also been some changes in Catholic schools. There are currently about 6,000 Catholic elementary schools and about 1,200 Catholic high schools. The number of elementary schools is going down, while the number of high schools is remaining fairly steady. However, while the number of children in Catholic elementary schools continues to decline, the numbers in Catholic high schools have been increasing slightly. The patterns are uneven, however. While schools are closing in some places, there are waiting lists in others. The schools we have are not where the people are and especially not where the school age population is growing.

Because of all this, there are changes in the number and the proportion of Catholics who have a Catholic school education and all that goes with that. More than half of Catholics from the Pre-Vatican II and Vatican II Generations attended a Catholic school for some part of their education. For the Post-Vatican II Generation, the percentage who ever attended a Catholic school drops to forty percent and to less than thirty percent for the Millennials. More than half of adult Catholics today of all generations (fifty-four percent) have never attended a Catholic school of any kind for any period of time.

While the Post-Vatican II Generation is less likely to have attended Catholic schools, they are more likely to have received religious education or faith formation through parish-based religious education, if they received any such formation at all. The quality of faith formation in our parishes is very uneven, however, so many younger Catholics today are not well-grounded or well-
The Face of Ministry

We all know that the face of ministry in the Church has changed considerably in the last two or three decades, with the number of priests and men and women religious declining and the number of deacons and lay ministers increasing.

There are currently a little more than 40,000 priests in the United States. About two-thirds are diocesan, and one-third are religious. That's down from almost 60,000 in the mid-1970s, when the number of priests reached its peak. Priests are an aging population, with a median age in the mid- to late-sixties (a little lower for diocesan than for religious priests). The majority of those under the median age are in their fifties and sixties. As you may know, compared to previous generations, priests today are being ordained later in life, on average in their mid-thirties.

A significant number of priests in the United States today—perhaps twenty percent—are “international”—brought from other countries to serve in the United States. In addition, more than a quarter of theoligate-level seminarians (twenty-seven percent) and almost a third of recent ordinands to the priesthood (thirty-two percent in 2008), were born in a country other than the United States. Thus priests are becoming more diverse in racial and ethnic background both because more are coming from outside the United States and because those who are native-born are more likely to be coming from non-Anglo backgrounds and disproportionately from Asian backgrounds, particularly Vietnamese, Filipino, and Indian.

There are many implications to the declining number of priests. One is that almost all diocesan priests today will become pastors, probably of multiple parishes. They will also likely become pastors early in their priesthood, that is, with less experience and less opportunity for the kind of mentoring that was common among previous generations of priests.

I think we all know that the numbers of men and women religious are declining, that their average age is increasing, and that there are many fewer in ministry than there once were. There are approximately 77,000 men and women religious in the U.S.: about 13,000 religious priests, 5,000 religious brothers, and 59,000 religious sisters and nuns. Although these numbers are considerably lower than those in the mid-1960s, when the numbers peaked at
more than 215,000 (about 23,000 religious priests, 12,500 religious brothers, and 180,000 religious sisters and nuns), it is important to recognize that the large numbers at that time were the exception historically and not the rule.

Even more than diocesan priests, religious are an aging population. The median age of men religious is in the late sixties for priests and about seventy for brothers. The median age of women religious is now in the mid-seventies. Most of those under the median age are in their sixties or early seventies. Congregations or provinces typically have many more members who are over the age of ninety than those who are under the age of fifty.

In my own community, the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, for example, of the almost 4,000 members in the United States, more than 300 (302) are age ninety or older, while only about 50 (53) are under age fifty (five are under age forty). Almost 80 percent are age sixty-five or over (79 percent). The median age is seventy-six.

Most of you are probably also familiar with some of the statistics on the financial resources of provinces and congregations, and especially the challenges many face or will face in taking care of their retired and infirm members.

Neither priests nor men and women religious are very representative of the Catholic population in terms of racial and ethnic composition, but there is some evidence of increasing racial and ethnic diversity among those who are entering, especially among religious priests.

The declining numbers of religious has implications for ministry in the Church. There are far fewer in ministry today than there once were, and there are very few in ministry in their own institutions. The Church is losing those who, at least for a time in our history, had the most experience in ministry and the most education and formation for ministry.

Growing Numbers of Ministers

The decline in the numbers of priests and religious does not mean that there are not people to minister in the Church. In contrast to the decline among priests and religious, the number of permanent deacons in the United States has grown steadily since the Second Vatican Council authorized the restoration of the diaconate as a permanent order of ministry. There are now more than 16,000 permanent deacons in the United States — more than in the rest of the world — with nearly 2,000 candidates in formation programs and almost another 1,000 in aspirancy programs.

More than eight in ten deacons are in active ministry. Most are involved in parish ministry, although a majority are also engaged in a non-parish ministry. About a third are engaged in ecclesiastical ministry on a full-time basis. Compared to religious, deacons are a little more representative of the Catholic populations they serve, with about sixteen percent coming from Hispanic/Latino backgrounds. Although they are more educated than the Catholic population as a whole, deacons tend to be less well educated than other ecclesiastical ministers.

The number of lay ministers in the United States is a matter of some debate, at least among those of us who attempt to count such things. We know that there are well over 30,000 lay ecclesial ministers in parish ministry in the United States. That number, which seems to get cited frequently these days, grossly underestimates the number of lay people engaged in ministry in the Church.

For example, that number does not include Catholic schools teachers, campus ministers, hospital chaplains, and those who serve in diocesan and national offices. It also does not include other lay ministers who are not classified as lay ecclesial ministers — such as catechists, liturgical ministers, and most music ministers — or other lay leaders, including people who serve on parish and diocesan pastoral and finance councils or on commissions, committees, and boards in our parishes, dioceses, schools, and Catholic institutions. In addition, there are thousands of lay men and women who serve in our institutions — in colleges and universities, in hospitals and health care institutions, and in social service agencies — whose work is in fact ministry, whether it is classified as such or not.

So while there have indeed been significant declines in the number of priests and religious in the United States over the past four decades, there are actually more people engaged in ministry in the Church than ever before! Moreover, these ministers, especially lay ministers, are more representative of the people they serve, at least in terms of their cultural backgrounds, if not also in many of the experiences they bring to ministry.

As the U.S. Bishops note in Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord, the document on lay ecclesial ministry: “Ministry in the Church continues the ministry of Jesus through the ages and throughout the world. Continually, the Spirit calls forth ministries and new ministers to serve evolving needs, as the history of the Church shows. In our time lay ecclesial ministers have emerged, men and women working in collaboration with bishops, priests, deacons, and other laity, each responding to the charism bestowed by the Spirit” (page 27).

The emergence of lay ecclesial ministry, along with the re-emergence of the permanent diaconate and the continued unique and distinctive roles of the priest and the bishop, calls for an ecclesiology of communion and relationship. Such an ecclesiology, according to the bishops in Co-Workers, “looks upon different gifts and functions not as adversarial but as enriching and complementary . . . [and] recognizes diversity in unity and acknowledges the Spirit as the source of all the gifts that serve to build up Christ’s Body. . . . For ‘to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good’ (1 Cor 12:7)” (page 21).

What We Know about Lay Ecclesial Ministers

I would like to add just a little about what we know about lay ecclesial ministers, whose numbers include non-ordained vowed religious. First, women make up the overwhelming majority — about eighty percent — of lay ecclesial ministers. About fifteen percent are women religious, and sixty-five percent are lay women. Women religious who are engaged in lay ecclesial ministry tend to be older than other lay ministers and, for reasons I described earlier, the percentage of women religious in ministry is declining. At the same time, more lay men and women (that is, not vowed religious) are becoming lay ecclesial ministers.

Like priests and religious, lay ecclesial ministers are not very representative of the
Catholic population they serve, at least not in racial and ethnic background. They are disproportionately non-Hispanic white, although the percentage of “non-white” is growing. Still the percentages do not come anywhere close to matching the percentages of Hispanics/Latino and Latina and African Americans in the Catholic population.

Formation for lay ecclesial ministry has been rather uneven, although we have seen increasing professionalization of lay ecclesial ministry. As you know, some associations like NPM have developed certification programs and processes. Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord also provides some guidance on professionalization. As a result, there is now much more consistency in the preparation and formation of lay ecclesial ministers. Still, there are significant differences across types of ministry in the background, education, and experiences of lay ministers.

I would like to share just a little bit specifically about what research suggests about music ministers. This comes not from CARA research but from the work of David DeLambo in Lay Parish Ministers (New York: National Pastoral Life Center, 2005).

Compared to other types of lay ecclesial ministers, music ministers are the most evenly divided between males and females: Fifty-two percent are men and forty-eight percent are women. On average, music ministers are younger than any group of lay ministers except youth ministers. They are very well educated, with half having at least a master’s degree. Six in ten (fifty-eight percent) have a ministry-related degree (that is, a degree that is considered music ministry related). However, they are the least likely of the various types of ministers that DeLambo studied to have gone through a ministry formation program. This may come as a surprise to you, but, on average, music ministers are the highest paid ($42,778). They are the least likely to have a job description or to have performance appraisals.

Belief and Practice

Here are a few findings about Catholic belief and practice. There are various estimates of both the number and percentage of Catholics who attend Mass on a regular basis. In national random sample telephone surveys, we and others find that about a third of Catholics say they attend Mass every week. Self-adminis-
tered surveys, such as those administered online, typically find that about a quarter of people who identify themselves as Catholic say they go to Mass at least once a week. Some dioceses are finding in their head counts that less than twenty percent are attending on a given weekend and that the numbers are going down.

When we look at Mass attendance by generation, regardless of the method used, we find much higher attendance rates among older generations of Catholics. In most studies, self-reported weekly attendance is about sixty percent of Pre-Vatican II Catholics, forty percent of Vatican II, and twenty-five percent of Post-Vatican II. However, that does not mean that the other seventy-five percent of Post-Vatican II Generation Catholics are not attending at all. About sixty percent of young adults attend Mass at least once or twice a month.

Despite some decline in Mass attendance, we find that Catholics continue to value the things we all think are important about Mass, particularly hearing the Word proclaimed and receiving the Eucharist. This is true even among those who go to Mass infrequently. What is different now is a changed sense of obligation. Two-thirds of Catholics (sixty-eight percent) “somewhat” or “strongly” agree that a person “can be a good Catholic without going to Mass every Sunday.”

Similarly, while there has been some decline in adherence to certain beliefs and some disagreement among Catholics with certain teachings of the Church, we find that there is actually widespread agreement among Catholics about the essentials of the faith and the core beliefs of Catholicism.

Some — though certainly not all — of the most contentious debate in our Church is among the “professionals” and the “opinion leaders.” There is often a difference between the professionals and the people in the pew. An example of this that comes to mind is from a non-scientific NPM online survey last year that asked about “what helps you to sing the liturgy.”

To music ministers, the most important things are: leadership of organ, instruments (sixty-six percent); leadership of cantor or director (sixty-one percent); meaningful text (sixty-six percent); and linked to liturgy of the day or season (sixty percent).

For those not involved in music ministry, the most important things are: familiar melody (fifty-two percent); easy to sing (fifty-one percent); and a traditional song (forty-eight percent). (Both groups think the enthusiasm of the congregation is important, fifty-nine percent and forty-seven percent, respectively).

Too Busy

Research about public opinion — whether about government and politics or about the Church — finds that most people, most of the time, do not know a great deal about many of the things that “professionals” think are essential. They are too busy living their lives and focusing on their families, their friends, their work. Nonetheless, they have good judgment, and, when they need to, they can and do master the essential details of complex issues.

Similarly, I think most of the people in the pews, most of the time, do not think about the questions that those of us who are more engaged in the life of the Church might think are vital. I suspect that might especially be the case with the finer points of liturgy and music. It’s not that they don’t care, but they’re not that interested in the specifics.

They value the Eucharist, they want to feel welcome, and they want to hear something that is meaningful to their daily lives. I suspect that they would be especially attracted by good music and good singing. (We hope to do a study about that with NPM.)

I would like to share with you an article I came across a couple of years ago in the “On Faith” section of the Washington Post (August 6, 2006). I think this summarizes well the feelings of many “typical” Catholics today and many people you encounter in your ministry. Theresa Dowell Blackinton of Bethesda, Maryland, wrote: “Despite Misgivings, A Catholic Is ‘Who I Am’.” Theresa wrote that she was “born Catholic” and raised in a typically Catholic household, yet at her own marriage, she “stood under a garden arch in front of a Unitarian folk-singing minister and exchanged vows with [her] husband.” Strongly at odds with many of the Catholic Church’s teachings, she only wanted, on her wedding day, “to confess to beliefs I was certain of and to make promises I intended to keep.”

She continued:

Despite my issues with the Church, I most likely will raise my children Catholic. I may not believe everything the Church believes and may even actively oppose some of its positions. But as time has passed, I’ve come to see that, for me, Catholic isn’t so much my faith but my culture. It’s who I am.

It’s 13 years of Catholic schooling. . . . It’s the Ursuline Sisters, with their quick laughs, steady guidance, and humble intelligence, who acted as teachers, mentors, and friends. It’s ashes on my forehead on the first day of Lent, midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, Stations of the Cross, summer church picnics, “The Lives of the Saints,” fish on Fridays, and “Ave, Maria.” It’s so many pieces of me that I would not be who I am if I took any of them away.

My Catholicism is for me, in many ways, like home—not always what I want it to be, yet often exactly what it needs to be. It is where I come from and where I belong. For my children to know me, they must know the Catholic Church.

One of the great joys of my ministry at CARA — in addition to being in the privileged position of having access to all kinds of interesting statistical data about the Church — is to discover what I have come to think of as “hidden treasures” in our Church. These are the parishes, schools, and other organizations — and the dedicated men and women, lay, religious, and ordained who serve them — doing truly wonderful ministry in and for the Church. Their work often goes unnoticed but is invaluable in building up Christ’s body. Even though you have a very public role in the liturgical life of the Church, I think NPM and pastoral musicians are among our “hidden treasures.”

I would like to conclude with a prayer for each of you and for the National Association of Pastoral Musicians. It comes from Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians (3:14–21):

This, then, is what I pray, kneeling before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name:

Out of his infinite glory, may he give you the power through his Spirit for your hidden self to grow strong, so that Christ may live in your hearts through faith, and then, planted in love and built on love, you will with all the saints have strength to grasp the breadth and the length, the height and the depth; until, knowing the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge, you are filled with the utter fullness of God.

Glory be to him whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine; glory be to him from generation to generation in the Church and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. Amen.
Some years ago, in an article in *Church* magazine, I argued that we need to distinguish between liturgical reforms and liturgical renewal. Liturgical reforms have to do with changes in words, rites, postures, ministries, and church art and architecture, among other things. Liturgical renewal has to do with the implications which liturgical reforms have on renewing the Church. Liturgical reforms serve church renewal. Liturgical reforms are comparatively easy to accomplish. Church renewal takes a lifetime.

Allow me to reprise the thesis of that article while I note that, rather recently, we have experienced at least some skirmishes in the liturgical landscape and on the liturgical horizon about revised vernacular translations of the Missal, about whether some of the rubrics and décor in papal liturgies should be imitated, and about whether and how to implement the *motu proprio* of July 2007 on the use of the Tridentine Missal.

Among my deepest regrets with some of the recent rhetoric, which has been fueled by a blogosphere culture where measured speech is not all that measured and polarization seems to be a goal, is a concern that the very thing that ought to bind us together—the liturgy—is in effect what is causing us more division, more polarization, and more separation. The theme of this convention—“One Body, One Spirit in Christ”—names one of the goals of every celebration of the liturgy.

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That phrase captures the first insight I ever learned about the liturgy from courses at the University of Notre Dame in the summer of 1968: The liturgy is about building up the Church. And as long as the Church is a pilgrim church on earth, we desperately need its celebration so that we may become a less imperfect church on earth. We are a people who are redeemed (but not totally), converted (but not fully), initiated (but never completely).

Weneed to name and—dare I say it—be ashamed of the polarization which some recent liturgy skirmishes have caused. My own judgment is that we need to reflect on the lens we bring to recent documents about the liturgy and to examine how, through that lens, we “weigh” these documents. For me the lens is always theological (What does the text say about God?), ecclesiological (What does the text say about the Church?), and spiritual (What does the text say about living the Christian life in the marketplace and in daily life?).

My own sense about how important it is to look at the lens we are using is spurred by the fact that, over the past eight years—from the time when *Built of Living Stones* was published to this year, *Sing to the Lord* was published to replace *Music in Catholic Worship*—we have received an unprecedented number of documents from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and from Rome which deserve study, reflection, assimilation, and implementation. They deserve to be read through a lens that emphasizes their theology, ecclesiology, and spirituality. While some have argued that we have received in these documents something of a “mixed bag” liturgically and theologically (recall the debates about the revised General Instruction of the Roman Missal), my own sense is that one would be hard pressed to find a better synthesis of what the Eucharist is and does than the post-synod exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis* (February 22, 2007), from the same pen of the pope who gave us, five months later, the *motu proprio Summorum Pontificum* for a wider use of the Tridentine Missal (July 7, 2007).

**A Lens on Summorum Pontificum**

In evaluating the *motu proprio* for the Tridentine Missal, a theological, ecclesiological, and spiritual lens can help us to see more clearly what was said and why it was said and therefore help us to understand more surely what it means. Clearly some authors in the blogosphere have used other lenses when they have spoken of this document in terms of a
liturgical romanticism, of attention to rubrical details and to the posture or placement of the ministers at Mass. But a more appropriate lens helps us to see that Summorum Pontificum stands in a line of three documents (1984, 1988, and 2007) which reflect the initial concerns of Pope John Paul II to care for two “publics” in the Catholic Church: those who could not adjust to post-Vatican II reformed liturgy and the (eventually excommunicated) followers of Archbishop Lefebvre, for whom it was hoped that the more frequent use of the Tridentine Mass could facilitate their return to the Catholic Church. In both 1984 and 1988 (and since) it was then-Cardinal Ratzinger who was charged with the task of trying to negotiate the return of the Lefebvreites to the Catholic Church. And if that meant more use of the Tridentine Missal, the judgment was “so be it” because Church unity is such an important value for the Catholic Church and for its witness before the world.

These same “publics” are addressed in Pope Benedict XVI’s motu proprio. For me the curiosity is that much of the publicity given to the motu proprio was about externals—how to learn the rubrics of the 1962 Missale and what kind of vesture to wear—but not about the two driving forces behind it: spiritual welfare and Church unity. The publicized statements of the Vatican and the leaders of the Lefebvre group this past June and early July brought the ecclesiological issue to the fore, with Vatican officials issuing what seemed to be a deadline for the Lefebvre followers to reconcile with the Catholic Church. The latest response from that group stated clearly (not to say nastily) that there would be no reconciliation because the permission for use of the Tridentine Mass and ritual was still too restrictive and, secondly (and I say more importantly), because they would never agree to the Church that was born from Vatican II—a Church whose agenda includes ecumenism and dialogue with world religions, a Church that necessarily dialogues with and is part of the modern world.

In fact I judge this answer to be regrettable in terms of ecclesiology because it reflects Church disunity. It is regrettable that a part of the Church remains separated and that a schism diminishes our witness before the world of a Church preaching and living the Gospel in our Catholic tradition for more than two millennia. But their answer is strikingly good theologically because the Lefebvreites’ response is not just about liturgical rubrics, text, or language. The reply reflects the classic adage “lex orandi, lex credendi”—what we pray is what we believe. The response from the Lefebvre followers is that they cannot be reconciled because they know that the post-Vatican II Church’s teachings are teachings they cannot embrace. At least part of what the post-Vatican II Church believes and prays is not something they can subscribe to. There is a fundamental honesty in their reply: They know what we all believe—that the liturgy goes hand in hand with Catholic Church teaching and Catholic living—but regrettably we are not yet reconciled. We are not yet “one body, one Spirit in Christ.”

Never Their Age

In his “letter” accompanying Summorum Pontificum, Pope Benedict notes an additional “public” who might be addressed by the celebration of the Tridentine Mass: the “many young persons [who] have discovered this liturgical form, felt its attraction, and found it a form of encounter with the Mystery of the Most Holy Eucharist.” While some might well debate the wisdom of inviting the young to celebrate an “old” rite, I think it important that the interest which some twenty-and thirty-somethings have shown in the Tridentine Mass and in devotions is worth reflection.

I have been on the theology faculty of The Catholic University of America since 1985, and in those twenty-three years I have seen an enormous evolution in the ideas and manners of the student body. I often say that our undergraduate population is hungry to learn about Catholicism and some (many?) are passionate about being Catholic. I have also been known to say, comparatively recently, that our seminarians are “desperate to be Catholic.” They are very keen to be well trained and well versed in the Church’s teachings and practices. But even as I say that, I also detect a fear—a fear of not being correct (and therefore of not being a good spokesperson for the Church)—and a certain theological and liturgical scrupulosity (sometimes so severe as to be spiritually harmful for the seminarians).

But in the end I also often say that “I was never their age!” I grew up in the Catholic culture of suburban New York (Sacred Heart Church, Mt. Vernon, New York, to be exact), in which a “mixed” marriage meant that an Irish man married an Italian woman. We asked, “What parish do you belong to?” and not “Where do you live?” “What Mass do you go to on Sundays?” but not “Do you go to Mass?” And “Are your children in the parish school?” (the presumption was “of course”), or are they “publics” (public school students)?

Part of the Catholic culture was May devotions and crowning with an annual “pilgrimage” to Yankee Stadium for “the living rosary,” with the cardinal archbishop giving the benediction of the Blessed Sacrament at an altar erected on the pitcher’s mound. We presumed a Catholic literacy, where our heroes were St. Thomas Aquinas, Hilaire Belloc, G. K. Chesterton, and Bishop Fulton Sheen. (Tuning in on Tuesday evenings at 8:00 pm to watch him was the eighth sacrament!) We knew the Catholic creed and catechism. We memorized both, even if we did not understand them. In our parish the pastor required us to attend daily Mass (but not to receive Communion), and during Mass we read the Father Stedman Missal (the large edition, not My Sunday Missal), and we were grateful that it had pictures of what the priest was doing at Mass so that we could keep up by watching, since we could not hear what he was saying (in Latin). And on Sundays at Mass we sang two or three hymns (of questionable theology) in English at Communion, among them “O Lord I Am Not Worthy” and “Jesus My Lord, My God, My All.” In May we also sang “Mother Dearest, Mother Fairest,” and on the Feast of Christ the King we sang “An Army of Youth” (which I admit was my favorite!). Otherwise our liturgical participation was ocular—participation by watching. We were silent and passive.

It was at Monday devotions that we experienced “full, conscious, and active participation!” We knew all the prayers of the Miraculous Medal Novena by heart as well as the Latin hymns for Benedictus. Every Friday in Lent, we returned to the church for the Stations of the Cross written by St. Alphonsus Ligouri. We had no post-Vatican II “social justice” adapted Stations, nor did we end with a fifteenth—the resurrection. No, ours was a passion-and-death piety, and our main idea of the Mass was as the “unbloody sacrifice of Calvary.” Our “paschal piety” was of Good Friday, not of the Triduum.

The students we now teach grew up with “full, conscious, and active participation” in the liturgy, and they have recently re-discovered devotions. At CUA, Thursday night’s “prayer and praise”
devotion in the chapel is the hottest ticket on campus. Some students found a disconnect with some faculty over Mel Gibson’s *The Passion*: The students were deeply moved (often to tears) by watching the physical sufferings of Jesus, and they wanted no part of a faculty critique that the resurrection was largely absent from the film. These students, for whom St. Alphonsus Ligouri’s stations are completely unknown, revere *The Passion* precisely because many of them had never before contemplated the totality of Jesus’ physical sufferings for them and their salvation.

I judge that underlying their liturgical tastes and their frequent participation in devotions is a hunger for silence. In fact, some resent the fact that there is a ritual book to guide Eucharistic devotions, *Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass*, with Scriptures, psalms, homily, and prayers—which ritual, in fact, was used in July at the vigil before the final papal Mass in Sydney, Australia. I suspect some of their fascination with the Tridentine Mass is its plentiful silence (for the congregation), its strict controls that avoids having to engage the vagaries and vicissitudes of different priest celebrants, and an automatic sense of otherness and transcendence by the use of Latin, incense, and ritual silence. My generation cultivated silence and solitude. These students live in an iPod, earbud, YouTube, IM, txt message, Blackberry, iPhone, iTunes, myspace, cellphone culture in which it is rare to see any of them without something in or at their ears—a practice which also allows them to tune in and out of conversations and other “noise” at will!

My generation participated in devotions and observed the Mass mostly in silence; this generation seeks out devotions precisely because they participate at Mass and have so much noise in their lives. My regret about this generation’s search is that the legitimate zeal for silence, transcendence, beauty, and otherness need not be sought only in the Tridentine Missal but can and should be a part of the reformed—and, indeed, every—liturgy. Whatever their age or ours, one of the ultimate purposes of liturgy is to build up the body of Christ—to be and become “one body, one spirit in Christ.” One way to support and build up the Church is by a reverent listening and by having a profound respect for each other—of whatever age—and by not imposing on any generation the interior practices or ex-
ternal behaviors of a former age. Catholic culture and Catholic literacy are always works in progress. So is the Church, built up by the liturgy — whether the rituals of that liturgy have been reformed by Vatican II or by the Council of Trent.

Beyond the Liturgy Wars

Allow me to offer seven ideas about the liturgy that might invite us to assess what it is we are doing in and through the liturgy and how the way we are doing it might be improved, enhanced, or deepened. I would also like to offer these seven ideas as principles for us to use in evaluating contemporary documents about the liturgy as well as in evaluating how we hear and appreciate what it is we do when we celebrate the liturgy.

1. All Liturgy is Pastoral. Liturgy is always about and for the folks. In my experience as a priest-professor, there is a world of difference between presiding and being an ongoing part of a parish or other community’s life and worship and occasionally “helping out” and “covering Masses” at a number of parishes. Ever since arriving at CUA, I have either been a priest resident in a parish or I have helped regularly at the same parish. It simply makes all the difference for me to be able to recognize the faces and name the folks; to meet and greet them week in and week out; to experience with them their joys and sorrows, their hopes and disappointments, their successes and setbacks, and their good health and their illnesses. And when a young person announces that she has been accepted into college, and I reflect on giving her first Communion and dismissing her regularly for the weekly children’s liturgy of the Word, I judge that this is part of what it means to be “one body, one spirit in Christ.” I am also on the weekly “firing line” after Masses with instant feedback on homilies! Like on the weekly “firing line” after Masses to celebrate the liturgy with the proposed texts is simply paternalistic both proclaimable and theologically accurate. One of the more delicate issues that needs to be raised in relation to this personal—but not-individual aspect of liturgy concerns the importance of liturgical ministries and the need to put less emphasis on an individual’s “performance.” In the end I judge that the model for liturgical ministers is St. John the Baptist: “I must decrease, he must increase.” We need to be careful in distinguishing between our “gifts that differ,” which we put at the service of the liturgy, and an approach to ministry that bespeaks “let me entertain you.” I judge that a personal and collegial examination of conscience on this point would be beneficial.

Sometimes the younger generation of seminarians admonishes my generation of clergy (we are the “’70s priests” to them) for being too effusive and egalitarian in the way we preside at the liturgy. While I was initially put off by this comment, I have since found it to be a helpful critique. At the same time, I also realize that as a reaction to excessive effusion on the part of some older priests, some more recently ordained priests have adopted a comparatively “ritualized” and “stiff” approach to the way they celebrate. I can help but wonder whether at issue in these different approaches to liturgical presidency is the very same thing—an emphasis on the self—whether a priest is decidedly “informal” or “formal.” Is it not, indeed, the same issue: my “style” versus what the liturgy requires of me?

2. All Liturgy Is Personal. Clearly one of the goals of every liturgical celebration is the personal appropriation of what is celebrated. In that sense every act of liturgy is deeply personal. But that does not mean that every act of liturgy is individual. And therein lies a delicate balancing act (or therein lies Hamlet’s “rub”). In a culture that prizes the self (“it’s all about me”), one of the more countercultural aspects of the liturgy is that it celebrates that it is about God, the Church, and our communal engagement in the living God. Another countercultural challenge is that the liturgy is about personal self-transcendence for the sake of building up the Church as “one body, one spirit in Christ.”

One of the more delicate issues that needs to be raised in relation to this personal—but not-individual aspect of liturgy concerns the importance of liturgical ministries and the need to put less emphasis on an individual’s “performance.” In the end I judge that the model for liturgical ministers is St. John the Baptist: “I must decrease, he must increase.” We need to be careful in distinguishing between our “gifts that differ,” which we put at the service of the liturgy, and an approach to ministry that bespeaks “let me entertain you.” I judge that a personal and collegial examination of conscience on this point would be beneficial.

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On a more theoretical level, I would also say that the celebration of the liturgy relies on and presumes the engagement of an ensemble of liturgical ministers serving the gathered assembly. In fact, if there were one line in the document Music in Catholic Worship that I would be cautious about, particularly because it found its way into the revision Sing to the Lord, it would be the assertion that “no other single factor affects the
Liturgy as much as the attitude, style, and bearing of the priest celebrant” (*Sing to the Lord*, 18). My sense is that we can place too much emphasis on the “style” of the priest celebrant and that we need to reflect more of the ordered approach to the priest’s role at Mass found in the Tridentine Mass but within the variety and complementarity of liturgical roles presumed in the post-Vatican II liturgy. But I would also suggest that when this communal emphasis on liturgical ministry is in place, then the same critique offered to the ordained clergy ought also be offered to all ministers. We do not “perform”; we offer our talents in service to all. There is a world of difference between leading the responsorial psalm “Speak, Lord, I love to listen to your voice” in a way that invites everyone to experience the psalm as ours and leading it in a way that really suggests the psalmist means: “Shush, Lord, I love to listen to my voice!”

One way for the liturgical assembly to negotiate the delicate balance between an essentially communal celebration and the need for individual appropriation of that celebration is through the wise use of silences during the liturgy. I would argue that all the possible times for silence should be appropriated and that catechesis about the silences can assist the assembly with satisfying this deeply personal need during the liturgy. If I were to single out two places of particular import it would be after the homily (to appropriate what was said and to formulate personal petitions for the prayer of the faithful) and after Communion (in order to offer personal thanks for the gift of the Eucharist and to begin to reflect on how the dismissal rite should help focus on linking liturgy and life).

3. All Liturgy Is Paschal. One of the most important parts in almost all of the blessing prayers revised after Vatican II (Eucharistic Prayer, blessing of water at baptism, consecration of chrism, and similar blessings) is the addition of or new emphasis placed on the “memorial” part of the prayer. That is the part of the prayer which speaks specifically about how Christ’s life, suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension are experienced by the gathered assembly in the liturgy. In effect this “act of memory” is what makes liturgy liturgy. *Anamnesis* (the Greek term for memorial) is built on the Hebrew notion of making memory together. The enactment of the liturgy is the actualization of the paschal mystery so that contemporary communities can participate...
in this mystery, appropriate it, be saved by it, and live by it. Theologically there is a world of difference between praying (devotional) prayer about Christ’s death and resurrection and the celebration of the liturgy where we are drawn into those mysteries. There is a world of difference between describing what Christ’s paschal mystery is and the Church’s appropriation of it through the celebration of the liturgy.

Let me give an example about this kind of difference in the liturgy itself that happened in Los Angeles two years ago. It was at the meeting of what was then known as the Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy (now the Bishops’ Committee on Divine Worship), which committee I serve as an advisor. The proposal concerned the eventual publication of the revised Roman Missal and whether the bishops would allow the use of the same American adaptations we have grown used to since the Sacramentary for Mass was published. These include the present texts of the memorial acclamations, the introductions to the Lord’s Prayer, and similar texts. The bishops on the committee voted to approve their use, but then I realized that I might want to offer a critique of one of the texts we now use: “Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.” As we all know this is one of the four acclamations presently in use in the American version of the Sacramentary. I argued that all the other memorial acclamations reflect what I judge to be the genius of this part of the liturgy—that the assembly is given the opportunity to voice what the liturgy is doing: drawing us into the paschal mystery of Christ. I argued that the pronouns (all plural) and the verbs (all active and engaging) reflect that through the liturgy the community participates in Christ’s paschal dying and rising. I then argued that the first “acclamation” is really not an acclamation. It is simply a declarative sentence which does not refer to our being drawn into the life, death, and resurrection but merely describes Christ dead, risen, and to come again. I also argued that it was not a translation of any text in the Missale Romanum and that, while catechetically helpful at first, the continued use of “Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again” might put a separation between Christ and the community precisely at the moment in the liturgy when our incorporation into Christ is emphasized. The committee discussed this critique briefly and voted out the first acclamation. The following day they offered their motions to the
full body of bishops, including this one. I am told that there was spirited debate among the bishops, with the vast majority arguing to keep the acclamation. Their pastoral wisdom was not to “shock the flock” unnecessarily: a point well taken.

Whatever the final disposition of that acclamation in the revised Missal, I would still argue against using that particular text. The other acclamations—all translations of Latin originals—do a much better job of underscoring that all liturgy is paschal in the sense that it is the Church’s unique experience of being drawn into and participating in the obedient life, suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. The language of the revised Eucharistic liturgy is dynamic and involving, not merely descriptive. In this regard, one advantage to the recently approved translations of the Order of Mass is the way the memorial part of Eucharistic Prayer III has been adjusted. The current English text reads: “Father, calling to mind the death your Son endured for our salvation . . . .” The new text says more accurately: “Therefore, O Lord, as we celebrate the memorial . . . .”

A final important historical and theological note: Memorial acclamations were added to the Order of Mass for the Latin Church in 1968 along with three additional Eucharistic Prayers. My sense is that these acclamations are among the most important pastoral adjustments to the Eucharistic Prayer. One of the architects of this part of the liturgical reform, Cipriano Vagaggini, argued that the Roman Canon (Eucharistic Prayer I) needed to have this addition precisely to serve the pastoral involvement of the community in the Eucharist. I would argue that this is an instance where the reform of the liturgy is a pastoral and theological advance over the Tridentine Mass.

4. All Liturgy Concerns Participation.
All of us are well aware of the repeated insistence in the Liturgy Constitution Sacrosanctum Concilium that “full, conscious, and active participation” in the liturgy is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy itself. Most, if not all of the reforms undertaken after Vatican II to revise the liturgy had active participation as a goal. It was the responsibility of more than a dozen committees charged with the reform of the liturgy to ensure “participation” as a main goal in their undertakings. One way this was achieved was through the evolution to more and more use of the vernacular in the Eucharist (as was common in the other sacraments prior to Vatican II). While not officially endorsed in Sacrosanctum Concilium itself, the move toward the vernacular was as a result of the faithful’s requests to the American bishops and to other episcopal conferences that we move toward a full vernacular liturgy.

Clearly those involved in pastoral liturgy took great pains from the start to instruct communities on the largely vernacular texts, music, postures, and protocols of the “new liturgy.” It was also an exciting time to educate for and encourage participation in a number of revised and newly established liturgical ministries. It was also a time when the externals of the liturgy became very important, as did liturgical planning, preparation, and rehearsing. Communities found themselves with the weekly challenge of preparing music and even the text of parts of the Mass itself, e.g., the prayer of the faithful. Presiding priests found themselves researching, writing, and preaching biblically based homilies every Sunday, if not every day.

But obviously “participation” does not mean activity. It can and should mean engagement with all one’s senses and engagement by watching, listening, and appropriating what is occurring in the action of the liturgy. “Participation” also should mean that we understand the liturgy as the Church’s privileged time to “participate in” (“take part in”) the very mystery of God. The theological frame of reference for any act within and of the liturgy is that these externals support and reflect the ever deepening participation in God through Christ in the power of the Spirit. Here I return to and build on my earlier distinction between reform and renewal. Engaging in the externals of liturgical participation does not guarantee our participation in the mystery of God. If the goal is partaking in the very life of the triune God, we ought to see external participation as serving this goal but not necessarily guaranteeing it.

To put this point somewhat differently: I am very concerned that the rhythm and structure of the liturgy should not change very often. In fact, too much textual, ritual, and rubrical change can cause an uneasiness and lack of familiarity with the very thing which the liturgy is: a ritual, familiar way of being engaged in common prayer to worship God. Too many changes to and in the liturgy can cause the externals of the liturgy to be made too important. In fact the rhyme and patterns of liturgical prayer ought to serve a level of prayer at Mass that is supported by but not dominated by text and gesture.

We are all well aware that soon there will be changes in the Order of Mass, including in the people’s parts. There will also be a revised Roman Missal with some entirely new and some adjusted texts. Some tried and true familiar texts will be jettisoned in favor of new texts. These events will cause a disjuncture and likely disorientation, at least for a while. My hope is that we have learned from implementing the reforms in the 2002 version of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal that we need to prepare ministers and communities for the changes by catechesis, then set a timetable for when the changes will take place, and arrange for the printing of appropriate worship aids to assist people at Mass. My earnest hope would be that the catechesis is theologically grounded so that we are invited to understand why we are changing texts and what the new texts mean. I would also argue that once the preparations are made, the changes be implemented all at once, not piecemeal. I am very pleased
that the recently approved and published translations of the Order of Mass are to be used for study and catechesis and are to be implemented only when the full Roman Missal is published. Undoubtedly, when that happens, there will be some initial confusion for some weeks or perhaps even longer, given our ritual and textual familiarity with the Mass as it is. But I judge it better to engage that challenge once and to try to let the changes settle in rather than changing them bit by bit, which would lengthen the period of ritual unease.

I also applaud the recent decision of the Bishops’ Committee on Divine Worship to make the revised Grail Psalter the text used in the Lectionary for Mass. For all too long we have had different translations of the psalms or parts of psalms for the liturgy of the hours, for Mass, for the refrains of the responsorial psalms, and for the antiphons in the Missal. My hope again is that one agreed-upon translation can serve ritual and liturgical familiarity to the extent that communities can learn and reflect on the wording of familiar texts and not be distracted by the changing words themselves.

Pope Benedict XVI was clear in the letter accompanying the motu proprio about the Tridentine Missal, concerned about popular participation in the Mass, when he asserted that “the use of the old Missal presupposes a certain degree of liturgical formation and some knowledge of the Latin language.” Where and when the Tridentine Mass is used more often care will need to be taken that “full, conscious, and active participation” be facilitated, which unfortunately was not always the case before the postconciliar reform of the liturgy was put in place. The active participation of the faithful in the act of liturgy is not the goal; it is a means toward the deeper and always elusive goal: to take part in the mystery of God.

5. All Liturgy Is Pneumatological. Every act of liturgy is done in and through the power of the Holy Spirit. Almost all of the presidential prayers of the Latin (Roman) Rite and every Eucharistic Prayer ends with an acknowledgment of the role of the Trinity in liturgical prayer: “Through [Christ], with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, forever and ever.” While it is true that the Holy Spirit functions the same way in the Tridentine Mass as in the post-Vatican II Missal—to enable us to enact the liturgy—it is also clear that there is a significant difference between the way the Spirit is imaged and invoked in these liturgies.

The post-Vatican II committee that was charged with evaluating the Eucharistic Prayer as the “center and summit of the entire [Eucharistic] celebration” engaged in a thorough examination of the Roman Canon, assessing what it judged to be its strengths and weaknesses. One perceived weakness of this venerable prayer is its lack of an explicit invocation of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, some argued, there is an implicit invocation of the Holy Spirit when the presiding priest places his hands over the offerings at the words: “Father, accept this offering from your whole family . . . Bless and approve our offering; make it acceptable to you, an offering in spirit and in truth.” Still there is no explicit verbal acknowledgment of the role of the Holy Spirit in the act of consecration.

What to do? The committee decided to make a few slight adjustments to the venerable Canon but not to force the addition of a prayer to the Holy Spirit into it. What they proposed—and what met with Vatican approval—was the addition of three other Eucharistic Prayers to the Order of Mass, each containing explicit invocations of the Holy Spirit. In fact, what we have in each of the Eucharistic Prayers added to the Missal after Vatican II (now included three prayers for Masses with children, two for reconciliation, and one “for various needs and occasions”) are two explicit invocations of the Spirit, one before the words of institution and one after the memorial prayer. In most Eucharistic Prayers from the Eastern churches, there is only one such prayer, called the epiclesis, asking the Father to send the Spirit on the gifts that they become the body and blood of Christ and upon the church to preserve it in unity. At the time when the single epiclesis was made a part of the Eastern Eucharistic Prayers, Eucharistic Prayers in the northern part of Africa had two separate invocations.

Obviously one of the intended results of the liturgical reform—that Catholics receive a more generous share in the treasures of the Bible at the liturgy—has been accomplished.

6. All Liturgy Proclaims the Word of God. One of the most striking aspects of Catholic liturgical life in the past forty years has been the welcomed proclamation of the Scriptures from lectionaries that accompany all the liturgical rites revised since Vatican II. Week in and week out, pastoral Catholics prepare for Sunday liturgy by reflecting on the Scriptures to be proclaimed the following week by personal lectio divina and by Bible study groups. Lectors prepare and rehearse the readings so that the texts can literally “come alive” when they are proclaimed at the liturgy. And Sunday after Sunday the faithful listen to homilies with eager ears. The opportunities for liturgical preaching have grown by geometric proportions since Vatican II, and communities of faith want to be nurtured, instructed, challenged, and consoled by their hearing and appropriation of the Word of God.

Obviously one of the intended results of the liturgical reform—that Catholics receive a more generous share in the treasures of the Bible at the liturgy—has been accomplished. But it is also interesting that, among those communities which used the Tridentine Mass with the permission of their bishop prior to Summorum Pontificum, some had requested the use of the post-Vatican II Lectionary for Mass at celebrations of the Tridentine Mass! Clearly the desired result of the Council in terms of the proclamation of the Word took deep root even in Tridentine Mass communities.

But theologically the deeper issue is how to appreciate that these written texts,
as they are proclaimed in the liturgy, are understood to be an event—an occurrence of salvation for the gathered assembly. Are they sufficiently understood to be doing something dynamic in and among the gathered assembly that does not happen when these same texts are prayed over and meditated on apart from Mass?

Some years ago we adjusted the acclamation at the end of the first and second readings at Sunday Mass. “This is the Word of the Lord” became “The Word of the Lord.” And in some parishes we had to adjust the practice of lectors raising the lectionary at the end of the readings for the assembly to look at the book. While those adjustments to the protocol of the liturgy may have been irksome, there were and are theological reasons why they had to occur. Simply put, the raising of the lectionary after each reading and the words “this is” drew people’s attention to the book. Yet what is actually going on at that point in the liturgy is the announcement of Scriptures from that book which, in the proclamation, are to be experiences of salvation through their being proclaimed.

For example, last year, on the Fourth Sunday of Lent, the Lectionary prescribed the proclamation of the parable the prodigal son from Luke 15. This poignant and perennially favorite parable is well known, but what might be less well appreciated is that, when it is proclaimed in the liturgy, that same act of amazing grace from father to son is offered to us through that proclamation. Another example, which does not always go down easily with all of the folks, is the parable of the laborers hired to work in the vineyard from Mathew 20 (25th Sunday of the Year, Year C). The apparent “unfairness”—that each laborer gets the same wage despite the number of hours worked—goes against the grain. But one of the main points of the parable is precisely to challenge our assumptions about what is really “fair.” In the end, the parable is less about “fairness” and more about our need for God’s generous love for us—poured out once more as we hear the parable—no matter what we have done and how unfaithful we may have been.

One of the challenges which I think still remains with the proclamation of the Word at Mass is to determine what makes a good liturgical homily and how that fits in with the rest of the liturgy. If in fact the Mass is one act of worship—word and altar—then the preaching at Mass should reflect that context and how the
entire Mass is an experience of redemption. I often ask myself, in listening to homilies at the liturgy, “Does this homily lead me to the altar?” — “Does it lead me to the baptismal font” or “to the exchange of marriage vows” or to other sacraments? If not, then I wonder whether the homily is serving as an end to “part one” of the liturgy rather than helping, as it should, to serve as a bridge to the next part of the liturgy?

I also wonder whether we have done away sufficiently with a kind of moralizing which characterized some preconciliar preaching. I wonder whether we have relegated commenting on saints to daily Masses rather than raising up these important exemplars of the “family album” of Catholicism on Sundays. I often think of the saints whose feasts occur in the week prior to or following a particular Sunday to see whether there might be an example from their lives worth noting on Sunday.

Overall, theologically, my concern is to underscore how the proclamation of the Word is an event and the extent to which our preaching is appreciated as integral to the celebration of the whole liturgy under the mantle of a two-thousand-year-old theological and religious tradition.

7. All Liturgy Is Paradoxical. Christianity is a faith of paradoxes. We believe that our redeemer was born in human flesh to a mother who remained a virgin. We believe, as St. Augustine reminds us, that the Son of God became one of us and lived on this good earth so that we could become God. We believe that Christ’s suffering brought us redemption, not ignominy and defeat. We believe that in rising from death Jesus conquered sin and death itself — belief based not on seeing but on believing alone. We believe in a Gospel that calls us to realize that the rich will be sent away empty and that the poor are specially loved by God.

One of the challenges we face, however, is to pursue paradoxical believing and paradoxical living when much of the world we live in would have us see things differently, not paradoxically but at face value. That is the opposite of much of our faith. It is the exact opposite of what the liturgy celebrates and is. Liturgy is about enabling us to view the world through paradoxical lenses, and it is about celebrating our faith’s paradoxes in sacred signs, symbols, words, and gestures.

An additional paradox and challenge for the pastoral minister is to distinguish between means and ends. The means is the celebration of the liturgy; the end is nothing less than believing more deeply in the paradoxes of our faith and living those paradoxes in daily life. It is crucial that we keep in mind the long view that it is the end that matters, not merely the means we use to get there. For you and me that can be a great challenge because we can get so caught up in getting the “means” right that the ultimate purpose of what we do can be lost or at least not be uppermost in mind and heart. After all, one of the asceticisms of pastoral and liturgical ministry is that we work very hard at “making the liturgy work” and “work well” so that others can be engaged in the liturgy in ever less encumbered ways.

True Renewal

In what can seem to be an ever increasingly polarized culture and time, you and I need to focus on ways that liturgical reforms can lead us to true personal and Church renewal. I intend that the seven principles I have articulated here can be reflected upon and, I hope, be found useful now. They are meant to emphasize some of the theology, ecclesiology, and spirituality on which the celebration of the liturgy is based. None of them requires the publication of the revised Roman Missal (as important as those translations are) or the publication of new service books for music. And none of them requires that we “take sides” in the blogosphere debates about the implementation of Summorum Pontificum. What they do require (among other things) is that we distinguish means from ends in liturgical matters and realize that, in the end, what really matters is the worship of and union with God, conversion of mind and heart, growth in our personal and communal conversion to God, and building up the Church as “one body, one spirit in Christ.”

In the end, in other words, one of the ultimate purposes of celebrating the liturgy is not to get the rite right. It is, rather, it is to get life right. Or at least to get life less wrong.

Notes

1. “Getting Beyond the Liturgy Wars: Liturgical Reform and Renewal,” Church (Fall 2000).
8. GIRM, 78.
When we come to the end of an NPM convention, it is good to pause and consider how we will leave that gathering. We might realize that we are like the people in our pews who begin to move to the edge of their seats at the end of Mass each Sunday, eager to go and, we hope, eager to be sent, so that they can begin the work of loving and serving the Lord: the work they are sent to do. As we ponder how we go from this week’s gathering, it may be helpful to focus on three words. They are words that have musical meanings; they are words that we use in our craft, words that we teach others. They also have implications beyond their musical definitions. To understand the impact of these words, we begin our reflections with their musical meanings and then move beyond those to consider how helpful these words might be to our Church and even to our world.

Resonate

The first word is “resonate.” To resonate means to be in a relationship of sound, to vibrate with the moving air that is God's divine gift to us. In the beginning all creation resonated with the voice of God: “Let there be...and there was...and it was good,” and it all resonated with God’s song. Resonance is built into us, calling us to respond to and shimmer with the energy of the first stars and galaxies and the tiniest of atoms, all resonating in their fields. We know from our physicist friends that nothing is really ever entirely still or quiet, but that everything, at its atomic level, is wildly busy. We can say that all creation resonates in expectant hope for God’s next appearance, the next revelation of the divine among us.

When I resonate with you, I recognize and allow into my own body space the truth of what you speak or, in the case of music, the beauty, the power of what you sing. I experience an energy exchange between us. A body that resonates quivers with the utter delight of the recognition of a universally true idea, an exciting thought, an alternative sequence or combination of notes. As musicians we are constantly setting air in motion. Our musical air moves the atmosphere around and inside others and draws them into movement that gets the air inside and around them going—that is, singing! Because we want others to participate in this resonating activity, we are always looking for resonant spaces for worship. We know how much more effective our work is when resonance is available in the environment.

Let’s explore this for a moment. If I come to an assembly in a un-resonant (dry) space, when I open my mouth to sing, my experience is that I am singing alone and therefore being heard alone, an experience of having no one or no thing with which to resonate. If I am a confident singer, this might not affect me much: I’ll sing out anyway. But if I am shy, unsure, or lacking confidence, I will probably not sing out because it feels to me that I have to put my sound “out there” all by itself, and I fear that my voice will “stick out,” that it won’t be good or right. On the other hand, in a resonant space in which the musical air surrounds me, pours over me, and reaches out to me, I am more likely to put my voice “into” that air. I can trust that my sound will blend into the sound that others are making. That helps me feel safe and confident, more ready to risk it. A resonant space encourages me to sing.

Beloved of God, you are called to extend this divine activity of resonance to others. What a gift you are! What better way to start worship than to get everyone in the building resonating together.

In chemistry the word “resonance” describes an energy shift between electrons on their energy levels. So when we sing together in a resonant space you are enabling energy shifts in your congregation. And you do that all the time, every time you make music. By the time the gathering song is concluded, we are one body in a way that we were not before we started because at a very deep body level—a level of our chemistry—we are quivering in a musical version of God’s immense and
surrounding love. Almost before they know what's happening, God's faithful are caught up in the resonance of worshipful song, a resonance which loosens them up so that spaces are created inside them in which they can hear the Word, let it resonate, and then eat and drink of the Body and the Blood. What an intimate resonance with the holy—with God and with each other.

If that's how we start our liturgical gathering, think about what happens when people leave. Imagine a neighborhood where people come out of all their churches resonant with the Word of God, quivering in a way that is almost visible, consumed by grace and ready to engage others in knowing God's Word and God's love. Such an energy shift at a deep and divine level would then occur that people would ask: What goes on in that church, and how can I get some?

Beyond the musical aspects of resonance, we can consider how badly our Church needs the balm of resonance these days. We are aching to get ourselves out of the dry and dead conversations that we are inhabiting and into live spaces of good dialogue. Our Church needs and wants to resonate with honesty, compassion, the grace of reconciliation, and a truly catholic embrace of diversity. The Church is all of us: We are one Body, one resonating Body in Christ. We can teach our Church about resonance, about how exciting and life-giving it is to give ourselves over to its transforming grace.

But our work doesn't end with opening up our churches to resonance; our work is meant for even larger spaces than that. Our world suffers mightily from a lack of resonance: There are people who are never—not once—invited into the resonance of a healthy life, an economically secure life, a spiritually uplifting and fulfilling life; there are people who do not feel safe to speak or who have no voice at all. All the world wonders where it is going and how it will ever learn to share its resources or accomplish an abatement of war and violence. Aren't the young men and women roaming our streets looking for something to resonate with, something that will set them a quiver? And who appeals to these young people more effectively: the advertising media or the churches? Who speaks more convincingly to them: the corporate money makers or the Vatican? Young people are finding things that make them resonate, but too often those things are dead ends; they quickly lose their superficial, momentary resonance and leave their consumers feeling disappointed, disillusioned, even despairing.

The Church has been entrusted with the Gospel of Jesus Christ—what a resonant story! And what good work pastoral musicians can do here, putting into music that story that has lasting resonance, that offers people intense mystery, that celebrates their deep questions. We get to invoke the music that is woven into that story, giving our people worthy texts that address the difficult issues and then sending them out to be resonators of love and compassion and reconciliation.

Articulate

The musical term “resonance” helps us to understand how we draw others in. But what shall we say to them when they come? To explore this question, we consider a second word: “articulate.” A speaker is articulate when she speaks a message clearly, when the words come out making good sense, and when the message helps the listeners to see and to think more clearly. Articulation helps to give shape and substance to resonance. It gives clarity about the “why” of resonance, and it provides a path to channel the excitement evoked in resonance.

Musically, articulation has to do with the care we extend in our work, the preparation of our vocal and instrumental sounds. How shall we sound this word so that it can be heard clearly, so that it makes good sense? How shall we play this phrase so that it will help our listeners to see and think more clearly? More importantly, how can we engage what we believe about this music with the skills that we have so that our articulation is not merely mechanical but comes from the wholeness of our body-spirit, and that it lasts not just for this moment but for a lifetime of faithful music making? How much do we need to practice our articulation so that it becomes natural and smooth and we become articulate singers and players, tapping into the fullness of our intended resonance?

How blessed are they who leave their Sunday worship having their souls drawn into resonance by lively music, and how further blessed are those who leave able to articulate what they have heard, not simply repeating, not remembering by rote, but articulating in their own words, for themselves and others, how God’s Word is alive and speaking now. When people walk up to them and ask, “Why do you look so happy? How can you look so hopeful when things are so bad?” they can answer. If people receive an articulate message in a resonating space, they have a much better chance of making the connections between what they hear and do on Sunday morning and what they say and do on Monday morning, not because they go out to convert the world but because they themselves are converted, and the grace of that conversion, being released in them, cannot be contained by them but resonates beyond them to do its articulate work in the world.

As we need articulation in our music, so we need it in our Church. More than ever we need articulate preachers and teachers. Let us support those who are struggling to articulate who we Catholics are in this new world, this world where old answers don’t match the questions any more, where what has always been true seems less true or irrelevant in light of the choices that face us, when day after day, faced with choices, most of us find ourselves mentally checking the box labeled...
“none of the above.” Where we find such articulators, let’s love and support them. Men and women: Let’s affirm them and encourage them in their prophetic voices, so that our beloved Church will not fail its duty to articulate the message of Jesus Christ but will work in the abundant grace of its call.

If we need articulation and our Church needs it, what about our confused, searching world? As a country, we are hungry for leaders who will articulate our country to us and to the world, leaders who will make good sense, who will help us to think clearly, leaders who will re-invoke the grand democratic resonance that has characterized the American spirit. The world is confused about who we are as a country because we are confused ourselves. We were shocked by the hatred which motivated the tragedies of September 11, 2001. And, in our communal soul searching, we have often asked ourselves, “How could they get it so wrong?” But we have still to ask “How did we get it so wrong? How did we lose the articulation of ‘we the people’?” As good citizens we have a role to play by articulating the possibility of resonating as one world body, one global spirit, and by raising up church leaders who will risk prophecy to and in our country and who will speak to it and to the world community about love and peace and joy and glory.

Once again we find ourselves with a great gift to offer. We know about the hard work of articulation; we offer the fruits of that work every week to the beloved of God in our pews, to our Church, even to the world. We have in our hands the skills of articulation. Let’s not keep that knowledge to ourselves; let’s spread it lavishly around so that no one in our Church feels abandoned and so that no one in our world dies for lack of hearing the good words of love and freedom and hope.

**Modulate**

Resonance can feel like lots of fun: “Let’s get together and resonate.” And articulation sounds more like work: “Shall we sing it this way or that way? What does the composer desire? What does the text indicate?” The third word is even more demanding. That third word is “modulate.”

Let me define modulation by describing an experience of it from the pew side of our assemblies. The assembly is
fully into the hymn, resonating away; we have sung three verses of a powerful and incredibly articulate text. We finish the third verse with energy and a good sense of ourselves as a singing body. But then, under our last note, the organist hits an unfamiliar chord, a chord that says clearly that something else is going to happen. On that unexpected chord the assembly pauses, and the organist begins a short but interesting transition, moving skillfully away from the key in which we had been singing. The beloved of God in the pews begin to feel a little nervously excited, wondering where we are going. Depending on the skill of the organist (or lack thereof), depending on the preparation of the modulation (or lack thereof), there may even be a sense of unease, even of impending chaos that develops as the assembly wonders if the organist does indeed know where we are headed and whether or not the music will have a safe landing somewhere. We hope that, through the magic of modulation, we do arrive somewhere, in a new key, a slightly higher (perhaps brighter) key, one that stretches our range a bit. We look around and notice that people are standing straighter, that we have all raised up on our tiptoes as we follow the lead of the modulation and now find ourselves in a wonderful new place. With gusto we all launch into the fourth and final verse and we sing it in a new key. We have modulated.

Note that there are three phases to this modulation business: a signal that something is going to change (the unfamiliar pivotal chord), the change (the modulation), and the arrival and grasp of the new reality (the new key). There are deep teachings here. For who of us in our personal lives has not heard the signal that sounds change: the loss of a job, the death of a dear one, a child leaving home? We realize that change is occurring in our life. Then there is a time of transition, when we may feel nervously excited or even uneasy and chaotic, wondering who is in charge and if that person knows where we are going and how to get there. And then finally we come to a place of adjustment to the new reality: We land safely, pick up our lives, and go on. If we are blessed, we understand this process and we trust it. But many people do not know and cannot trust. For them life modulations are scary and anxiety-producing.

What a gift we have as musicians to understand not only that modulation is okay but that it is even a good thing, that stretching to a new place is growing into what God intends for us. Not only do we have this gift, but we are blessed and charged to show it to others, to lead our assemblies through musical modulations that are practiced, that make good musical sense, and that take them to new and singable places. In doing so we model the process for life-modulations as they may unfold in our Church or in the world. People who leave church should be singing in a new key. Having entered the resonance of creation, having heard and felt the good articulation of prophecy, and having crossed through the Red Seas of modulation, they can leave with new energy to love and serve the Lord.

Now what about Church? Could it be that we are in the course of a huge, grace-full modulation, signaled by the Second Vatican Council, and continued by the skilled hands of those who heard the challenge: The world has become a new place and we, the Church, must respond. The opening words of the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World articulated the change: “The joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor and afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well.” From the moment that those words were published, the Church could not go back to what it had been; it could not retreat back inside its own walls. Hearing this pivotal chord, its modern modulation was underway.

This work has been carried forward by other important words like “full, conscious, and active participation.” But we are in the midst of the modulation, and, like the nervous assembly hearing that new chord, we may well wonder if the people in charge really know where we are going and when will we ever get to that blessed new key? There are glimpses of that promised goal, as the flats of our former key are transformed into the sharps of the new key. (Sometimes it’s hard to let go of flats: They are dark and lovely and comfortable, and they have worked for so long.) But the new key is enticing us, beckoning us onward, giving courage to those of us who have born the heat of renewal in the 1960s, ’70s, and ’80s. We who are elders in renewal might be tempted to pray: “How long, O Lord, how long?” But let’s be careful. Once we call upon the Master Modulator, we may receive an answer that we are reluctant to hear. When he was asked when he would finish painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, Michelangelo is said to have responded: “I will be finished when I am finished.” God’s graceful plan has its own timing, and no second or hour or life goes uncounted in the completion of that plan.

We are, however, in good company. We walk with those who longed for the Promised Land, some of whom never made it there. We wail with those in Babylonian exile; some died before they could go home. But also we pray with the disciples in the Upper Room, hoping that we will have the courage to wait and see what will happen next. We wait, and we watch, and, because we are musicians, we listen very, very hard for the resonance of God’s reign. We have the gift to know that we are headed toward a new key, and we can say with confidence: “It will come, it will come.” And as believers we know that God is singing and playing away, having the best time ever, and that we are in those supremely capable hands.

If we can own and celebrate our Church in modulation, what a word we can take to our struggling world! While some still try to enforce the tired old keys of war and aggression to solve our problems, others are making friends around the globe, causing resonance to shift the energy that will move us out of the old world view and into new keys of freedom, health, kindness, and compassion. The universe is cheering us on. “Yes,” it’s saying: “This is my new key. Sing it, sing it with all your heart, until all creatures on earth and beyond, yes, even the stars, are resonating with you.”

What in the World?

What in the world are we doing, we
pastoral musicians, we who understand the turbulence of these modulatory times?
Where are our voices raised to announce that, with skill and good preparation, we can all help this modulation to happen. Far from forsaking our art, may we use our art to reveal and to celebrate that justice is already at work in this world, claiming its true space. Far from hanging our harps of exile on the weeping willows, may we take them to the streets and sing the songs of a new Jerusalem.

There, in the midst of dry dead spaces, we evoke our resonant God, we articulate God’s blessed justice, and we invite whomever we find there into the modulations of a new heaven and a new earth. We sing:

**God Is the Source**

God is the Source of all our song:
How blest we are to sing along!
Made so to resonate with hope,
Matching creation note for note.

Honed by the Gospel’s love command,
We work for justice in this land.
Called to articulate God’s word:
Sounding a strong, inviting chord.

Trust in the Spirit keeps us
true/tuned,
Listening, we watch for our next cue,
Ready to modulate our keys,
Hoping to sing the world to peace.

God our Creator’s song we share,
Christ the Redeemer’s voice we bear.
Sent by the Spirit’s winds abroad—
Truly we are beloved of God!

Text: Cynthia Serjak, rsm, © 2008
Tune: LM

Beloved of God, be not afraid to be who you are, be not reluctant to be the best musician you can be. For every note you play will resonate in the Church and in the world and will be to their benefit. Every phrase you articulate will make a difference, as the Church and the world rediscover their true selves. Every modulation through which you pass will help to ignite the greatest conflagration of hope that the world has ever seen—the sounding in a new key of the ever-new story: We are one body, we are one spirit in Christ. In his name let us live and move and have our being. And let the Church say: Thanks be to God!

“I’ve been considering going further into my music ministry. . . and at this convention I got a whole lot of spiritual renewal, vocal encouragement, and a bit more confidence.”

* A Convention Participant

Vocalists from the WLP Showcase (top) with instrumentalists from the GIA Showcase (center) and the OCP Showcase (bottom).
Pastoral Musicians: Certified or Certifiable

Have you ever had one of those weeks when you truly think you should have your head examined for choosing to be a pastoral musician? I mean the weeks when your spouse or partner is complaining once again about not being able to get away for a weekend. Or the week when your brother-in-law boasts of his work bonus that is more than your whole salary. Or the week when the Marian devotees or the patriots in the parish go to the pastor about you not programming their favorite tunes on the Solemnity of the Ascension (because, after all, it’s in the month of Mary and our nation is still at war). Or the week when the new parochial vicar decides to abandon the carefully prepared script at the last minute, and you don’t really know what’s coming next. Or the week when you make a mistake at the keyboard or microphone and someone immediately points it out and questions your competence to be up there. Does this make you want to run screaming from the church in search of some confirmation that you are truly, certifiably crazy?

This is not what the current NPM professional certification programs are about. On the contrary, these formation programs are very helpful in convincing you that what you do is sane and rational, filled with passion and prayer, and as sensible a profession as that embraced by most musicians who volunteer or try to make a living in a world that is increasingly musically illiterate and even hostile to efforts to engage in communal music making. These programs are designed to equip you better as a professional or amateur musician in improving your musical, liturgical, and pastoral skills. As you make improvements, of course, the crazy-making aspects of this holy work may not diminish, but you will be able to deal with them with new knowledge and greater certainty about the choices that must and should be made in the art of ritual music and in the compassionate handling of the sometimes cranky People of God.

Currently NPM offers the following certification programs:

- Director of Music Ministry through the DMMD division,
- Basic Organist Certificate,
- NPM/AGO Organ Service Playing and Colleague Certificates,
- Basic Cantor Certificate.

All of these programs are based on self-initiated and self-regulated efforts to improve knowledge and skills for the pastoral musician. Each program has a published list of requirements, study guides, exams, and performance evaluation methods administered either locally or at convention sites. The DMMD program includes the assistance and advice of an appointed mentor/colleague to guide you through the process.

For each certification, you study and practice for the exams or juries, and, through either videotaped or live performances and testing, you are evaluated. If you fail to pass all or part of the exam, you simply go back, work a little more, and try again later. The DMMD program includes skill testing for piano, guitar, or choral conducting as well as organ or cantor. Reflection papers are required on organization, pastoral issues, and liturgy. This program even includes a five-year renewal based on continuing education units. All the requirements and study guides for any of the programs can be found on the NPM website at the Certification link: www.npm.org.

Nothing Better

There is nothing better for building your confidence and confirming your competence than putting it all on tape or performing live for some sympathetic but fair ears and eyes who will give you unbiased feedback. There is nothing better for updating your knowledge and skill than taking the time to reflect on how you do things and how that could improve. There is nothing better than being tested on the most current aspects of pastoral and performance practices to boost your sense of the right choices to make in planning and execution. There is nothing better than working with fellow colleagues and teachers who can provide support and prayerful solutions for the crazy-making situations in which we often find ourselves.

Sure, working evenings and weekends and all major holidays with less time off and for less money than even school teachers is a little crazy. Sure, singing chants and playing the organ seems a little anachronistic and even bizarre. Sure, working for an institution that doesn’t seem to get it about women and leadership is questionable. Getting certified won’t answer all the questions about our rationality, but it will help to bring balance and purpose and integrity and pride to our holy efforts. As I’ve heard tell, most of the saints were a little crazy. I guess we’re not in such bad company.

Mr. Daniel Wyatt, director of music ministries at St. Frances Cabrini Church in Littleton, Colorado, chairs the Certification Committee for the Director of Music Ministries Division (DMMD).
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Advent and Christmas Choral Recitative

What Child Is This? Arr. Paul Halley. SATB and organ. Pelagos, PEL2038, $2.60. The First Nowell. Arr. Paul Halley. SATB, organ, opt. brass. Pelagos, PEL5021, $2.20. Many organists will know Paul Halley from his stunning organ improvisations found in the recording Nightwatch (PEL1002). His recordings of instrumental and choral music as well as his choral octavos can be obtained through his publishing company, Pelagos Incorporated. Here is highly creative and effective music that may be just the right touch for your Christmas celebrations. Take a look into Mr. Halley’s creative output: You won’t be disappointed.

Quem Pastores Laudavere. James Bassi. SATB. Oxford University Press, 9780193870512, $1.80. This is extraordinarily beautiful music for the Christmas Season. Newly published and also available in The New Oxford Book of Carols, it is already on its way to becoming a classic. Latin and English texts are provided. While it is not overly difficult for a good choir, there are a few challenges to consider. First there is a verse set for TTBB voices in which the first tenors have a good share of F, G flat, and A flats. Editorial notes state that alto can sing the first tenor line. The verse can be sung by the full section or by a small group or even a quartet. Secondly, this music calls for the choir to be able to sing long, rich legato lines. This is an unaccompanied work. The richness of harmonies and the length of the melodic line make this nothing less than stunning fare! If you can get hold of the CD Christmas on Fifth Avenue, by John Scott and the choir of St. Thomas Church, New York, you will enjoy hearing this work expertly sung. Choirs and directors will do well to look into this moving choir carol. This one is not to be missed. Very highly recommended!

Go, Tell It on the Mountain. K. Scott Warren. SATB. Oxford University Press, 9780193870215, $1.80. This exciting and highly imaginative setting of a familiar tune and text will absolutely challenge the very best choirs and their directors. If you and your choir are up to it, then here is the perfect Christmas piece for you. Each refrain and verse is uniquely set, full of wonderful and challenging surprises. A really fine choir will be up to the task of bringing to life the vitality and excitement of this excellent setting.

Verbum Patris Umanatur. R. Corp. SATB a cappella. Oxford University Press, 9780193359253, $1.80. Here is a thirteenth century Latin text in refrain-verse style (an English translation is also provided by the composer). Moderate in difficulty, it shifts meters throughout—3/8 and 2/4. The setting of the refrain is ninety-five percent the same with each repetition, and verses one and two are set exactly the same. In verses three and four, however, more harmonic variation takes place. Verse three has the more challenging setting, but is by no means difficult. The tempo marking is Vivo, and therein lies the exuberance of the carol. Delightful music here.

Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow. G. Thornton. SATB, oboe or flute and piano. Oxford University Press, 9780193359253, $2.25. This is a lovely spiritual, and it is given very fine treatment in an accessible setting. The choir parts are moderately easy for the average parish choir, and the solo instrument and lovely piano accompaniment offer another layer of interest. The only thing that might offer an obstacle to smaller choirs is several TTBB and TTBB measures throughout. Here is worthy music that is not overly demanding but is very satisfying. Recommended.

His Praises We’ll Sing. A. Bullard. SATB, piano or organ. Oxford University Press, 01393359291, $1.80. Here is a little gem and a real find for small choirs or busy choirs who need an easy, extra work to add to their Christmas offerings. While this piece is marked SATB, it is really SB. There is one measure of SAB and a final SATB chord to end it all. One practical feature that makes this a welcome addition is that none of the SB parts are out of the range of the altos or basses, as they often are in two-mixed-voice settings. The text is familiar: “Rejoice and be merry in songs and in mirth! O praise our Redeemer, all mortals on earth! For this is the birthday of Jesus our King. Who brought us salvation: his praises we’ll sing!” Each verse is given its own treatment and a key change and very fine keyboard accompaniment, making this a winner. Directors of smaller choirs will want to check this out—but remember, it will sound great with large choirs as well. Recommended.

Nowell Sing We. G. Jackson. SATB a cappella. Oxford University Press, 9780193359529, $1.80. Two unaccompanied pages of lively and vigorous music are given in this setting of a familiar, anonymous, fifteenth century macaronic text. Verses one through three are in unison, sung by either the men or the women, and the refrain is in four parts with the same setting each time. The last quarter of verse four breaks into SATB, and the final refrain is also set for four-part choir. Constantly changing meters (6/8, 5/8, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 7/8, 8/8, 9/8) add to the driving intensity of this carol. (It’s a great piece for conductors to use for practicing their conducting skills.) The text is familiar: “Nowell sing we now all and some, For Rex pacificus is come.”

Tim Dyksinski

The following pieces are all from World Library Publications (WLP).

Stirs the Power of Earth: Advent Litany. Tony Barr. SATB choir, cantor, congregation, C instrument, guitar, keyboard. 005819, $1.25. Barr has given us a solid liturgical litany that the assembly will embrace enthusiastically. This litany is set with a different assembly refrain for each of the four weeks of Advent. The refrain is one short, rhythmic phrase that will be easy for a congregation to sing while in
procession, as during Communion. Also check out Barr’s Lenten litany.

My Dancing Day. Arr. Jennifer Kerr Breedlove. SATB choir, organ, opt. violin and cello. 005815, $1.30. This delightful English carol dances its way through the Nativity story and the baptism of the Lord. It begins with an instrumental ritornello that unites the four verses. The carol is set with great rhythmic energy and is a carol that most choirs will master quickly, always a plus at this busy time of year. The text has the choir singing in the voice of Jesus on the day before his birth.

What Child Is This? Arr. Richard Proulx. SATB choir, congregation, string quartet, organ. 003080, $1.40. Richard Proulx has arranged Greensleeves for string quartet and organ. Verses one and two are unison for assembly and choir, with an SATB refrain. Verse three features the men singing the melody, while the altos and sopranos sing a two-part descant. The strings provide an interesting and full sounding addition to this beloved Christmas carol.

By God Kept Pure. Alan Hommerding, SATB choir, congregation, organ, opt. brass quartet. 008828, $1.65. This hymn will become a beloved Marian standard. It features two different choral settings to accompany the congregational melody, the most interesting one being an SATB Latin choral ostinato beneath verse two. This melody is one of Alan’s finest!

Agnus Dei: Two Settings in Alternation. Ed. Richard Proulx. SATB choir a cappella, cantor, congregation. 005279, $1.50. One of the most common ritual chants from the treasury of the Church, Agnus Dei XVI, is presented in an extremely practical octavo. Each statement of the chant is framed by the SATB setting of William Byrd (I) and Tomas Luis de Victoria (II). This octavo is an excellent introduction to the Renaissance style and is accessible to most SATB choirs. You receive two settings in this single octavo, making this an excellent addition to any church’s choral library. 

I Saw Three Ships. Arr. Larry Harris. Two equal or mixed voices, two soloists, piano, flute. G-6658, $1.60. This is a delightful arrangement of the traditional English carol. It is scored for a number of solo singers, two-part choir, piano and flute, but Harris provides much flexibility. If a flute isn’t available, the right hand of the piano can pick up the line. Soloists’ lines could be given to sections of the choir. All but three of the nine verses are for unison choir. This is simply a charming selection for either liturgical or concert setting.

Reges de Saba. Florian Leopold Gassmann, ed. Jane Schatkin Hetrick. SATB, organ. G-6579, $1.60. This motet, by the Bohemian composer Florian Gassmann, incorporates texts from Isaiah and Matthew to create a marvelous composition for Epiphany. It is scored for SATB and organ, though the organ simply doubles the voice parts. The editor notes that during Gassmann’s time, the custom would’ve been to have instruments playing along. Choirs who love contrapuntal polyphony will enjoy performing this work. The lines are simple and beautiful. This is certainly a worthwhile addition to your choral library.

How Brightly Shines the Morningstar. Phillip Nicolai, arr. J. S. Bach, ed. William Tortolano. SATB, violin or flute, German and English texts. G-6601, $1.50. In his notes, Tortolano names this well-known chorale the “Queen of Chorales.” He incorporates Bach’s harmonization of Nicolai’s original melody. A violin obbligato part from Bach’s Cantata 172 is also included, but a flute may take it up as well. There are two texts: the German original and an English translation by William Mercer. Tortolano notes that this chorale has flexibility and should not be relegated to Christmas alone. It is a worthy edition to your choir’s repertoire.

Brightest and Best of the Stars of the Morning. Visser/Harding; text: Reginald Heber; arr. Larry Visser. SATB, congregation, organ. G-5940, $1.60. Larry Visser uses the hymn tune Morning Star in his arrangement of the revered Epiphany hymn. It is scored for SATB voices, organ, and congregation. Aside from one verse in four parts and the soprano descant on the last verse, unison singing prevails. The harmonies in the organ introduction and interlude are refreshing. After the rush to get music prepared for Christmas Masses, directors will find this to be a worthwhile and relatively easy piece to prepare for Epiphany.

The following selections are all from GIA Publications.

I Saw Three Ships. Arr. Larry Harris. Two equal or mixed voices, two soloists, piano, flute. G-6658, $1.60. This is a delightful arrangement of the traditional English carol. It is scored for a number of solo singers, two-part choir, piano and flute, but Harris provides much flexibility. If a flute isn’t available, the right hand of the piano can pick up the line. Soloists’ lines could be given to sections of the choir. All but three of the nine verses are for unison choir. This is simply a charming selection for either liturgical or concert setting.

Come Lord! Maranatha. Ricky Manalo, csp. Congregation, SATB choir, keyboard, and guitar. 20317, $1.70. This is lovely Advent music that could be used effectively to accompany the opening or Communion procession. The composer uses a verse-refrain structure and provides four verses for each Sunday of Advent based on the scriptural themes found in the lectionary. The melodic and harmonic materials are simple and direct; their solidity will withstand repetition for the entire Advent Season.

On Jordan’s Bank. Arr. Kevin Keil. Congregation, SATB choir, descant, and keyboard. 20304, $1.50. Keil uses an alternate version of the tune WINCHESTER NEW in compound meter as the basis of this attractive arrangement for smaller mixed ensembles. A variety of textures keeps the presentation of five verses fresh and engaging. The choral writing is well-crafted and accessible throughout.

Three Christmas Carols, Set 1 (“Coventry Carol,” “The Holly and the Ivy,” “Once in Royal David’s City”). Arr. Christine Manderfeld, osb. SSA choir and organ. 20279, $1.50. These are well-crafted arrangements of very familiar texts and tunes. Manderfeld negotiates the voice-leading and range issues of equal-voice scoring with great musical success.

The Angel Gabriel. Andrew Wright. SATB choir and keyboard. 20248, $1.50. A traditional Basque carol is the basis of Wright’s attractive two-part arrangement. The text is based on the Annunciation narrative that is used for the Gospel reading on the Fourth Sunday of Advent (Cycle B, Luke 1:26–38). The arrangement will work with any combination of equal voices and could be sung in unison by the entire assembly.

Joyful the News. Kevin Keil. Congregation, SATB choir, piano, guitar, oboe, and cello. 20303, $1.70. Keil sets an original text with a simple melody reminiscent of a lullaby. The choral writing is practical and accessible, providing excellent material for smaller mixed ensembles.

A Child is Born for Us. Rick Modlin. SATB choir and piano. 20379, $1.50. This Christmas anthem uses an engaging text by Genevieve Glen, osb. Modlin’s setting is essentially strophic with very effective
In Spirit & Truth
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The fantastic vocal interpretations of standard and new repertoire on this recording will take your spirit to places it's never been! Based on WLP's In Spirit and Truth: Music from the African American Catholic Community choral music series, these 14 recorded selections include compositions by Petty himself, as well as pieces by Richard Cheri, Thomas Lucas, Patrick Bradley, Frederick B. Young, Malcolm Speed, and Anita and Christopher Watkins. Includes skillful arrangements and piano and organ performances by Thomas W. Jefferson and Val Parker.

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use of textural development, harmonic variety, and metric nuance.

Rudy Marcozzi

The following selections are from ECS Publishing.

The Lord He Comes. Derek Healy. SATB chorus and organ or brass trio. 6309, $1.85. This is an engaging setting of a text by Isaac Watts and an anonymous Dorset poet. Fanfare-like interludes in the instrumental parts separate the choral strophes. The exuberant jaunty melodic materials create engaging rhythmic energy and bright resonant choral textures. As Healy notes, “the choral writing, in the rural English folk style, is similar to that found in Appalachian shape-note hymns; the melodic element takes precedence over the normal rules of classical harmony.”

Still This Night. Daniel Pinkham. SATB chorus and keyboard. 6641, $1.50. Pinkham sets an original Christmas text using a neo-tonal language marked by poignant modulations. Each of the three verses uses similar melodic and harmonic materials within an essentially homophonic texture. The tenors and basses sing mostly in unison, making this challenging but rewarding material for smaller ensembles.

The Snow Lay on the Ground. David Conte. SATB chorus, harp, and organ or piano. 6419, $2.15. In this elegant choral setting of an anonymous nineteenth-century text, the melodic and harmonic materials feature modal inflections against a rich accompaniment provided by harp and keyboard. The writing is tonal throughout, with frequent changes of key center. It is also available in SSAA (ECS 6420) and TTBB (ECS 6421) arrangements.

Three a cappella Carols. Clare Shore. SATB chorus, unaccompanied. Shore has crafted very novel and engaging settings of three beloved Christmas texts. They could be presented in conjunction with the traditional settings or as alternatives to them. In Joy to the World (6628, $1.50), hocket and imitation imbue the setting with a rhythmic energy that suggests the exuberance of the text. The text of Silent Night (6629, $1.50) is “painted” with sparse melodic fragments and frequent use of rests and unison silence. The story of Good King Wenceslas (6630, $1.85) is told in an overall homophonic texture with jaunty syncopations in the alternate tune. Common-tone modulations mark the start of each verse, allowing the music to circle back to the home key for the final stanza of text.

The White Dove. Derek Healey. One or two soprano soli, SATB chorus, and organ ad lib. 6314, $1.85. Healy’s original text recounts the story of Christ’s baptism. The three verses are presented by the choir in homophonic strophes, separated by imitative segments of Alleluias taken by the soloists. The organ accompaniment provides supportive doubling and must be used in the absence of a second soloist.

The Virgin. Derek Healey. Soprano solo (or C instrument), SATB chorus, and keyboard ad lib. 6311, $1.85. Healy was attracted to the “freshness of imagery” found in this text by Henry David Thoreau. The two verses are presented by choir and are framed by wordless quasi-improvisatory material.

The venues challenged students to rise to a level beyond their expectations. For our final concert we were on a bill with the Edinburgh Philharmonic – truly a ‘wow’ experience!

Marge Campbell, Encore Tours Group Leader, Director, Chester County Voices Abroad, PA

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sung by the soloist. A part is provided so that a solo instrument may also play this material. The modal language creates an engaging major/minor ambiguity. An attractive alternative to more familiar Marian texts, suitable for Christmas or Marian feasts.

Rudy Marcozzi

Choral Recitative

These selections are from OCP.

Holy God, Holy and Mighty. Colin Mawby. SATB divisi, organ. 4606, $1.60. Dating from the fifth century, the Trisagion text has an enduring character, and Mawby’s setting exploits this unchanging quality to great effect. From the opening measures, which set up an intangible aura by using only a perfect fifth, to its fortissimo pinnacle, this piece features dramatic extremes of range, texture, and dynamic. It will be best sung by singers that can narrow vibrato for dissonances (similar to Arvo Pärt), and the low E-flats and Cs necessitate one or two deep basses. (However, if your chorus lacks Russian basses, the p and pp organ assists at each of the problematic places.) The composer aptly recommends use of this piece at the veneration of the cross on Good Friday, and it may also be useful during Lent.

He Is Risen. Ricky Manalo, csp. Congregation, SATB choir, keyboard, guitar, solo instrument. 20318, $1.70. This upbeat, contemporary setting uses the traditional Easter text “Jesus Christ is risen today" in alternation with a newly-composed refrain text. Manalo cleverly omits the original Alleluias in the verses and adds them later in the refrain. The choral writing follows expected patterns and can be learned easily, and congregations will quickly learn the tuneful refrain. In addition to the scored instruments, percussion will add rhythmic vitality.

One with the Risen Lord. Bob Hurd. Congregation, SATB choir, descant, keyboard, guitar, cello, trumpet. 20587, $1.50. With harmonic motion that captures the depth and weight of the Easter message, “One with the Risen Lord” resolutely proclaims the Church’s mission to abide with Christ. The well-constructed vocal parts and leading accompaniment impart strong forward motion to the rich text, based on John 14:15–29. The cello and trumpet parts, included in the octavo, transform from lyric to sturdy while the descant adds heralding to the final refrain.

Faith, Hope and Love. Stephen Dean. Congregation, cantor, SATB choir, descant, keyboard, guitar, solo instrument, B-flat clarinet. 20412, $1.50. Dean’s “Faith, Hope and Love” warrants a look by communities needing a simple, versatile setting of the Ubi caritas text which includes the Mandatum text as optional verses. Congregations will find its low tessitura manageable, and choirs will be grateful for its vocal ease at their busiest time of the liturgical year. Cantors will easily navigate the verses, which use an unchanging motive, and the Latin text appears in a mellow descant.

Tim Westerhaus

Books

A Commentary on the General Instruction of the Roman Missal


In its first publication, the Catholic Academy of Liturgy has produced not only an immensely useful book but one that creates a new genre. Styled after commentaries of the Bible and the Code of Canon Law, this work offers a paragraph-by-paragraph analysis of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, which surveys the theology and celebration of the Roman Catholic Mass. The missal’s third edition was promulgated in Latin in 2002 together with a revised General Instruction. Although the missal is still being translated, the Instruction is available in English, and it will have renewed importance when the vernacular translation of the entire missal is released. The Catholic Academy of Liturgy was formed about seven years ago by Catholics schooled professionally in liturgy who were also members of the interfaith North American Academy of Liturgy. Twenty-four members contributed to this commentary. (In the interests of disclosure, the reviewer is a member of this Academy, though not a contributor to this book.)

The Commentary is perfectly designed to suit its purpose. A typical page divides into three uneven parts. At the top is the full text of the General Instruction in English and Latin in parallel columns. The middle of the page holds the commentary. Footnotes anchor the bottom. More than a commentary on the Instruction, this book also offers critique of the document, pointing out its strengths and inconsistencies.

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three excellent essays. Nathan D. Mitchell and John F. Baldovin give a historical overview of the class of liturgical documents to which the Instruction belongs. Kevin Sealsolz’s explanation of liturgy and ecclesiastical law reminds the reader that the Instruction has more to do with theology than legislation. David N. Power and Catherine Vincie have composed rich theological and pastoral reflections. The editors have controlled this material to prepare the reader for what lies ahead while avoiding the mire of extraneous matters.

Some strong sections brace the body of the book, starting with Margaret Mary Kelleher’s analysis of the Preamble, where she nuances the continuous line from the Councils of Trent and Vatican II. “It would be a mistake to read the Instruction as claiming that the Church’s whole tradition of Eucharistic Prayers supports a particular understanding of the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist” (78).

Readers will most frequently thumb through Edward Foley’s commentary on the structure, elements, and parts of the Mass. His analysis is always clear, insightful, and practical. Here are remarks on prayer as a divinely initiated dialogue (122), the psalm as an expression of Christ’s presence in Word and communion (147), the presence of Christ in all proclamations of the Word (150), the theology of Eucharistic prayer (170-173), the constitutive quality of the congregational parts of the Eucharistic Prayer (174), the difficulties involved with the word “consecration” (131), the correlation between verbs and ministers in the receiving/taking/administration of Communion (188-189), and the treatment of capitalizations in terms such as “Sacrifice” and “banquet” (163).

Martin Connell and Sharon McMillan’s entry on the different forms of celebrating Mass is likewise strong, especially its treatment of the Communion rite (258-261). Noteworthy is the observation that the English translation of paragraph 161 “shows more of a prejudice for receiving on the tongue than the Latin text” does (258).

The practice of concelebration has its admirers and detractors, but it is rare to find as balanced a presentation as the introduction by Gilbert Ostdieck and Andrew Ciferni (279-281), which treats the history and contemporary expression of the practice.

Mary Schaefer and Joanne M. Pierce offer sagacious insights on some general norms for all forms of Mass. Their fine treatment of extraordinary ministers of holy Communion (344-345) examines another section of the Instruction that needed good commentary and received it.

Still, some parts could have been improved. There is no overview of the entire General Instruction, explaining or critiquing the flow of its chapters. Occasionally one finds a remark about the character of the Instruction (e.g., its “parchment for . . . precision” [266] and its separation of clergy and laity [passim]), but one wishes these had been gathered into an introduction. The commentary makes important references to ancillary liturgical documents, but very little is made of the Directory for Masses with Children. Several important paragraphs from the Instruction get surprisingly little treatment, for example the prohibition against priests removing or changing anything in the Mass (GIRM, 24), the centrality of the freestanding altar (GIRM, 299 and 303), and the placement of the tabernacle (GIRM, 375).

A good index is always welcome, but this one seems almost prodigal. For example, under the heading “Rite(s),” there are more than 300 references. Is anyone really going to search through them?

In a work of such detail, there will be instances when the writers miss the mark. For example, the Kyrie is indeed used in form B of the Act of Penitence, despite words to the contrary (143). The repeated objections to the use of the word “offertory” (beginning at 124) are well-intentioned but miss its association with a musical piece. Arguments about the antiphon at the preparation of the gifts (190) ignore that there is only one such antiphon in the entire missal. GIRM 32’s request that musical instruments be silent throughout the Eucharistic Prayer is old and probably pertains to “organ Masses” (120). Priests who cannot tolerate alcohol may indeed use mustum (390), but the same is true of the laity, with permission of the ordinary. The statement that the presider is required to say the prayer after Communion from the chair (260) conflicts with the rubrics in GIRM, 165. A proposed retranslating for the title of one subheading (“The Choice of the Mass and Its Parts”) correctly notes one inadequacy but creates two more (405). And one can quibble over the spelling of “Exultet” (459 and 464) and using the neologism “eucharistized” (passim) as a substitute for “consecrated.”

This is a reference book that contemporary and future generations will need in order to understand the General Instruction as well as its implementation. It is a landmark achievement by some of the best Catholic liturgical minds of our day.

Paul Turner

Sacred Music and Liturgical Reform: Treasures and Transformations


With this monumental study, Anthony Ruff has given a transforming treasure to anyone who ponders the relationship of music to the Church’s prayer. A general readership will find his clarity and first-person conversational passages engaging; liturgical scholars, pastoral musicians, and music historians will find his wide-ranging scholarship enlightening and enriching.

Ruff adopts the writing style of many European historians. On each leg of the journey he tells us where he is going, then he goes there (stopping along the way to investigate particularly intriguing landmarks), then he tells us where we have been, and finally he articulates the conclusions a reasonable person might make. With less compelling writers this style can be an annoyingly repetitive mannerism, but with Anthony Ruff as our knowledgeable guide, it leads us safely and surely through to his conclusions via some (at first) seeming detours (e.g., “The Twentieth-Century German Lutheran Rebirth of Church Music”).

One virtue of this writing style is that the reader can skip around, reading many of the twenty-three chapters out of order as separate essays. The “essay” on the nineteenth century Cecilian movement (Chapter 6) is the best introduction to that movement that I have encountered in English. Other meaty “essays” include “Active Participation and Listening” (Chapter 17) and “The Vernacular Congregational Hymn” (Chapter 23).

But the real strength of the style is best experienced when the story is read straight through. With irresistible logic, the author leads the reader step by step to the concluding call for acceptance of musical diversity in Catholic liturgical music:
There is no absolute model of worship music in the [post-Vatican II] Roman liturgy. In many pastoral situations, fairly little music of the past would be employed, but integration between music and rite would be high. In other situations, considerably more music of the past would be employed without causing undue inconsistencies in any direction. In some exceptional places and on some occasions, generous employment of inherited repertoires would be affirmed as an appropriate manner of celebrating the Roman Eucharistic Liturgy. All have their place within the catholic whole. No solution is absolutely perfect; a wide variety of solutions deserves respect (610–611).

Taken out of context (as in the present review), this can sound a bit too much like “can’t we all just get along.” In the context of Ruff’s argument, however, there is nothing banal about his conclusion. It is a hard-won goal achieved by a willingness to consider with fairness and objectivity both sides of liturgical and musical battles of the past.

The author is a respected scholar of medieval chant notation and performance, the founder of the acclaimed National Catholic Youth Choir (an ensemble specializing in liturgical music from the “treasury”), and a Benedictine monk. He is the guiding force in NPM’s recently enhanced chant program and the author of a manual on Gregorian chant. His personal experience that gives such weight to his concluding call for mutual respect and acceptance.

As he builds his case throughout the book, Ruff helps the reader along by means of twenty-two well-crafted “summaries.” These brief sections (as short as one sentence in Chapter 1 and as long as six pages in Chapter 21) enable the reader to peer into the mind of the author in the very act of constructing his argument. Often written in the first person, the nearly forty pages of these summaries form a sort of Reader’s Digest condensed version of the 700-page study. It is here the reader finds the author’s hard-fought, persuasively won, and boldly stated conclusions. A sampling of these sometimes provocative conclusions includes these thoughts:

I propose that listening as a means of active participation can claim a legitimate basis in the conciliar documents and in sound liturgical theology (381).

It does not necessarily follow from the assembly-based nature of the liturgy that the choir’s primary role is to support congregational singing (413).

Choral performance in the reformed liturgy should be acknowledged as liturgically desirable (415).

Very little of the inherited Gregorian chant repertoire is suited for congregational singing in parish settings (505).

The polyphonic Mass Ordinary repertoire can no longer have the liturgical function originally intended when composed (543).

Sacred Music and Liturgical Reform is based on Ruff’s 1998 doctoral dissertation defended at the University of Graz, Austria.
Unlike much American commentary of the past forty years, this work provides a welcome overview of European liturgical music discussion. Citations from dozens of German articles, lectures, and studies on aspects of music in worship appear for the first time in English. The study provides a much-needed compilation of thought by the musicians and liturgists of Germany and Austria and, to a lesser extent, France and the Low Countries and thereby provides balance for our own national discussion on music in liturgy, a discussion which too often has been limited to Roman and American thinkers.

Ruff is generous in giving German (and Italian and French and Latin) texts both in the original language and in thoughtful and often splendidly clarifying translation. (For example, the dense argument of Theodor Adorno on page 145 is easier to follow in Ruff’s translation than in the original). A few minor quibbles with the pages and pages of excellent translation from German sources: Is “Leaves” the best translation of “Blätter” in reference to publications? Is “prescriptions” the most idiomatic translation of “Vorschriften” in reference to church directives? And
there is the amusing little moment when Hugo Distler is rechristened as “Ernst” (151). The German original has “im Ernst Distlers . . . Werke” The translation might better have read “in all seriousness, Distler’s . . . works.” (The rare translation issues do not distract the reader; however, the number of typographical errors in the English text does distract. A work of this seriousness and importance deserved better editing.)

Whether one agrees with the conclusions or not, Sacred Music and Liturgical Reform will need to be on the reference shelf of every serious student of music in the liturgy. The listing of Documents of the Magisterium (613ff) provides a comprehensive source for Latin and English versions of twentieth century Roman documents on music. The 1,134 entries in the General Bibliography include citations of works in German by such leading thinkers as Helmut Huckle, for whom twenty-three publications are listed, with nearly as many titles cited for Fellerer, Haberl, Philip Harnoncourt, and Söhngen.

The footnote discussion supplementing the text constitutes a book in itself. Alone, the 124 annotated notes on the Cecilian movement in Chapter 6 will become the reference for a generation of students.

Perhaps the greatest contribution Anthony Ruff has made in his overview of twelve centuries of liturgical music is the articulate reminder that music in the Catholic Church has never been frozen in one moment, and it surely will not freeze now. Were this only a brilliant study of the past, its value would be substantial, but it is so much more than that. It is a way to think about the future of music in the liturgy.

What a bargain this publication is—three books for the price of one: It is (1) an intriguing tale of a treasure hunt or, rather, a “treasury” hunt, specifically the author’s search through centuries of materials for the origins and meaning of the “treasury of sacred music” honored in Sotericon Concilium; (2) a much-needed scholarly compendium of resource materials; and (3) an insightful and reasoned challenge for the next generation of musical-liturgical discourse.

In my library, just between Documents on the Liturgy, 1963–1979 and Bugnini’s The Reform of the Liturgy, Anthony Ruff’s Sacred Music and Liturgical Reform has taken its rightful place. James Savage

Understanding the General Instruction of the Roman Missal


Do we need another commentary on the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)? After reading this short work (121 pages) by Gerard Moore, associate professor and director of research at the Sydney College of Divinity in Australia and a consultant to the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL), you could very well answer with a resounding “yes.”

Many of the commentaries being offered today deal with an almost line-by-line study of the GIRM from the standpoint of the proper carrying out of the practical implementation of its guidelines and rules. Moore begins by stating that this is not his task. Rather, he attempts “to explore the inner dynamics and theological streams at the heart of the Instruction.” This book is part explanation and part commentary. As explanation we will be seeking a theological appreciation of the content of the GIRM. As commentary, we will cast a critical eye over the document, highlighting strengths, weaknesses, inconsistencies, developments, and tensions. This will involve teasing out the implications of the scriptural passages and patristic citations used to support various liturgical positions and assertions” (Introduction, ix–x).

The five chapters of this commentary open with an examination of principles of interpretation that Moore finds in the GIRM and which he feels inform its theology and practice. Since there is no single section of the GIRM which specifically lists these principles, the author categorizes them as five main points gathered from his own close reading of the text. The first two principles state that our celebration of the Eucharist should be pastorally effective, and it should encourage full, active, and conscious

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participation by all. The third principle is identified as a need to be attentive to the genres and function of whatever we do or use. Fourth, the actions and objects ought to appropriate standards of dignity, beauty, and solemnity. And Moore’s fifth principle states that the Instruction leads us beyond mere rubrics and calls us to reflect the very spirit of the sacred liturgy itself.

Chapter 2 looks at some explicitly theological themes that can be found throughout the Instruction. Moore describes these themes as “how the document understands ‘tradition’; the relationship of the Mass from Vatican II to that from the Council of Trent; the contribution the GIRM makes to the discussion of unity; the adequacy of its theology of symbol; and the sense it accords to the liturgical term lex orandi lex credendi.” As he does consistently throughout this commentary, Moore raises questions for the reader to ponder instead of offering easy answers, and he encourages the reader to engage the document, appreciate its strengths, and go beyond its shortcomings.

Chapter 3 contains a review of the theology of the Church in the Instruction, since the celebration of the Eucharist reveals the mystery of the Church. Moore sees this revealed in the biblical images which are found in the text (bride of Christ, people of God, the body, and baptism), the apostolic nature of the Church, the Church as foretaste of the reign of God, the understanding of the Church as hierarchy, and how the GIRM understands the structure of the Church.

In Chapter 4 the commentary examines the people of God understood hierarchically, “not the least of which involves the liturgical sense of the hierarchical Church and what this may have to offer discussions of the meaning of the hierarchy.” Here, as before, Moore challenges the reader to reflect on other questions regarding the role of bishops, priests, deacons, and lay people to realize that something more is required in the celebration of the liturgy than the laws governing valid and lawful celebration.

Moore closes his study with a chapter dedicated to the way the GIRM portrays the Eucharistic celebration itself, with particular reference to its Trinitarian underpinnings. This commentary differs from others in the way in which it concentrates on the theological currents that make up the Instruction. The author feels that “the clearer we are about them (the theological principles), the richer our understanding of the Institutio, and the more prayerful and powerful our liturgical practice.”

Understanding the General Instruction of the Roman Missal is written to be accessible to all readers with an interest in liturgy: clergy, liturgists, lay ministers, diocesan and parish staff, school liturgy teams, seminarians, and lay people. Moore follows the document as closely as possible, connects it with other related documents, offers quotations to explain interpretations, and makes use of few footnotes in order not to confuse those who are not liturgical scholars. The book offers much food for thought and questions for further discussion. This commentary will be a welcome addition to the library of everyone wishing for a deeper understanding of the GIRM, and it should lead to a fuller celebration of our redemption.

Victor Cinson, Jr.

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Item #PR-10

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Major speakers include Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo, Rev. Ronald Rolheiser, omi, Ms. Kate Cuddy, Dr. Kate DeVries, Rev. Paul Turner, and Rev. Msgr. Ray East. Watch this space for more details!
In the Midst of Change

By the Participants

The major benefit I received from this NPM convention is... the insightful plenum addresses... challenging plenum speakers... meeting others in music ministry... deeper relationships with NPM members... an introduction to NPM... connecting with colleagues... networking... solidarity... sharing ideas and stories... talking to people... warnings from my peers... practical information... opportunities to learn... learning new techniques for rehearsals... sight-reading SATB... hearing hundreds of people singing SATB... inspiration to do better... knowing that I can and do make a difference in worship... Rockin’ the Parkway... musical inspiration... centrality of the Eucharist for communal life... a sense of God’s empowering Spirit... a sense that we’re pulling together for the right reasons... cantor sessions... voice technique... versatility... excitement and energy to bring back home... laughing... Handbell Institute... opportunity to take a break from the reality of parish life... youth day... hope from young composers... meeting the composers... accessible global music for classroom use... opportunities to follow instead of lead... new ideas about initiation rites and funerals... up-to-date and accurate information... liturgical insight... wise words from workshop presenters... updates on new documents... professional updating... motivation to try to initiate some changes... discovering that my pastor may not be so bad after all... hospitality... seeing churches... live music during lunch... ministerial renewal... spiritual refreshment... learning basic conducting... learning about other cultures... keeping an open mind... participating in multicultural liturgies and concerts... seeing good liturgical advice manifested in practice... seeing the amazing growth in NPM since Scranton in 1978... pride in the national organization... preparing for our own convention in 2010... a good reminder that lay ecclesial ministers have a place in the world... figuring out what I’m going to do in my parish music program... resources... showcases... fine job by the local committee... events that started and ended on time... learning improv skills... opportunity to preview new music... a framework for future development... renewed hope... renewing my commitment as a pastoral musician... a total blessing... the encouragement I needed... practical management ideas... concerts... time to reflect... wonderful Eucharist... Convention Eucharist at the cathedral... exposure to different ways of doing music and liturgy... liturgy done with dignity and grace... listening instead of doing, being instead of doing... pleasant surprises at every turn.

At future conventions, we should have more (better)... variety... exhibitors... breakout sessions... inspirational plenum presentations... visuals used by plenum presenters... opportunities for questions after the main presentations... contact information for speakers and workshop leaders so we can follow up... bishops giving a plenum address... a higher stage so all can see what’s going on... technical breakout sessions... longer breakout sessions... repetition of popular breakout sessions...
music reading sessions ... master classes ... handouts at workshops ... workshops on the liturgy of the hours ... workshops on using handchimes with choirs ... “learner” breakfasts or lunches as additional workshop sessions ... breakouts that nourish spiritually as well as practically ... workshops that feature well-known composers ... workshops on healthy living as ministers ... higher-level workshops for cantors ... music educator sessions ... workshops on liturgy with children ... workshops on children’s choirs ... workshops on Hispanic culture for Anglos ... sessions on copyright law ... percussion workshops ... recording of workshops ... workshops on how to use online planning resources ... workshops on arranging ... bigger rooms for crowded breakouts ... better sound insulation between breakout rooms ... identifying levels of workshops (from basic to advanced) ... visits to churches ... events in the hotel ... events that finish early (or on time) ... more time for exhibits ... giveaways at exhibits ... coffee ... complimentary coffee and tea ... complimentary or discounted food ... breaks ... evenly dispersed free time ... free time for meals ... food options in the convention area ... healthy food ... affordable food ... a cookie and fruit table ... “fellowship” activities ... opportunities for camaraderie ... opportunities for confession ... opportunities to participate directly in concerts and events ... opportunities for clergy ... liturgical movement ... singing ... involvement of multicultural/ethnic participants and presenters ... involvement of youth ... access to mentors for new-to-convention people ... English translations when Spanish texts are used ... discussion of the use of metaphor in liturgical language and in ecclesiological imagination ... Taizé prayer earlier in the evening ... more liturgies ... vocal warm-ups before morning prayer ... new music at morning prayer ... quiet time during morning prayer ... daily Mass nearby ... optional daily Mass at the convention ... opportunities for a healing/anointing service ... hymn festivals ... space for notes in the convention booklet ... T-shirts ... liturgical jewelry ... free parking ... options for housing ... hotel rooms with a microwave, coffee maker, and mini fridge ... choral and Latin music opportunities ... upbeat, spirited prayer services and liturgy ... greater use of contemporary music ... familiar music at the Eucharist ... wine at Eucharist ... congregational singing at the liturgy ... traditional music that has survived the test of time ... piano and guitar music ... recognition of founders and charter members ... waste baskets in conference rooms ... air conditioning ... lighting at the opening event ... spaces (a chapel) for private prayer ... a Blessed Sacrament chapel ... input from pastors and pastoral directors ... lectionary-based music selections ... diverse faces ... accessibility for youth ... lunchtime organ recitals ... organ recitals on quality pipe organs ... showcase opportunities for smaller publishers ... NPM sweatshirts for sale ... ethnic suggestions ... opportunities for special interest groups to meet and share ... use of a city’s cultural and recreational activities ... signs to help us navigate ... maps showing good restaurants ... information on ground transportation ... organization ... time.

And less (fewer) ... trite music ... contemporary cha-cha style music ... “high-brow music” ... responsorial music instead of hymns ... chant at morning prayer ... organ ... “style wars” ... liturgies ... concerts ... showcases ... sales ... least common denominator material ... pageantry ... plenum addresses ... microphones for the choir at Mass ... ambiguity about local practice for Mass postures ... clergy presiding at non-sacramental worship ... disappointing environments for worship ... grumpy people at registration ... cheesy presenters ... unprofessional or prejudiced remarks ... publisher-dominated breakouts ... pushy exhibitors ... small print in the program ... need for buses ... breakouts centered on the artist-presenter ... air conditioning ... cell phone interruptions ... dead time between events ... free time ... small chairs close together ... uncomfortable chairs ... standing during the opening event ... small meeting rooms ... “people jams” (everyone leaving at once and using the elevators) ... travel ... repeated breakouts from year to year ... poor cantors and accompanists ... poorly planned liturgies ... printed descriptions that do not match the actual workshops ... late nights and early mornings ... humidity ... Spanish ... negativity ... fear.
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